



Support for farmers during hard times

June 2023

Farmers and rural communities face many risks to their business, including natural disasters, drought, pests and diseases, and other market disruptions. Australian Government programs and services can assist farmers as they plan for, manage, and recover from these shocks.

Support in your area

There are many people and organisations you can talk to about your options. They include:

- farm industry groups
- banks and advisers, such as agronomists and accountants
- federal, state and local governments
- charities and other non-government organisations.

To find out about help available if you are affected by drought, a disaster or natural event, visit the National Emergency Management Agency at nema.gov.au.

Farm Household Allowance

The Farm Household Allowance (FHA) is available to farming families in financial hardship. The program provides practical support for eligible farmers through a package of assistance including fortnightly payments and additional allowances such as rent assistance, case support and farm financial assessment.

The program also includes a \$10,000 activity supplement to develop skills and increase capacity for financial self-reliance.

To apply for FHA, call Farmer Assistance Hotline on **132 316** (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

For more information, visit agriculture.gov.au/fha.

Farm Management Deposit Scheme

Farm Management Deposits may help eligible primary producers to put their own money away ahead of a downturn. A Farm Management Deposit account allows them to make tax deductible deposits during years of good cash flow and withdraw them during bad years. Primary producers affected by natural disasters, such as floods, may be able to withdraw their Farm Management Deposits within the first 12 months of deposit without losing any taxation benefits.

For more information, visit agriculture.gov.au/fmd.

Mental health and social support

Dealing with economic, climatic and social pressures can affect farming families' wellbeing and mental health. Help is available.

- Call lifeline.org.au on **13 11 14** for immediate crisis support.
- Visit headtohealth.gov.au to find reliable information, advice, and free or low-cost phone and online mental health services and support.
- Find other resources aimed directly at farmers and rural communities at takingstock.community.

Regional Investment Corporation concessional loans

The Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) delivers the Australian Government's concessional loans to the farming sector, offering low-cost, low-interest rate loans. Farmers and farm-related small businesses meeting eligibility and lending criteria requirements can apply for loans of up to \$2 million for farmers and up to \$500,000 for farm-related small businesses.

For more information, visit ric.gov.au or call **1800 875 675**.

Rural Financial Counsellors

Rural Financial Counsellors (RFC) are qualified professionals who can provide support that is unique to the farmer's situation, at no cost to the client. They will listen and help develop an action plan with the necessary steps to get out of financial difficulty.

For immediate help with household expenses, facilitation of farm debt mediation, or emergency assistance following a natural disaster, your local Rural Financial Counselling Service can provide information on the full range of government assistance programs.

To find your nearest RFC, visit fcsnetwork.com.au or call **1300 771 741**.

Taxation measures

There are various tax measures that can support primary producers, including:

- immediate deduction for capital expenditure on fencing, water storage and fodder storage assets.
- other instant asset write off deductions and accelerated depreciation for eligible businesses of claims for assets up to a specified threshold.
- tax payment plans and concessions available through the ATO for those suffering hardship.

For more information, visit ato.gov.au/Business/Primary-producers.

More information

Learn more about the support you can access on agriculture.gov.au/ruralsupport.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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