

Funding and support information for WA primary producers

This document provides some useful resources and information on loans, programs and support services to assist growers, pastoralists and industry experiencing hardship in challenging times.

Season information

Season 2024: information for WA farmers and pastoralists - seasonally relevant information and management options in broadacre and south-west agricultural areas and the Southern Rangelands of Western Australia.

Options to investigate

Grants, loans and programs

- Interest-Free Loans Applications for the interest-free loans are now open. Farm businesses can apply for \$25,000 to cover the costs of stockfeed, water and transportation. The funds can also be used to establish feed silos, water tanks and improved irrigation systems or any other infrastructure that supports drought resilience. The loan is repayable over 5 years with no repayments for the first 2 years. The availability of loans is subject to funds being available. Applications will close 30 November 2024 (or when funds are exhausted). The loans are administered by the Rural Business Development Corporation and are delivered through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. For queries, please contact the Rural Business Development Unit - ruralbusiness.developmentunit@dpird.wa.gov.au or 08 9368 3082 (during business hours).
- Hardship Grants Applications for the \$5000 hardship grant are now closed as funding has been fully committed.
- Drought Loans for eligible farm businesses are available from the Australian Government farm business lender, RIC (Regional Investment Corporation). RIC provides low-interest Drought Loans for farm businesses to help them prepare for, manage through and recover from drought. Farm business loans of up to \$2 million are available. Farm businesses are encouraged to learn more about eligibility and lending criteria before applying.
- AgBiz Drought Loans for eligible small businesses directly linked to the farming sector are available from the Australian Government farm business lender, RIC (Regional Investment Corporation). Low interest loans of up to \$500,000 may help eligible farm-related businesses in drought affected areas manage their business during a drought. Eligibility and lending criteria apply to all RIC loans.
- The Australian Government's Farm Management Deposits (FMD) Scheme is a risk management and drought preparedness measure which allows eligible primary producers to set aside pre-tax income which can be drawn upon when required. Income deposited into an FMD is tax deductible in the financial year the deposit is made. It becomes taxable income in the financial year in which it is withdrawn. FMDs are held by authorised deposit taking institutions and attract market rates of interest. Primary producers can access previously lodged FMDs to supplement business cash flow. This may include accessing deposits held for less than 12 months, for eligible drought affected properties (without penalty).

- The Farm Household Allowance Program is a program of support for farmers and their partners running commercial operations that are experiencing low cash flow. There are four financial components, underpinned by practical support to help people examine their business and make sustainable changes. The \$10,000 Activity Supplement plays a large part in the change process because people can pay for professional advice and/ or training to achieve their goals. Around 18,500 people have accessed the program and the vast majority have said it makes a big difference in the short to medium term. Although the application process is rigorous, most people say it is worth it.

Farm Debt Mediation Scheme

- Available to assist farm and pastoral businesses resolve commercial debt disputes regarding loan agreements with their financial institution. Mediation is conducted by an independent mediator in an impartial and safe environment. For more information visit the website, email ruralbusiness.developmentunit@dpird.wa.gov.au or call 1300 374 731.

Support services

- The Regional Mens Health Initiative (RMHI) is a wellbeing and health education project aimed at improving outcomes for men and communities in regional, Western Australia. RMHI enables individuals, groups and communities to be self-sustaining and self-managing of wellbeing challenges. Phone: (08) 6314 1436
- Rural West provides free financial counselling to all primary producers and aims to transition clients through a financial crisis, improve their financial well-being and resilience, and improve business profitability or facilitate a dignified exit. Phone: 1800 612 004
- Rural aid provides critical support to farmers affected by natural disaster through financial, wellbeing and fodder assistance.
- Other rural support services are available, here is a comprehensive list.
- Drought, disaster and rural support – Australian Government (agriculture.gov.au) - provides a list of programs and services to help prepare for, manage and recover from droughts, floods, pests and diseases, and other market disruptions.

Natural disaster assistance

The WA Government website lists support during emergencies caused by floods, cyclones or major bushfires or other natural disasters.

- Prepare warnings & incidents, recovery - Department of Fire and Emergency Services - provides simple advice and directs you to resources where you can find practical actions to prepare for and cope during a bushfire.
- Farm recovery after fire information and support services for recovery after fire.
- Animal welfare in emergencies - links to animal welfare during bushfires and recovery.
- Disaster recovery funding for WA is listed here when a natural disaster has been declared.
- Disaster Assist lists some arrangements to help with relief and recovery costs such as:
 - Disaster Recovery Payment may be provided as a one-off recovery payment to assist individuals and families that have been significantly affected by a major disaster.
 - Disaster Recovery Allowance a short-term income support payment to assist individuals who can demonstrate that their income has been affected as a direct result of a disaster.

More information

DPIRD's Dry season 2024 Hotline: 1300 489 832
 For information and resources to assist this season, visit the Season 2024 webpage at agric.wa.gov.au/Season2024

