

Thousands of cattle feared dead after drought-stricken Australia is hit by intense flooding



Stranded cows are seen surrounded by floodwater in Queensland, Australia February 5, 2019 in this still picture obtained from social media on February 8, 2019. (REUTERS)

Thousands of drought-stricken cattle are feared dead in Australia after a storm brought torrential downpours and intense flooding to parts of the country that had not seen much rain in years last week.

Up to 500,000 animals, worth more than \$200 million, are feared dead in Queensland, according to reports. One woman said she lost around 2,000 cattle because of the storms.

AUSTRALIA'S MOST POPULOUS STATE ENTIRELY IN DROUGHT

"I can provide for my family right now," Rachel Anderson told The Guardian. "But in six months' time or when the bank comes for their repayment, I don't know what I'm going to do, none of us know what we are going to do."

The mass deaths of the animals have farmers puzzled on what to do with the carcasses. Dead cattle are rotting in the same creek some use to wash clothes or brush their teeth, according to The Guardian.

Michael Guerin, the chief executive officer of AgForce, couldn't put an exact number on the losses but feared that up to 500,000 cattle were dead because of the floods. It might take years for farmers to recover from the losses, he said.

CROCODILES MAY TURN UP IN THE STREET, OTHER 'UNUSUAL PLACES', OFFICIALS WARN AMID AUSTRALIA FLOODS

"There is no doubt that this is a disaster of unprecedented proportion," he told The Guardian. "The speed and intensity of the unfolding tragedy makes it hard to believe that it's just a week since farmers' elation at receiving the first decent rains in five years turned to horror at the devastating and unprecedented flood that quickly followed."

Grazier Jacqueline Curley wrote in a Facebook post: "The scale of devastation here and throughout the North West is impossible to put into words.

"There are estimates of hundreds of thousands of domestic livestock having been lost so far during this disaster and it is impossible to put into numbers the impact on the regions native wildlife. In some of our paddocks we are facing a 95% loss and on average we are estimating approximately 50% losses over all of our families flood-affected properties."

Annastacia Palaszczuk, the Queensland premier, said: "People have gone through drought, they have come out of years and years of drought, and they have now gone smack-bang into a natural disaster the likes of which no one out there has seen before."

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