

Sunday, February 8, 2009

## DPI ON STANDBY TO HELP WITH FIRE AFFECTED LIVESTOCK

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is mobilising teams to assess the impact on livestock of the weekend fires, the Executive Director of Farm Services Victoria, Ron Harris, said today

The teams will comprise government animal health officers, people from other agencies and private veterinarians,

“Teams have already begun assessing the damage in the Horsham area and the west of the state,” Mr Harris said.

“As soon as it is safe to do so we will send in teams to all the other fire-affected areas and to make contact with affected farmers over the next few days.

“We will also be undertaking an assessment of other agricultural losses and are working with the Victorian Farmers Federation to arrange emergency fodder.

“Anyone wishing to donate fodder should call the VFF on 1300 882 833 from tomorrow or email [www.vff.org.au](http://www.vff.org.au)

“If farmers need urgent assistance in assessing burnt livestock they should register their needs by calling the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

“These farms can be visited when it is considered safe to enter the areas but, if access is limited, farmers may need to use their own resources or local networks to prevent unnecessary suffering.”

Senior DPI veterinarian and Manager of Animal Health Field Services, Lloyd Klumpp says farmers have three major options.

- **Destroy immediately** – if the animal is down, unable to walk, has excessive burns, swelling of limbs or difficulty breathing.
- **Keep and nurse** – if the animal is mobile and alert or has burns to less than ten per cent of its body. These animals will need shade, water, feed, daily inspection and veterinary advice and treatment. They will also need constant reassessment.
- **No apparent damage** – Livestock will still need shade water and feed and they will also need to be reassessed.

“For livestock at risk of impending fire it should, where possible, be moved to safer areas such as recently cultivated paddocks, bared-out or irrigated paddocks or stockyards with bare or ploughed surrounds,” Mr Klumpp said

“People should remove halters, fly-veils and anything else that can burn the animals, they should not be let out onto public roads.”

Any injured wildlife should be reported to Help for Wildlife on 0417 380 687 or Wildlife Victoria on 0500 540 000.

**Media contact: Alan Everett 9658 4092**