



Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Grazing BMP self-assessment **People and business**





Self-assessment – People and business

Improving the performance of a grazing business requires careful consideration of a range of areas such as production, natural resource management and human resources. While many producers prefer to concentrate on production, focusing on people and planning is also critical.

To strengthen, grow or develop a successful grazing business, time and thought needs to be allocated to developing the people and business skills outlined in this module. It is people who make the plans, develop the strategies and implement them.

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Key area 1 – Business planning

Successful businesses are built on successful plans and the ability to anticipate and prepare for the future, while being flexible enough to deal with change. Managing agricultural businesses has become more difficult as a result of rapidly changing production, economic, environmental and social conditions. Businesses must deal with increasing risk and uncertainty.

The purpose of planning is identifying and clarifying where the business is going, identifying what needs to be done to achieve objectives and what roles people will play. Having all involved in the business working together towards the business goals is critical.

Documented plans are critical for ongoing review of business direction and performance and are particularly valuable for managing succession or changes in key management personnel.

Business goals and plans

Planning begins with having a vision of what the business owners want to achieve for the business and their family. Key considerations in developing the vision are:

- Natural resources
- Property development
- Finances
- Productivity
- Management, family and employees.

Once a vision has been developed, goals which will direct and guide management towards the desired outcomes can be identified.

The goals should cover:

- Personal
- Family and employees
- Natural resources
- Production
- Financial.

For goals to be meaningful they need to be specific, measurable and have time frames for achievement. Goals can be short, medium or long term and should be grouped as such. Once goals are listed then strategies to achieve them can be developed.

Shared goals, strategies and plans for your business that are reviewed and updated regularly assist with effective decision making, managing human relations, and dealing with change.

The planning process generates information and helps you to feel more in control. The process sets the business up to perform as well as possible with the resources available.

Property planning

Property planning starts with a clear understanding of the property's current resources and management practices, and establishes a process to move the property sustainably and profitably toward the business's goals.



Property planning is an ongoing process. Property plans include a schedule for regular evaluation and review as the business moves forward.

Property plans generally include elements such as:

- a statement of the property's business and natural resource goals
- plans for managing natural resources
- plans for developing and maintaining property infrastructure
- plans for developing and adapting land use and farming practices into the future.



Numerous training courses, templates and information sessions are available to assist primary producers develop property management plans.

Financial risk management

The key area of financial risk is how much debt the business carries. The more indebted the business the more income is consumed by interest and the more exposed it is to income fluctuations, changes in interest rates or lending criteria of banks. One way to assess your financial risk is to work out your interest cover; that is how many times your annual interest bill divides into your net cash flow before interest. A minimum of four is recommended, if it is one or less then the business has a very high level of financial risk.

Financial risk management also includes protecting the business assets - both the physical resources as well as the people who are responsible for keeping the business operational. This can be done through appropriate insurance policies.

Other financial risk management strategies include Farm Management Deposits, off-farm income and off-farm investments.

Succession planning

Succession planning is important where more than one generation is involved in the family business. Professional and legal input is generally recommended. Succession planning includes transition strategies for transferring management responsibility, and assets to the next generation with the support of the current management.

Even if there is not a second generation in the business, it is still useful to have a plan for transitioning from the current business structure when the time is appropriate.

