

Drought Planning Checklist – Livestock

Never feed your way out of a drought – it will bankrupt you economically, financially and ecologically

Land

- Develop a grazing plan that provides sufficient rest for each pasture. Will you need additional fencing to subdivide existing paddocks?
- Develop a stock water budget – how much water will you need daily, weekly and monthly?
- Develop a water distribution system. Will you need to haul water to livestock in order to utilize all pastures/paddocks?

Livestock

- Identify “A” herd (keeper) and “B” herd (to be sold) animals.
- Inventory classes of livestock by nutritional demand (e.g., dry cows, lactating cows, replacement heifers, etc.).
- Develop a marketing plan for animals selected for sale.
- Identify critical rain dates (e.g., dates on which you’ll need to begin marketing animals).
- Develop a rebuilding strategy for when the drought is over.
- Evaluate breeding system – when is the best time for calves, lambs or kids to be born? Do my seasonal feed demands match my seasonal forage supply? Does drought present opportunities for adjusting my breeding season to better match seasonal forage supplies?

Economics and Finance

- Develop an enterprise mix that is compatible with or that reduces drought risk. For example, is a cow-calf enterprise more appropriate than a stocker or small ruminant enterprise?
- Develop stock and cash flow budgets to assess impacts of destocking.
- Consult with a tax advisor regarding the tax ramifications of destocking.
- Develop a plan for investing proceeds for destocking and a restocking budget.
- Research government disaster assistance programs.

People

- Engage all stakeholders in planning and decision-making process.
- Evaluate opportunities presented by drought – are there opportunities to improve the health of the land or the viability of the business?