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Hell or High Water

The past 18 months has seen the Australian elements throw everything possible at our farmers. Drought, fire and floods have dominated the media since the beginning of 2019. Farming became synonymous with disaster.

20 million hectares of land under water following years of drought conditions and then 35 million hectares of land burnt. Record numbers of livestock were killed and infrastructure lost in a year like no other.

Very few, if any, of Australia's farmers can say that they weren't affected by one or all 3 of the recent disasters and the reality is, at some point during a farmer's life on the land in this country, they will battle them all.

Mr Charles Armstrong, Chairman of Farmsafe Australia, has experienced all three. "There is one thing that every farmer can do to prepare themselves in the event of drought, bushfire or flooding and that is to ensure that they take the time to prepare a disaster management and mitigation plan."

Unfortunately, no matter how well developed the plan is, Mother Nature will do as she pleases. "The plan will not prevent the drought or the bushfire or the flood from affecting your property, but it will reduce your losses."

Disaster management and mitigation plans will help farmers and their families identify risks, assess priority actions and follow a well thought out plan when the situation arises.

"It is impossible to assume how you will react when you are in the situation, so it is best to make all your critical decisions before the stress and the fear are involved" Mr Armstrong advises.

Some practical solutions that can be organised in advance are installing water tanker units on trucks at the beginning of bushfire seasons, doing routine checks and maintenance on pumps, installing fire breaks on your property and ensuring that evacuation plans are up to date. Training in First Aid and CPR is critical in the country but even more so in disaster situations.

"It is also important to make copies of all vital documentation and keep this file up to date and in an easy to grab location so that in the event that you need to evacuate your home, you are not without personal identification, insurance numbers and medical information" Mr Armstrong says.

Advice on how to prepare bushfire management plans can be found through the state emergency services webpages (such as the RFS or CFA sites) while Royal Life Saving Australia has informative resources on flood water safety.

Committed to keeping you safer on Australian Farms