Self-assessment – Business planning

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 1.1 Business goals and plans				
<p>Business goals or plans have not been developed or are not shared between individuals involved in the business.</p> <p>Business members' personal goals are not considered or incorporated into planning.</p>	<p>Business goals and plans are developed with input from all business members. Professional advice is sought when required.</p> <p>Business members' personal goals are discussed and included in the business plan.</p>	<p>Industry standard plus:</p> <p>Goals and plans are reviewed every 12 months and updated as required with input from all business members.</p> <p>Business members' personal goals are discussed and included in the annual review of business goals and plans.</p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
PB 1.2 Natural resource planning				
<p>No natural resource management goals are defined.</p> <p>Plans to manage natural resources are non-existent, not specific, incomplete, or out-dated.</p>	<p>Property has defined natural resource management goals. Plans to manage natural resources have been developed with input from all business members and are being implemented.</p>	<p>Business members' personal goals are discussed and included in the annual review of business goals and plans.</p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 1.3 Infrastructure planning				
<p>Infrastructure development has been ad hoc and development plans do not consider land management.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Infrastructure is planned, developed and maintained to achieve good land management. Planning considers how infrastructure development can improve the efficiency of property management.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Infrastructure planning, development and maintenance are reviewed annually or when significant changes occur in the business.</p> <p>Capital investment options are analysed to prioritise investments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 1.4 Financial risk management				
<p>No financial risk management strategies are in place.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Basic financial risk management strategies are in place, e.g. income protection, disability, life and property insurance policies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus:</p> <p>Opportunities for off-farm investments and income are considered in business plan.</p> <p>Farm Management Deposits are utilised (when practical) to smooth cash flow.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 1.5 Succession planning				
<p>No wills, enduring power of attorney or succession plan in place.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Wills and enduring power of attorney in place for every business member.</p> <p>Succession plan in place and some professional input has been obtained.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Detailed succession plan including a time line is in place and all relevant people are aware of it. Plan developed with professional legal and financial advice.</p> <p>Where appropriate, transition strategies are being implemented e.g. transfer of management responsibility.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>



Key area 2 – Business knowledge and skills

Effective business records

Organised, timely, accurate records allow for production and financial performance to be analysed and provide a solid basis for planning, budgeting and management.

Business recording begins with production information (e.g. stock records, livestock sales), and flows through to financial reports (e.g. cash flows) and performance analysis (e.g. gross margins, return on assets).

Consider how the data will be used when organising how your records will be kept. Ensure that the data collected will be sufficient for the intended use. Also consider how information needs or reporting requirements could change into the future and allow for this.

In a beef enterprise some key performance measures can only be analysed annually e.g. conception rates and weaning whereas live weights and growth rates can be measured frequently if desired. The frequency of live weight measurement should be a balance between the data required to manage marketing and seasonal conditions, the logistics of handling livestock and the workload.

Business performance analysis

Business performance should be analysed at a frequency that will provide the information required to manage the production system(s) and overall business. The type and frequency of business analysis will vary with the enterprise type, financial situation and seasonal conditions. Because cash flow is fundamental to business survival expenditures and cash flow need to be monitored on a monthly basis.

Performance analysis is particularly critical for enterprises with high debt levels and or when seasonal and market conditions are affecting herd performance, sales and costs. Performance

analysis can greatly assist communication and negotiation with financiers.

For a breeding and finishing enterprise, annual review of herd performance and business returns may be appropriate, whereas for a trading enterprise more frequent analysis (e.g. each mob) is valuable for planning purchases and sales.

Performance analysis may be conducted internally or with the assistance of external professionals. Benchmarking the business against industry (or district) averages may provide a useful perspective on the business's performance, but caution must be exercised as many key performance indicators (KPIs) provide little information on the practices producing the end result seen in KPIs. The length of the production cycle is a particular challenge for beef enterprise analysis. For an enterprise producing heavy bullocks, breeding, growing and finishing occurs over four-five financial years.

Business decision making

Effective business decision making is a proactive rather than a reactive process, and is characterised by reliable record keeping, consideration of past experience and historical data, and regular analysis of business performance. Alternatives and opportunity costs are weighed up, and possible scenarios are tested by creating forecast budgets before commitments are made.

Good decision makers generally tend to consult with peers and/or contemporaries.

Timeliness of decision making is a key factor in enterprise performance. Delays in critical activities such as adjusting stock numbers and weaning often result in reduced cow body condition which leads to lower weaning rates and higher mortalities.

Self-assessment – Business knowledge and skills

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 2.1 Stock records				
<p>Stock numbers are not recorded accurately by paddock, class and age.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Stock numbers are known by paddock, class and age and enable easy preparation of stock flows and budgets. Stock records enable accurate assessment of mortalities and reproductive performance. Live weight data for growing and finishing animals is used in livestock and grazing management decisions and to plan livestock marketing.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus:</p> <p>Stock numbers and livestock performance data are analysed to identify changes over time and measure the effectiveness of management strategies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 2.2 Business and financial records				
<p>Business and financial records are minimum required by financiers and for taxation purposes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Business and financial records are current and their content and format enables effective budgeting and cash flow analysis.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus:</p> <p>Business and financial records enable detailed analysis of the physical and financial performance of the business (e.g. gross margins, return on assets, interest coverage, and equity).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 2.3 Budgeting				
<p>A budget is prepared at start of year, for bank and not looked at again</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Budget prepared at start of year and used in planning activities and finance arrangements for year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A budget always exists 12 months ahead. It is reviewed and updated every month/ quarter with variance of actuals to budget analysed. Budget is a key management tool used throughout year.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>

