



Industry Regulation fact sheet

Cattle feedlot

This fact sheet provides guidance on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation’s (DWER) administration of licences and works approvals for cattle feedlots.

Any premises where an activity listed in Schedule 1 of the [Environmental Protection Regulations 1987](#) (EP Regulations) is carried out at, or above, the specified production or design capacity are prescribed premises and regulated by DWER under Part V of the [Environmental Protection Act 1986](#) (EP Act).

Prescribed premises require a works approval for construction and either a licence or a registration to operate.

Cattle feedlots are described in Categories 1 and 68 of the EP Regulations:

Categories 1 and 68: Cattle feedlot

Description of category	Production or design capacity
Category 1	
Cattle feedlot: Premises on which the watering and feeding of cattle occurs, being premises – (a) situated less than 100 metres from a watercourse, and (b) on which the number of cattle per hectare exceeds 50.	500 animals or more
Category 68	
Cattle feedlot: Premises on which the watering and feeding of cattle occurs, being premises – (a) situated 100 metres or more from a watercourse; and (b) on which the number of cattle per hectare exceeds 50.	500 animals or more

Application

Interpretation

Cattle feedlots are operations where cattle are confined, fed and watered for the purposes of beef production.



In determining whether Category 1 or 68 applies, DWER:

- uses the definition of a watercourse in the [Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914](#);
- calculates the distance to a watercourse from the boundary of the cattle feedlot, not from the premises cadastral boundary; and
- calculates the stocking density based on the feedlot area and the minimum space requirement for each animal, as recommended in the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Cattle (Primary Industries Standing Committee Report 85)*, unless another decision-making authority has stipulated a lower stocking density for the premises.

Production/design capacity

In determining the production or design capacity, DWER considers the maximum number of cattle within the premises at any one time.

Environmental risk

Cattle feedlots involve a risk of causing pollution or environmental harm unless prescribed premises are appropriately regulated and managed. The EP Act sets out a range of offences that specifically relate to occupiers of prescribed premises, in addition to general offences relating to pollution and environmental harm. For further information on these offences, refer to DWER's *Industry Regulation Guide to Licensing* and the EP Act.

Emissions and discharges from cattle feedlots typically include:

- odour;
- solid and liquid wastes (for example manure and carcasses);
- potentially contaminated stormwater;
- noise; and
- dust (for example, from the movement of vehicles or animals).

Assessment

DWER applies a risk-based approach to its regulatory functions under the EP Act. DWER's publications [Guidance statement: Decision-making](#) and [Guidance statement: Risk assessments](#), detail the approach taken by DWER in assessing applications for works approvals and licences under Part V of the EP Act.

DWER considers the [National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia](#) (Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012), and the [National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice](#) (Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012) as the most appropriate industry guidelines to inform its assessment of works approval and licence applications for cattle feedlots.

In assessing applications for works approvals and licences, DWER will assess actual or predicted emissions and discharges from the primary cattle feedlot activity, including any directly related activities that give rise to emissions and discharges, including:

- handling yards;
- feed mill and feed storage facilities;
- controlled drainage areas, including drains and ponds;
- waste treatment and storage areas;
- wastewater irrigation and solid waste application areas; and



- stock and vehicle washdown facilities.

DWER will use Standard Cattle Units (SCU) as defined in the *National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice*, for the assessment of odour and liquid and solid wastes. DWER will also consult with Local Government Authorities and the Department of Health about approvals for the treatment and disposal/irrigation of liquid waste.

Where a prescribed premises has been assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority as a 'significant proposal' and is subject to a Ministerial Statement granted under Part IV of the EP Act, the conditions of a works approval or licence granted under Part V must not be contrary to the conditions of the Ministerial Statement.

More Information

For further information please contact DWER Regulatory Services (Environment) on 6364 7000.

This document is available in alternative formats and other languages on request.

Applicants can seek more specific guidance on environmental guidelines for cattle feedlots from publications including:

- [National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia \(Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012\)](#)
- [National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice \(Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012\)](#).

Additional publications regarding DWER's assessment of licence and works approval applications are available at www.der.wa.gov.au/our-work/licences-and-works-approvals, or can be requested by phone on the above number.

Legislation

This document is provided for guidance only. It should not be relied upon to address every aspect of the relevant legislation. Please refer to the State Law Publisher (SLP) for copies of the relevant legislation, available electronically from the SLP website at www.slp.wa.gov.au.

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