



# Flood damage repair works start

**Relief teams from Agriculture Victoria are gathering impact reports and providing support to farmers as they begin to repair the damage following the recent East Gippsland floods.**

At least 150 farms have been affected by flooding in the catchments of the Avon, Mitchell, Tambo, Buchan and Snowy rivers. Major losses recorded so far include about 100 stock, at least 20 kilometres of boundary fencing, about 40 tonnes of stored fodder, 40 hectares of crop, two farm sheds and four irrigation pumps.

Catchment Management Authority field teams have assessed the damage to river frontages, frontage fencing and drains and Agriculture Victoria staff are now gathering more extensive information about damage and losses on farms.

Agriculture Victoria incident controller at Bairnsdale, Dr Dianne Phillips, said the flooding had the potential to cause longer term damage to pastures and the health of stock in affected areas.

"We are contacting affected landholders to assist in us in assessing the effects of the floods and to see if landholders need assistance with recovery," Dr Phillips said.

Landholders who have suffered significant losses or need advice on animal welfare and feeding, pasture management and soil erosion, but have not been contacted directly by Agriculture Victoria, are encouraged to ring the Customer Service Centre.



**At least 150 East Gippsland farms were impacted by flood earlier this month. (PS)**

## FLOOD CHALLENGES

Floods can bring a range of animal health problems, from food shortage and plant toxicity to dehydration, infection and disease.

Pasture and crops damaged by flooding may leave farmers needing to find alternative feed for stock over the coming months.

In particular, mould growth on water damaged feed reduces the nutritive value and palatability of both standing and stored feed, with some mould toxicity causing

death or longer-term health problems such as liver damage.

Surprisingly, dehydration can be a problem with stock often refusing to drink flood water if it is polluted or tastes different from their normal supply. It's important to watch your stock carefully to ensure they are drinking adequately.

While rain and floods may fill dams, flood waters carry silt and organic material, so it is important to be on the look-out for algal blooms on polluted dams

and waterways.

Foot problems are another concern with all stock susceptible after long periods of immersion in water or standing on wet, muddy ground.

Abscesses and other foot problems will be common where an animal's feet are constantly wet. The very wet season is also likely to produce larger than usual insect populations with flystrike likely to occur in sheep after wetting, especially if they have a thick wool cover.

Even when the fleece dries out, problems such as fleece rot and lumpy wool would continue to attract flies while diseases spread by flies, such as pinkeye, could become more widespread.

Most bacteria thrive and multiply in a moist environment, so bacterial diseases could become a real problem after heavy rain.

Pneumonia and diarrhoea are also likely to occur in flood-affected stock due to stress and exposure to prolonged cold.

Mastitis is a problem for cross-bred ewes grazing tall grass as a result of the combined effects of udder engorgement due to lush feed, udder abrasions and flies.

Vaccinating with 5-in-1 after floods is important as the sudden flush of feed make stock susceptible to pulpy kidney.

Bloat in cattle or redgut in sheep could occur, especially on lush clover or lucerne.

Worm larvae survive much longer on pasture in moist conditions and parasite burdens may increase rapidly.