Self-assessment – Business knowledge and skills

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 2.4 Cash flow analysis				
<p>Previous year's cash flow figures used to do current budget for bank.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Annual cash flow analysed. Reasons for changes (against budget or previous) identified and used in management.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Annual cash flow performance analysed in detail. Analysis broken into key components (sales, enterprise costs, overheads, total operating costs, capital expenditure, finance costs, tax).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 2.5 Business performance analysis				
<p>No, or limited, analysis of overall business performance.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Business performance is analysed to level required by financiers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Performance analysed in detail against long term trends and averages. Gross margins, return on assets, interest coverage, equity and other key measures calculated. Where appropriate professional advice is sought to assist with performance analysis.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 2.6 Business decision making				
<p>Decisions made by key people as and when needed. Usually not time or perceived need to involve others in business or evaluate alternative options.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Business decision making happens when there is an issue to be addressed and is based on gathering as much information as possible, talking to other people in the business and consulting with peers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Business decision making is a structured, proactive process involving gathering timely information, consulting with peers and professionals, weighing up alternatives, and reflecting on past experiences.</p> <p>Key decisions made well in advance at regular management meetings, where options are identified and analysed to choose best course of action.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>



Key area 3 – Human resources

Rural businesses, like any other, rely on harmonious working environments where everyone involved in the business feels that they are able to contribute to the success of the business and are rewarded for their efforts.

Regardless of the size of the business, human resource areas that need to be addressed include personal health and wellbeing, communication, roles and responsibilities, working conditions, training and skills development.

Personal wellbeing

Many aspects of running a rural business influence the health and wellbeing of property owners/managers, family members and workers. These include the nature of agricultural work, financial pressures, intergenerational issues, running a business with family members, and dealing with ongoing change, extreme weather conditions and limited access to health services. These pressures can lead to poor health including chronic disease and injury as well as anxiety and depression.

If any member of the family, management team or staff is concerned about levels of stress and their ability to cope, seek assistance from health professionals or specific support organisations.

The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety has a useful reference blueprint for maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of people on farms. The key is to be aware of the issues and to be willing to seek assistance if needed.

Work life balance

Planning for and achieving work life balance requires

consideration of the personal needs of the managers, family and workers as well as planning and running the business. Lack of work life balance affects people's satisfaction and motivation, and can impact on productivity and safety.

Farming families have the added pressure of the workplace and the home being the same place.

One of the most important strategies for maintaining balance is understanding the needs and goals of family members and staff. Healthy and balanced work environments can be created by factoring in time for activities such as recreation, training and family responsibilities.

With the recruitment and retention of skilled agricultural staff increasingly difficult, businesses that are mindful of work life balance are better positioned to attract and retain workers.

Internal and external communications

When management decisions are communicated effectively, they can be understood and adopted by other people in the business. Effective communication promotes teamwork and co-operation, and is characterised by being frequent, open, and two-way.

In grazing businesses, the business stakeholders are usually family members. Poor communication will not only damage business performance but can also put relationships under strain.

Good business performance also depends on effective communication with financiers, suppliers and market representatives e.g. processors, livestock buyers and agents.

Learning and networking

Ongoing formal and informal learning and quality networking, keeps business managers informed about industry, regulatory and other developments that could impact on the business. Networks can be a source of information as well as a forum in which to share and explore ideas. Online communication tools have vastly enhanced access to information and networking opportunities.



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Organisations such as AgForce, NRM groups, Landcare and Best Practice groups are some of the formal networks available to producers.

Recognise and value the skills available within the business. Identify the current skills that family and workers can contribute to help decide which skills could be developed further through training, or which could be used to produce additional income through new ventures or off-farm employment.

