

## Carting in Stock Water for Drought Preparation

If you have experienced periods of drought as a farmer, then you will understand sometimes your only water source option left is to have water transported to your farm. As rainwater stops falling, dams dry up and groundwater stops being replenished either water is carted in or livestock die.

### Stock Water Requirements and Costs

Stock water requirements depend upon a number of factors such as the type of livestock, breed, lactation, temperatures and quality of pastures.

You will need to calculate your livestock water consumption needs. If you are contemplating buying water for your property you should carefully consider the amount you need as well as any added costs you could face.

For example, the cost of carted water in NSW is about \$13.50 per kilolitre (based on an 11,500 litre load costing \$155). While you may be eligible for a freight subsidy on transport costs, the overall cost of carting water is still extremely high.

When it comes to livestock such as cattle or sheep, buying subsidised water can add an extra 20-35 percent to the costs of full hand feeding. Proper planning for drought can allow you to calculate whether it is more worthwhile to sell off more animals rather than purchase the extra water required to maintain them.

Also note that carted water is best stored in a water storage tank rather than a dam – this keeps the water quality higher, and reduces loss due to seepage or evaporation.



Source: [Lake Hume, Tim J Keegan](#)

## Government Drought Relief Subsidies

The following state government schemes provide subsidies to property owners who need to transport water to their farms to sustain their livestock:

- [Queensland Drought Relief Assistance Scheme \(DRAS\)](#) – offers a 50% subsidy to cover transport of water for livestock
- [NSW Transport Assistance for Animal Welfare](#) – offers a 50% subsidy to cover water cartage for livestock (managed by the Rural Assistance Authority (RAA))

## Is Carting Water Due to Poor Planning?

There is a thought that if a property runs out of water, that the farmer is to blame for not having an adequate water plan in place or choosing the wrong land. Little sympathy is shown because the farmer should have known better. So if they need to pay more for having water trucked in, then that is seen as mismanagement on their part.

The reasons for running out of water can be quite varied and be due to the harsh Australian climate, water trading laws or unforeseen circumstances that making planning difficult. In fact, carting in water can be part of wise water planning. Proactively keeping track of weather conditions means you can plan to purchase water ahead of time to be carted in and stored in [stock water tanks](#) before the worst of a drought hits.

This was seen in March 2015, when [The Weekly Times](#) reported that farmers throughout South Australia, western Victoria, the west coast of Tasmania, and parts of southern NSW faced severe rain shortages. Changes to water trading rules in the [Murray-Darling Basin Plan](#) in 2014 meant farmers had to plan for water to be carted in. This was required throughout Victoria, especially in the Wedderburn-Inglewood district, for household use and to keep stock alive.

Good farm water planning can mean carting in water. Of course it is better to have a local water supply such as rainwater, dam water or bores – but good planning sometimes means having the foresight to plan for carting water in due to changing weather or government regulations.

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