

KELLEHERS AUSTRALIA

2018 Planning Reforms to Agriculture

Newsflash

In June 2018, the Victorian Government announced new planning changes that seek to provide clearer land use definitions and risk-based planning controls for various agricultural activities. The reforms will come into operation when gazetted in September 2018.

The new land use term *animal production* will be included and apply to keeping or breeding of farm animals for the production of livestock, eggs, fibre, meat, milk or other animal products. Only farm animals kept or bred for production purposes are included (i.e. not animal keeping or training). These include chickens, beef cattle, dairy cattle, pigs, sheep, rabbits, camels, buffalos, and goats.

The current land use term *extensive animal husbandry* will be removed. This is defined as land used to keep or breed farm animals, including birds, at an intensity where the animals' main food source is obtained by grazing, browsing, or foraging on plants grown on the land. The term includes emergency and supplementary feeding, as well as incidental penning and housing of animals.

The new land use term *grazing animal production* will apply where the animals' food is obtained by directly grazing, browsing or foraging plants growing on land. This term applies to farms where grazing is a key component of the farming system. This term will include:

- *Emergency feeding*: feeding animals when an emergency event (e.g. flood or bushfire) restricts or prevents the animals from grazing, browsing or foraging plants grown on the land.
- *Seasonal feeding*: Feeding animals for no more than 6 months within any 12 month period when season conditions, including drought, restrict or prevent the animals from feeding on plants grown on the land.
- *Supplementary feeding*: routinely feeding animals to supplement the food the animals obtain by feeding directly on the land.

Therefore, if there is little intention for the animals to meaningfully obtain food directly from the plants grown on the land, the use would likely be *intensive animal production*.

The existing land use term *Intensive animal production* will be amended to apply where the animals' food is imported from outside the immediate building, enclosure, paddock or pen. It does not include an abattoir, sale yard or grazing animal production or a pig or poultry farm. A new definition of *intensive dairy farm* will apply to farms where dairy cattle are confined in an intensive housing system and/or feed 100% imported feed. This changes the meaning from the current use of the term so that it does not rest on the requirement of importing 'most food' from outside the enclosures as difficulties arose in determining whether 'most food' was a 50% rule, and what time frame applies.

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Cattle feedlot applies to feedlots described in the *Victorian Code for Cattle Feedlots (1995)*. All other intensive beef cattle systems where the food is imported falls within the term *intensive animal production*.

Various changes to Victorian zones now reflect the new approach. The table below summarises the permit requirements. Section 1 is 'as of right' uses. Section 2 are uses requiring a permit. Section 1* / 2* is subject to conditions being met. Section 3 uses are prohibited.

ZONE	Agriculture	Animal Production	Grazing Animal Production	Intensive Animal Production	Cattle Feedlot)	Pig Farm	Poultry Hatchery	Poultry Farm	Broiler Farm
Farming	1	2	1	2	1*/2*	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2*
Rural Activity	1	2	1	2	1*/2*	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2
Green Wedge	1	2	1	2	2*	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2
Green Wedge A	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2*/3
Rural Conservation	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2*/3
Rural Living	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2*/3
Urban Floodway	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Urban Growth	1	2	1	3	3	2	2	1*/2*	1*/2*/3
Industrial	2	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Commercial	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Residential	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3

The Victorian Government has stated it will provide materials such as guidelines and Planning Practice Notes to facilitate decision-making. No specific date is given for their release.

Zac Galbally
13 August 2018

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