Labour management

Although agricultural businesses vary markedly in their ownership and management structure and the number and type of workers, the principles of personnel management remain the same.

These principles include the legal obligations relating to pay rates and working conditions, superannuation, taxation, workers compensation, and WHS. Systems need to be in place to meet the record keeping requirements of federal and state industrial laws. WHS requirements are detailed in Key Area 4.

Self-assessment – Human resources

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 3.1 Personal wellbeing				
Little consideration is given to allocating time and resources for maintaining mental and physical wellbeing.	Time and resources are committed toward maintaining the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone involved in the business.		Industry standard	1.
			<input type="checkbox"/>	2.
				3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 3.2 Work life balance				
A lack of balance between work and family commitments is putting pressure on everyone involved in the business.	Business commitments take work and family needs into consideration.	Business and operational planning takes into account the personal needs of individual business members, e.g. recreation, annual leave, training.	Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	2. 3.
PB 3.3 Internal communications				
Internal communications are unplanned and ad hoc.	Business and planning meetings are held as required. These meetings enable discussion and clarification of issues and opportunities.	Business and planning meetings are held regularly with all family members and staff. Specific meetings are held to prepare for key activities, e.g. weaning. Strategies are in place to facilitate ongoing communication, e.g. communication board located in public area.	Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	2. 3.
PB 3.4 External communications				
Communication with suppliers, private and public professionals (e.g. financiers, legal, accountants, meat processors, agents, public and private advisors) is minimal and ad hoc.	Contact is made with suppliers, private and public professionals (e.g. financiers, legal, accountants, meat processors, agents, public and private advisors) as required.	Regular contact is maintained with meat processors, agents and suppliers to ensure best prices and services are obtained. Regular contact with financiers to ensure sound management of business's finances. Targeted contact with other private and public professionals contributes to business innovation.	Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	2. 3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 3.5 Learning and networking				
<p>Minimal awareness of industry networks, learning opportunities, and training events.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Management, family members and/or workers are involved at some level in industry networks and attend learning and networking opportunities identified as useful for the business and individuals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Management, family members and/or workers are actively involved with industry networks and learning opportunities, and contribute to broader industry outcomes through R&D, agri-political, Landcare or NRM groups.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 3.6 Roles and responsibilities				
<p>Clear roles and responsibilities do not exist for family and non-family workers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Family and non-family workers know their roles and responsibilities and these are reviewed from time to time.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus: Family and non-family workers are encouraged to develop their skills and responsibilities. Achievements are recognised.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 3.7 Labour management				
<p>Minimal awareness of legal obligations as an employer. No systems in place to comply with federal and state industrial laws.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Legal obligations as an employer are fully understood. Systems are in place to manage employment requirements. Advice is sought from professional and government sources when required.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus: Business plan incorporates strategies to develop staff skills and achieve good staff retention.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>

Key area 4 – Workplace health and safety

Safe workplaces feature awareness and communication and are places where both workers and employers share responsibility for safety.

WHS legislation recognises that actions taken to protect people from risk need to be 'reasonably practicable'.

WHS awareness

Rural property owners and managers need to be aware of their legal responsibilities for the health and safety of workers, contractors and visitors to their workplace. These responsibilities are described in the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 (WHS Act), the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (WHS Regulation) and the associated codes of practice.

The codes of practice provide practical guidance on how to achieve the required standards under the WHS Act and Regulation. They include written examples and forms that employers can use to meet their obligations.



Risk management

The WHS Act requires that hazards be identified and risks eliminated or minimized, so far as is reasonably practicable. Managing risks involves the following steps. Follow the SAFER principle:

- 1. See and identify hazards** – determine which locations or activities could cause harm
- 2. Assess risks if necessary** – consider the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be, and the likelihood of it happening
- 3. Fix and control risks** – implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, following this hierarchy:
 - Level 1: eliminate the hazard
 - Level 2: substitute or isolate, or reduce the risk through engineering controls
 - Level 3: reduce exposure to the hazard using administrative controls; use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- 4. Evaluate and review control measures** – to ensure they are working as planned.
- 5. Recording** – document the assessment and any action or work procedure established to minimize risk in the workplace

Safe Work Procedures should be developed and implemented in consultation with all staff for all activities that pose a risk. Guides and factsheets are available to help employers successfully manage risk within their enterprise (see Tools and Links).



