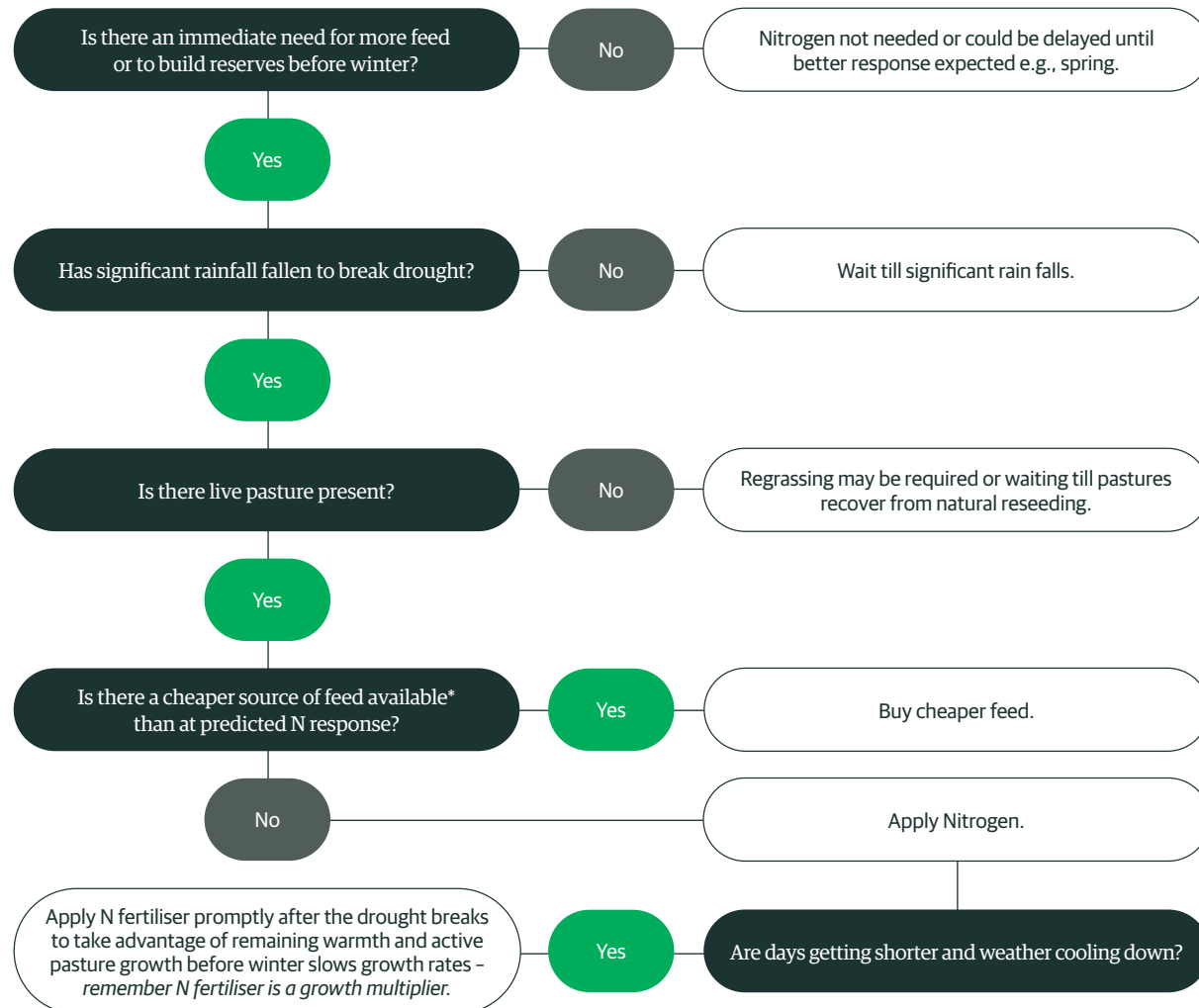


Guide to Nitrogen application post drought

Every farm and situation is different, and you know your own situation best. Consider this decision tree a starting point - adjust it to fit your farm's unique needs.

Should I apply Nitrogen fertiliser after a drought?



*Consider quality of feed, cost of feeding out and utilisation.

What rates should I apply?

The rate of N fertiliser to use depends on how much extra feed you need and the expected pasture response.

- Typical rates are 25-30 kg N/ha applied across a suitable area.
- If more feed is required, rates up to 60 kg N/ha can be used in good growth conditions, or 40 kg N/ha in less favourable conditions.
- In general it is best to use lower rates on larger areas rather than the reverse.

How do I get the most out of my response?

Prioritise applying to areas that are recovering well.

Pastures affected by drought generally fall into three categories:

- **Slowed Growth:** Pastures that are still alive but growing slowly during the drought. These pastures will recover quickly, often greening up within a few days of rainfall. Nitrogen fertiliser can be applied within days of the rain break.
- **Dormant:** The above-ground parts have died back, but buds at ground level have survived. These pastures typically green up within 1-2 weeks. Nitrogen can be applied, ideally within a couple of weeks after the drought breaks.
- **Dead:** Most plants have died and recovery will rely on seed or regressing. Applying N to these areas is less effective.

Ideally it is best to apply N fertiliser to those paddocks with some cover (i.e., 1200 kg DM/ha or better) as leaf grows leaf, although this may not always be possible and it is better to apply the N and accept a lower response than not to apply it at all. Once there is fresh green leaf, a growth response can be expected.

Once the N has been applied, paddocks ideally should be spelled for four to six weeks. This will give the plants time to grow in response to the fertiliser.

We're here to help

0800 100 123

customer.centre@ravensdown.co.nz or contact your agri manager


ravensdown