

****ASK THE TAFE TEAM****

With Rural Studies Teacher, Ron Trace

19 May, 2016

Question: *Should I destock my property or supplementary feed my cattle?*

Answer: This is always a tough question and requires a lot of thought before any decision can be made. Things you need to consider are.

- 1) Long term weather predictions
- 2) Availability of supplement
- 3) Cost
- 4) Have you got the capital to get back into cattle when the weather does break and prices rise?
- 5) Buying cattle that you consider to be of the same quality as the cattle you sold
- 6) The long term impact of over grazing on the environment like erosion causing valuable top soil loss.
- 7) The impact of stress on relationships, health and your wellbeing.

If you do decide to start destocking, consider culling the older cattle first as part of the seasonal program as they will be the first to feel the effects of your deteriorating pasture. Be in tune with the market to get the best returns to enable you have capital to re-invest. Look at keeping a core herd that you feel can be managed without the need of extensive, costly feeding.

In my role as a TAFE Queensland South West teacher I visit a number of farms in Queensland and just recently visited two properties in need of drought breaking rain. One has decided to cull heavily, and the other has made a decision to use supplement feed and hope for a break in the season. Only time will tell who has made the right decision, but at this stage it is becoming clear to me that the property owner that has cut the numbers has had a less negative environmental impact than the second. Also, after making this tough decision the family seems to be happier and less stressed.

For more information about TAFE Queensland South West's rural offerings please call 1300 914 754 or visit www.tafesouthwest.edu.au.

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