Consultation

Consultation in the workplace is a necessary part of complying with WHS legislation. Consultation means owners/managers regularly sharing information and exchanging views with workers. When workers are involved in the WHS risk assessment and safety planning process, many problems can be resolved or even pre-empted. Workers who feel involved in the decision-making process will usually have an increased sense of ownership for and responsibility toward safety in the workplace.

Training and supervision

As part of their primary duty of care, employers must provide adequate safety training, information and instruction to staff. Once 'safe work procedures', have been developed these can provide the basis for a training program. Some degree of supervision is necessary to ensure that safe work practices are being followed.

It is important to keep a record of what training has been provided (e.g. a diary entry). A structured and documented training program, which can be as simple as a checklist of competency for identified work procedures, will help ensure the required training is being provided.

Worker induction and records

Worker inductions, delivered before new workers commence work, set the framework for safety in the workplace. Expectations can be clearly established, while expected work practices and procedures are outlined and emergency procedures detailed. Creating and using an induction checklist will help with ensure all necessary topics are discussed.

Inductions are an ideal opportunity to collect critical worker information (contact details, next of kin, payroll details, health issues). It is important that inductions are recorded in some way; ideally on an induction document that lists the topics covered and is signed and dated by both employer and workers. A simpler option is to note the induction in a diary entry.

Visitor induction

Visitor inductions are related to farm safety but can also help with biosecurity control. Running through a simple checklist of safety and biosecurity issues with visitors and recording this as a diary entry is an easy way to do this. Defining which spaces are considered living only and which constitute the 'workplace' can help determine which visitors need to be inducted.

More formally, a visitor register can be compiled and signed by visitors after they have listened to or read about potential safety or biosecurity issues before they enter the workplace. Regular visitors may only require an initial induction.

Emergency response plans

List emergency contacts where this information can be easily accessed by all staff and family members in an emergency situation.

Discuss general emergency procedures with all staff and family members: who to contact in specific situations, how to use communication equipment, where fire fighting equipment is located, where first aid supplies are located, and who on the property has first aid training.

Document emergency procedures into a checklist to help ensure all aspects are covered.



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Remote or isolated work

Workers who are remote from base or isolated from assistance must be equipped with appropriate equipment and a procedure that facilitates effective and regular communication between them and base. This could be in the form of a UHF radio to be used according to an agreed call-in schedule.

Child safety

In rural workplaces, children are commonly exposed to workplace hazards that are not present in urban homes. Some of these hazards can have severe or fatal consequences for children. The safety of children is always an adult responsibility – primarily of the parent or carer but also shared by other adults present.

Under the WHS Act, persons who conduct a business or undertaking at a rural workplace have responsibilities to all visitors, including children. These responsibilities extend to children living on the property.

To ensure these responsibilities are met, a process of Risk Management (identify hazards, assess risks, control risks, keep records and review control measures) needs to be completed. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) provides an excellent checklist for this process (please see Tools and Links).

Develop clear rules about the entry of children to work areas and the responsibility for their supervision. Make sure all family members and workers know these rules.

It is recommended that children wear seatbelts/restraints when in vehicles on the property, are not allowed to travel in the back of utilities, and are only allowed to operate machinery and equipment if they are physically capable and have the experience, training and maturity to do so.

Providing a safe and secure play area for children is an important part of child safety on farms.

First Aid

Rural workplaces must ensure that:

- suitable and adequate first aid equipment is provided at the workplace
- each worker has access to the first aid equipment, and to facilities where first aid can be administered
- an adequate number of workers are trained to administer first aid.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is clothing or equipment designed to be worn by someone to protect them from risks of injury or illness.

PPE is the least effective method of controlling a risk. PPE should only be considered as a control measure when exposure to a risk cannot be minimized in another way, or used with other control measures as a final barrier between the worker and the hazard. PPE must be appropriate to the risk, kept in good working order, and be available.

The worker must use the PPE in accordance with information, training and instruction provided in relation to its use.

Environmental hazards

Environmental factors to be considered from a WHS perspective include dust, high or low temperatures, and sun exposure. Implement procedures need to be implemented to reduce the risk of injury or illness resulting from environmental hazards.

