



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Exemptions available for organic drought cattle

Australian Certified Organic cattle producers from Queensland's drought declared areas are eligible for exemptions to the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*.

Exemptions allow producers to source conventional supplies of supplementary feed - that don't contain prohibited substances - without losing their organic status for the domestic market.

"We recognise that drought places enormous stress on organic producers who are trying to keep feed and adequate nutrition up to their stock," says Chief Certification Officer Michael Baker.

"Australian Certified Organic doesn't take derogations from the Standard lightly but when animal welfare is at risk we will consider applications for exemptions."

With over half of Queensland declared drought affected, sourcing certified organic feed can be difficult and expensive.

Queensland certified organic cattle producer Peter Mayne is supplementary feeding for the first time in five years due to dry conditions.

He says, "Because there is limited organic feed available there can be a long waiting time and the costs are very high. Being able to use conventional feed at times of hardship would be really helpful."

Certified organic graziers can also apply for exemption to agist their stock elsewhere until conditions improve.

Michael says, "During times of extreme climatic conditions livestock may be agisted on alternative pasture; however under the requirements of the *Australian Certified Organic Standard* livestock must be bought back onto organic land for at least six months before regaining organic status. Meat might also be required to be tested."

Graziers who export meat are warned that exemptions could affect their export certifications.

"Many livestock operations in Queensland also hold certification for export markets such as the United State's NOP. The exemption is not available for some of these markets," says Michael.

Drought declared areas [daff.qld.gov.au/environment/drought/drought-declarations-and-revocations](http://daff.qld.gov.au/environment/drought/drought-declarations-and-revocations)

Contact Australian Certified Organic on (07) 3350 5706 for information or to apply for exemption.

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