

# FIRE RECOVERY CHECKLIST

## January/February 2020

*This straightforward checklist is to assist farmers after the damage of bushfire.*

### **FAMILY**

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of yourself, family and friends.
- Talk to family and friends about your experience.
- Start doing a few small, safe, jobs.
- Manage offers of assistance by recording names and phone numbers.
- Take plenty of photos and notes for insurance and future reference.
- Identify and isolate on-farm hazards such as:
  - fallen powerlines
  - asbestos contaminated sites
  - chemical storage areas
  - sheep dips and spray areas
  - lead and other heavy metal contaminated sites (batteries, treated pine etc.).

### **STOCK**

- Manage the health and welfare of your animals by:
  - reporting injured livestock to Agriculture Victoria on 1800 226 226 so that our animal health staff can assess the livestock
  - euthanise impacted livestock if you are confident that you can do so humanely, or contact Agriculture Victoria for assistance
  - continuing to monitor all stock on a regular basis
  - providing adequate food, water and shelter to remaining animals.

### **WATER SUPPLY**

- Protect your drinking water by diverting downpipes until an initial flush (of roof and pipes).
- Protect your dam water by:
  - skimming off floating debris and organic matter
  - trapping ash, debris, organic matter and sediment with closely spaced steel posts, ring-lock, netting or sediment traps

- fencing and reticulation
  - consolidating water supplies with pumps and pipe
  - removing floating debris off dams after rain
  - de-silting dams
- Remove stock if water becomes putrid, looks or smells rotten or has signs of blue green algae (paint-like scum on surface).

## FENCING

- Mark boundary fence alignment prior to clean-up.
- Seek assistance with clearing boundary fence lines.
- Fencing (con).
- Avoid replacing internal fencing immediately; fire offers an opportunity to re-think your farm layout.
- Consider:
  - patching up old fences wherever possible
  - a new fence alignment or gate location/s
  - replacing fencing along land class boundaries
  - requesting an aerial photo plan of your farm to review your farm layout
  - seeking advice from Agriculture Victoria staff on re-fencing and whole farm planning.

## PASTURES

- If possible, de-stock burnt and partly burnt paddocks.
- Seek potential for outside agistment.
- Consider building a stock containment area or sacrifice paddock to limit grazing to a defined area (to protect your pastures and soil).
- Perennial pastures and sub-clover are generally unaffected by fire, however fire can have a major impact on annual pastures.
- Consider setting up a watered pasture trial plot to assess plant survival.

## SOILS

- Seek assistance with rehabilitation of firebreaks and access tracks.
- Consider protecting loose, sandy soils from wind erosion with cover crop of oats, deep ripping or ridging.
- Upgrade track drainage to minimise erosion.

## NATIVE VEGETATION

- A significant proportion of native vegetation will survive a bushfire; give it time to recover.
- Watch for burning tree roots three to six months after the fire.

## WEEDS

- Contain weed spread by feeding stock in one location, such as a containment area.
- Closely monitor areas disturbed by firefighting or recovery activities.

## FLOODING

- Flooding can be a major issue following a bushfire.
- Protect your house and other facilities from flooding with earthen banks or sand bags.
- Install closely spaced steel posts upstream of culverts and stream crossings to trap debris.
- Regularly check your dam spillways and banks for damage.
- Regularly check erosion control structures for damage.

For more information call Agriculture Victoria on 136 186, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au) or contact your local fire recovery centre.

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