Some people could be at higher risk of harm, such as people new to the industry or the climatic conditions (e.g. backpackers from cold climate areas working in hot weather).

Zoonotic diseases (such as Q fever) are also considered an environmental hazard for people working with animals.

Workers need to be made aware of the risks and the preventative practices in place for possible zoonotic diseases.

Incident reporting

Under the WHS Act, any incident that results in the death, serious injury or serious illness of a person or that involves a

dangerous incident must be reported to WHSQ, if that incident resulted from the conduct of the business or undertaking. Definitions of 'serious' injuries or illnesses and 'dangerous' incidents, can be found on the Tools and Links page.

Records of notifiable incidents need to be kept for five years from the date WHSQ was notified of the incident.

Self-assessment – Workplace health and safety

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 4.1 WHS awareness				
Property owner/manager has limited understanding of legal responsibilities for the health and safety of workers, contractors and visitors or fails to meet them. <input type="checkbox"/>	Property owner/manager understands their legal responsibilities for the health and safety of workers, contractors and visitors and takes appropriate actions to meet their obligations. <input type="checkbox"/>		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
PB 4.2 Risk management				
No process of risk management has been undertaken for the workplace. No Safe Work Procedures have been developed. <input type="checkbox"/>	A risk management process is undertaken (in consultation with workers) for all activities in the workplace that pose a risk. Safe Work Procedures are developed and implemented. Risk management processes and safe work procedures are documented. <input type="checkbox"/>		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 4.3 Consultation				
Safety issues are not discussed between owners/managers and workers.	Regular discussion occurs between owners/managers and workers and contractors, to ensure a safe work environment is maintained. Consultation is documented when required by regulation and recorded.		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
PB 4.4 Training and supervision				
Safety training is not provided and/or workers are not made aware of safety issues. Limited supervision of safe work practices.	Workers are trained in safe work practices before commencing tasks. The workplace is supervised to verify procedures are being followed. Training meets requirements of WHS legislation and relevant codes of practice. Records are kept of training. Training and Safe Work Procedures are reviewed before different tasks are undertaken.		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
PB 4.5 Worker induction and records				
Inductions are not undertaken for new workers and contractors or not recorded. Critical worker details are not known.	Inductions are undertaken for all new workers and contractors before work commences and are recorded. Critical worker and contractor details are recorded in a confidential personnel file on engagement.		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 4.6 Visitor induction				
Visitor inductions are not undertaken or not recorded.	Inductions are undertaken for all workplace visitors and details recorded.		Industry standard	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	2.
				3.
PB 4.7 Emergency response plans				
No emergency procedures have been developed.	Emergency procedures appropriate to the property have been developed (in consultation with staff and family members), documented and are included in the induction procedure for new staff and contractors. Emergency procedures are reviewed annually and updated as required. Emergency procedures have been tested to check their effectiveness.		Industry standard	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	2.
				3.
PB 4.8 Remote or isolated work				
No effective system of communication with remote or isolated workers is used.	An effective system of communication is implemented for remote or isolated workers and the procedures are reviewed annually.		Industry standard	1.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	2.
				3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 4.9 Child safety				
Limited awareness of child safety issues and/or limited effort to provide for child safety.	A process of risk management for the safety of children has been conducted and hazards identified and controlled. All staff, family members and visitors are made aware of the risks. Clear rules regarding child safety have been developed and implemented.		Industry standard	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
PB 4.10 First Aid				
No first aid kit or the kit is not appropriate for the workplace risks. Suitably trained first aid people are not available. Accidents or incidents in the workplace are not recorded.	First aid equipment is appropriate for the injury risks at the workplace and available to all trained and/or accredited staff. Staff have appropriate first aid training for the property situation and work place risks. Accidents and injuries in the workplace and associated treatments are recorded.		Industry standard	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
PB 4.11 Personal Protective Equipment				
PPE is not available or is not well maintained. Staff are not trained in the use or maintenance of PPE and/or do not understand their duty of care to wear it.	The use of PPE is assessed and matched to the work conditions and task-specific requirements. The PPE is clean, well-maintained and available to all staff as required. Staff are trained in the use and maintenance of the PPE and understand their duty of care to wear it.		Industry standard	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 4.12 Environmental hazards				
Environmental hazards are not managed in the work place.	Environmental hazards are considered and processes are in place to manage the risk, e.g. work rotation or limiting the duration of exposure.		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
PB 4.13 Incident reporting				
Regulatory obligations for reporting incidents to WHSQ and WorkCover are not known and/or not met.	Regulatory obligations for reporting incidents to WHSQ and WorkCover are understood and reporting requirements met.		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			



