



## Environmental regulation fact sheet

# Cattle feedlot

Guidance on licences and construction work approvals administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is provided in this fact sheet.

The Department regulates cattle feedlots under Part V of the [Environmental Protection Act 1986](#) (EP Act). Sites 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 which require a works approval for construction and either a licence or a registration to operate.

Categories 1 and 68 of the EP Regulations describe feedlots as prescribed premises:

### Categories 1 and 68: Cattle feedlot

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

## Application

Any premises where 500 or more cattle are watered and fed in an intensive setting may be considered a cattle feedlot, regardless of the purpose for holding the cattle or the duration. This is because the activities result in emissions and accumulation and concentration of significant volumes of waste that require appropriate management to prevent unacceptable environmental, amenity and public health impacts.

The Department considers an intensive setting to mean the cattle are confined (such as in sheds, barns, outdoor pens or laneways) for feeding and watering at a stocking rate where the landscape can't assimilate the nutrients deposited from manure and spent bedding.

For Category 1 and 68, this is when 500 or more cattle are held at a stocking rate that exceeds 50 cattle per hectare. Categories 1 and 68 do not exclusively apply to cattle feedlots for beef production. For example, the introduction of housing or feeding infrastructure for dairy cows such as free stall barns, dairy dry lots, loose housing barns and feed pads at some dairy farms may fit the description of Category 1 or 68 and require



licensing under Part V of the EP Act. In deciding whether Category 1 or 68 applies, the Department:

- uses the definition of a watercourse in the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*
- calculates the distance to a watercourse from the activity boundary and any waste (solid or liquid) application areas, not from the premises cadastral boundary. More information on defining the activity boundary is in Appendix 3 of [Guideline: Odour emissions](#).
- calculates the stocking density based on the containment area and 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.



## Environmental risk

Prescribed premises under Category 1 and 68 may cause pollution or environmental harm unless they are appropriately regulated and managed. The EP Act sets out a range of offences relating to occupiers of

prescribed premises in addition to general offences relating to pollution and environmental harm. For further information on these offences, refer to [Guideline: 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, spent bedding and carcasses)
- potentially contaminated stormwater
- noise
- dust (for example, from the movement of vehicles or animals).

## Assessment

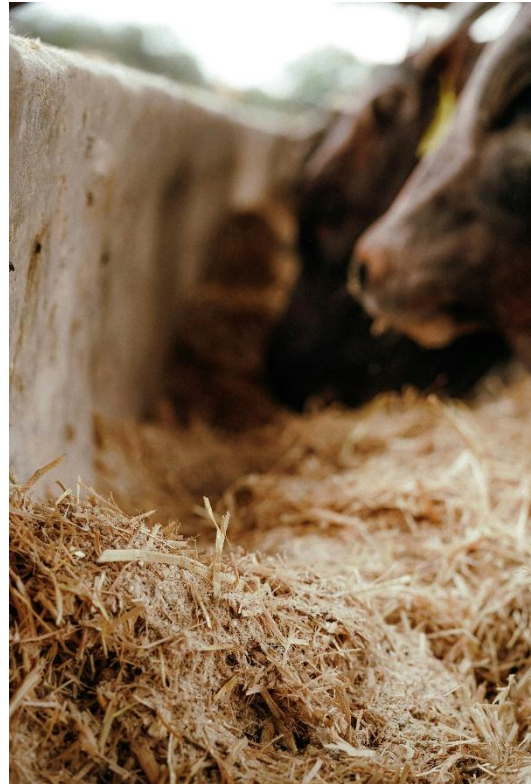
The Department applies a risk-based approach to its regulatory functions under the EP Act and details on the assessment of applications for works approvals and licences can be found in [Guideline: Decision making](#) and [Guideline: Risk assessments](#). The main industry guides used to inform the assessment of applications for cattle feedlots are [National Guidelines for Beef Cattle Feedlots in Australia](#) (Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012) and [National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice](#) (Meat and Livestock Australia, June 2012). However, the [National Guidelines for Dairy Feedpads and Contained Housing](#) (Dairy



Australia and Agriculture Victoria, 2024) may more appropriately inform assessment of applications for cattle feedlots relating to a dairy farm.

In assessing an application, the Department will consider the actual or predicted emissions and discharges from the primary cattle containment and feeding activity, including any directly related activities that give rise to emissions and discharges such as:

- handling yards
- feed mills and feed storage facilities
- controlled drainage areas, including drains and ponds
- waste treatment/composting and storage areas
- wastewater irrigation and solid waste application areas
- stock and vehicle washdown facilities
- carcass burial pits.



Standard Cattle Units (SCU) as defined in the *National Beef Cattle Feedlot Environmental Code of Practice* are used for the assessment of odour and liquid and solid wastes. The Department will also consult with local government authorities and the Department of Health about approvals for the treatment and disposal or irrigation of liquid and solid 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

Contact Environmental Regulation on 6364 7000 or [info@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@dwer.wa.gov.au) for more details. This document is available in alternative formats and languages on request. Other industry regulation publications are available at [DWER Regulatory documents](#).

### Legislation

This document is provided for guidance only. It should not be relied on to address every aspect of the relevant legislation. Please refer to [legislation.wa.gov.au](http://legislation.wa.gov.au) for electronic copies of the relevant legislation.

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