



Weekly update on Cyclone Gabrielle recovery activity

Extreme Weather Recovery Directorate

- MPI has established the Extreme Weather Recovery Directorate to ensure appropriate engagement and support for national and regional recovery work. The directorate aims to enable faster and effective delivery of recovery initiatives, support collaboration across MPI branches, and provide visible support networks for the regions. Recruitment for the Directorate is underway.

Operations Reach and Muster

- Operation Reach enabled the delivery of 60 bags of dog food to Ruatoria last week, and ongoing deliveries are being made to Tokomaru Bay this week. There were no helicopter drops this week.
- Operation Muster moved 45,000 head of stock off-farm from the beginning of March to the end of April 2023. Further support is being contracted in the Hawke's Bay for the next two months.

Farmer trends around the country

- Reports from the Regional Skills Leadership Group in Northland (convened by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) indicate that initial flooding destroyed hay and silage stores for many farmers. Delays in de-stocking farms (moving stock off farm for sale, fattening, or processing) will deplete available feed supplies and may reduce the health and welfare of livestock. Some farmers may need to supplement existing feed with imported palm kernel, further impacting cashflow.
- In Tararua many rural professionals are experiencing financial pressures with farmers facing a shortfall between insurable losses and returning farms to a pre-cyclone state.
- There is considerable anxiety in rural communities in the Tararua region about maintaining road access as winter weather approaches.



The image shows the bailey bridge at Bushy Knoll through the Blue Berry Flats (in Tairāwhiti). The load limit is 3500kg and it is well used by the local rural community.



\$57.6 million grant applications paid

As at 8 May, 5,084 applications for farmer and grower recovery grants have been approved and paid, totalling \$57.6 million in value.



Over 400 people joined The Big Check-In

On 4 May over 400 people joined 'The Big Check-In' event, convened by the Primary Sector Wellbeing Reference Group. The webinar featured four expert panellists sharing experiences and practical advice.



\$10,000 raised for cyclone-affected families

On 27 April 2023 the Canterbury West Coast Wood Council hosted a fundraising event for cyclone-affected families, which raised \$10,000.



1.4% increase in empty cows in 2023, largely due to extreme weather events

A recent report quoting Livestock Improvement Corporation shows the average percentage of cows not in calf, or empty, this year is 17.6%, the first increase in four years. The 1.4% rise is largely attributed to cold, wet weather leading up to and through mating.



Bridge scour protection has been undertaken at Tapuaeroa Road in Tairāwhiti.

Key Updates

- Northland has experienced further flooding, and there is uncertainty about how soon the floodwaters will drain. Pasture will die if it is underwater for more than three days. Some Northland farmers will be faced with re-sowing for the fourth time in a year, late in the season. This could deepen psychosocial and financial issues.
- Marine environment impacts for the fishing industry in the medium to long term are now at the forefront of community recovery planning in Tairāwhiti and the Hawke's Bay. Navigational and safety challenges as a result of debris and poor-quality catches are of most pressing concern, with fishers travelling considerable distances to reach clear fishing grounds. Fisheries New Zealand continues to engage with fishers and is monitoring this situation.
- On 10 May the Animal and Plant Health Directorate in Biosecurity New Zealand released a consultation document that proposes amendments to import requirements for fresh produce from Australia. Consultation is open for 15 business days and covers:
 - the commodities involved in these amendments are winter supply commodities.
 - proposed amendments, with three additional treatment options to continue to support importation of a range of fresh produce.
- The Directorate has previously met with Horticulture New Zealand to discuss this work programme, and will meet with them again to talk through any concerns prior to this body making its submission.
- On 27 April, the Canterbury West Coast Wood Council hosted an event which raised \$10,000 for cyclone affected families. Matt Croft from Hawke's Bay Forestry Group spoke at the event with an update on impacts and the clean-up. Matt also presented a summary of the findings of the recently released woody debris report. More information is available in the [Friday Off Cuts newsletter](#).
- There remains a large amount of feed on offer through the Feed Coordination Service, which has had 30 requests to date. Members of the national Stock Feed Working Group report there is an overall sense of exhaustion from the physical work required in cyclone recovery.
- A further \$45.5 million will be invested through Budget 2023 to support the recovery of rural communities affected by North Island weather events, including Cyclone Gabrielle. The funding will be available to all parts of the primary industries, including horticulture, agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. Funding allocations will be managed via an expression of interest process that we anticipate will go live later this month. Further details will be available soon.