Key area 5 – Chemical use and records

Chemicals used in grazing enterprises must be stored and used in a manner; that is safe for staff, stock and the environment, and complies with relevant legislation and regulations. Chemicals include pesticides, herbicides and animal health/veterinary products.

Product selection

Best practice product selection means identifying the product that is most effective while having the least impact on people and the environment. In some cases, external experts may need to be consulted, e.g. to choose chemicals to minimize the possibility of resistance developing in local parasites.

Alternative pest management strategies, such as rotational grazing and genetic selection, should be investigated and implemented whenever possible.

Chemical use

Chemicals must be used as per label directions. The product label lists the purposes for which the product is approved for use and provides directions for use. Products must only be used for their intended purposes, in accordance with the instructions on the label. Using products at lower or higher dilutions than the recommended rate can be ineffective, wasteful, and potentially contribute to decreased effectiveness over time.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be readily available for staff using the chemicals. These sheets list PPE required and important information regarding use and storage of the chemical. Withholding periods (WHP) and Export Slaughter Intervals (ESI) are generally noted on the label, but can also be found on the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines

Authority (APVMA) website. The WHP and ESI must be noted and adhered to for all agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

Staff training

Anyone involved in the storage and use of chemicals in the workplace must be properly trained. Training can be carried out by producers or by outside training providers. The training should be applicable to the workplace and the work being done and must take into account the needs of the workers, including literacy levels, work experience, and skills required for the job.

Training should be practical and include a hands-on component. All training should involve consultation between owners/managers and workers to identify and assess risks and develop and implement the risk management strategies. In smaller workplaces, consultation can consist of informal discussions, while more formal processes need to be in place for larger workplaces.

Chemical records

Records of chemical use are particularly important for protecting the reputation of Australia's livestock industries as a source of safe and traceable red meat. Good records allow claims made on the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) National Vendor Declaration and Waybill (LPA NVD/Waybill) to be substantiated.

It is particularly important to keep records of the use of all veterinary drugs and animal health products. These records are essential for ensuring treated animals are not sold before the ESIs and WHPs expire. ESIs are the period following treatment when animals are unsuitable for export processing.



WHPs are the period following treatment when animals are unsuitable for domestic processing.

These requirements also apply to the use of herbicides, recording where and when these chemicals have been used.

An inventory of all chemical products detailing, quantities on hand, batch numbers and expiry dates must be kept up to date and available at all times.

Chemical storage

Chemicals must be stored in a locked, secure area, in accordance with label directions, and in their original containers to prevent accidental misuse. SDS should be kept with the chemicals.

Ideally chemical storage areas are only used for storing chemicals, and are ventilated to reduce inhalation exposure and protect chemicals from heat damage. Signage

declaring the area as a chemical storage area should be displayed. Emergency procedures must be established and communicated to all staff. Appropriate PPE needs to be available where chemicals are stored and used.

When large amounts of chemicals are stored on the property, a dedicated storage facility should be built which should be bunded to contain accidental leaks and spillages.

Chemical and container disposal

Containers and unwanted chemicals must be disposed of according to manufacturer and/or label directions. Containers should be triple rinsed or thoroughly pressure rinsed. Unwanted or out-of-date chemicals should be disposed of via approved disposal sites or collection points. Detailed information on chemical disposal, preparation of empty containers for disposal, and disposal points is available from the drumMUSTER and ChemClear websites.

Self-assessment – Chemical use and records

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 5.1 Product selection				
Products are selected without always considering their suitability or alternative products and management practices. Chemical resistance is not considered. <input type="checkbox"/>	Product choice is made after considering alternative products, management practices and possible resistance issues. Wherever practical, the product with the lowest impact on people and the environment is used. <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry standard plus: Management strategies for reducing the amount of chemicals used to control disease; weed and pest threats are considered and implemented where appropriate.	Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/> Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1. 2. 3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 5.2 Chemical use				
Label instructions for chemicals are not adhered to. SDS are not read and followed, and required PPE is not used. Relevant Acts, Regulations and codes of practice are not known and/or adhered to. <input type="checkbox"/>	Chemicals are used as per label directions, with reference to SDS, and with required PPE. WHPs and ESIs for all agricultural and veterinary chemicals are known and adhered to. SDS are kept where the chemicals are stored. Relevant Acts, Regulations and codes of practice are known and adhered to. <input type="checkbox"/>		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
			Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	2. 3.
PB 5.3 Staff training				
Limited or no training program in place. Limited or no knowledge of required PPE, SDS or label directions for chemicals used. <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate training is conducted for all staff, covering the required PPE, SDS information and label directions for chemicals used. Chemical application training is undertaken following consultation and risk assessment. Staff training is recorded. <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry standard plus: All training is documented in a competency register. Workers have current certification from an accredited training provider in agricultural and veterinary chemical use. <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
			Above industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	2. 3.
PB 5.4 Chemical records				
No or limited chemical records are kept. <input type="checkbox"/>	Accurate and up-to-date records are kept in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations covering the safe use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. Chemical stocks are monitored and managed to ensure chemicals are used before their expiry dates. <input type="checkbox"/>		Industry standard <input type="checkbox"/>	1.
				2. 3.

Below industry standard	Industry standard	Above industry standard	Desired standard	Steps required to improve
PB 5.5 Storing chemicals				
<p>Chemicals are stored wherever it is convenient, no dedicated storage area.</p> <p>Chemicals are sometimes stored in containers other than the original containers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Chemicals are stored in a dedicated, secure area, in original containers and in accordance with label directions.</p> <p>SDS are available for chemicals kept on farm.</p> <p>Appropriate PPE is available.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard plus:</p> <p>Signage is in place. Emergency procedures are established.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Above industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
PB 5.6 Chemical and container disposal				
<p>Empty containers or unwanted chemicals are not disposed of in accordance with label instructions.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Empty chemical containers are disposed of in accordance with manufacturer or label directions e.g. drumMuster.</p> <p>Unwanted or out of date chemicals are disposed of via approved disposal sites or collection points e.g. ChemClear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>		<p>Industry standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>

References and further reading

Websites

Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
www.daff.qld.gov.au

FutureBeef www.futurebeef.com.au

Meat & Livestock Australia www.mla.com.au

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety www.aghealth.org.au

Australian Taxation Office www.ato.gov.au

Agforce www.agforceqld.org.au

Landcare www.landcare.org.au

ChemClear www.chemclear.com.au

drumMuster www.drummuster.com.au

Farmsafe Queensland www.farmsafe.com.au

Key area 1 – Business planning

Business EDGE Workshop www.babusiness.com.au/products/business-edge.html

Collected references on business management www.futurebeef.com.au/topics/business-management

Key area 3 – Human resources

Blueprint for maintaining mental health and wellbeing of people in rural industry www.aghealth.org.au/blueprint/blueprint

Australian Taxation Office information page for paying staff www.ato.gov.au/businesses/entry.aspx?menuid=42684

Key area 4 – Workplace health and safety (WHS)

Work health and safety laws – a guide for Queensland’s rural industry www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/rural-guide-whslaws.pdf

Legislation and Codes of Practice that apply to rural industry www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/rural/law/index.htm

Guide to using rural plant and equipment www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/rural/plant/index.htm

Guide to animal handling and hazards www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/rural/animal/index.htm

Workplace obligations www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/rural/obligations/index.htm

Compliance at a glance checklist – how do you rate? www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/zeroharm-compliance.pdf

Key area 5 – Chemical use and records

Guide to using rural chemicals www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/subjects/rural/chemicals/index.htm

Export slaughter intervals and chemical withholding periods www.apvma.gov.au/residues/esi_whp/

Livestock Production Assurance Program (LPA)

Risk assessment requirements and process www.mla.com.au/Meat-safety-and-traceability/Livestock-Production-Assurance/Requirements/Property-risk-assessments