



Queensland emu farming Conditions of application for emu farm licence



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Wherever the words emu or emus appear those words shall mean the taxon known as *Dromaius novaehollandiae*.

It is important for prospective applicants to be aware that they can develop their emu farming enterprises in stages. Stage one may be the construction of a pen/pens with the required fencing to satisfy the stocking density of the current Draft Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Husbandry of Captive Bred Emus. Construction to this stage can be granted a conditional licence and is all that is required to commence the farming venture.

All applicants should, however, be aware that only properties containing a minimum of 50 emus for commercial purposes will be licensed. The Chief Inspector may, in special circumstances, allow a lesser number for a specific period on a licensed farm when emergencies such as natural disaster, floods, etc, are encountered.

For those people who wish to construct the basic facilities before purchasing birds, approval-in-principle will be given when the construction is satisfactory to handle the intended introductions.

Emus shall not be taken from the wild and it is an offence to move, keep or farm emus without a licence.

The owner or prospective owner of a property will have to make application for a licence, renewal or transfer of a licence to farm emus on that property.

The licence holder will be required to keep registered books demonstrating the breeding history of the birds in the flock and the disposal of eggs and skins.

Throughout the course of establishing an emu farm, a lot of new terminology will be encountered. It is important that applicants know the meaning and implication of these terms. The following definitions should be helpful in explaining some of these meanings.

Closed-cycle captive-breeding

- (i) Breeding is maintained without bringing emus from the wild.
- (ii) The emu farm is managed so as to reliably produce second generation offspring.
- (iii) The farm maintains a controlled environment which is managed in such a way to produce offspring and has a perimeter boundary to prevent the intended or unintended loss of emus, and includes facilities such as artificial housing, veterinary care, artificially supplied food and protection from predators.

Information contained in this publication is provided as general advice only. For application to specific circumstances, professional advice should be sought. The Department of Primary Industries, Queensland, has taken all reasonable steps to ensure the information in this publication is accurate at the time of publication. Readers should ensure that they make appropriate inquiries to determine whether new information is available on the particular subject matter.

Emu farm

An establishment which breeds emus in a closed-cycle captive-breeding situation for the production for sale of live emus and products such as skins, meat, feathers, oil, feet, egg shells, and so on.

F₁ birds

These are emus which are first generation birds resulting from the mating of wild parent emus in an emu farm.

Chief Inspector

The Chief Inspector is the person in charge of administering the requirements for emu farming in Queensland.

Farm emu

- (a) An emu which has been bred in captivity on a licensed emu farm.
- (b) An emu being brought into Queensland for the purposes of emu farming.

Owner

This is the actual owner of the property on which emus are to be farmed.

Prospective owner

A person who intends to purchase a property on which to farm emus.

Application for a licence

The application is to be made to the Chief Inspector of Stock and signed by the owner of the premises to which the application relates and shall be accompanied by:

- (a) the prescribed fee;
- (b) two copies of the plans; and
- (c) a statement setting out the intended nature extent and manner of carrying out operations at the existing or proposed premises.

Plans and drawings

The following plans shall be submitted in duplicate with an application for a proposed licence.

Site plan

Shall contain the location and description of all buildings, storage tanks, roadways, existing tree cover, drainage points, dams and the fall of the land.

Pen plan

Shall show the location of each proposed pen, yard or containment area, including handling facilities and isolation pens, and show the location of existing or proposed laneways, internal and external fences, gates, feeding and watering points.

Environmental buffer plan

Shall show the existing or proposed separation distance between -

- (i) the boundary of the premises;
- (ii) the nearest residence, business and occupied area, or area approved for residential subdivision;
- (iii) the nearest town;
- (iv) any watercourse within 1 km of the boundary fence; and
- (v) the existing tree cover on the premises.

Where a staged development is proposed -

- (i) a full development plan stating proposed time schedules.

Where the application relates to a proposed expansion not originally proposed, it is to be treated as a fresh application attracting a fresh application fee and the above documentation is required.

Character of plans

The plans required to be submitted shall -

- (a) be prepared in a professional manner (not necessarily by a draughtsperson);
- (b) be of a convenient size;
- (c) be drawn with sharp lines and printing and be capable of easy interpretation;
- (d) be drawn to scale and have printed thereon the scale used; and
- (e) show compass points where necessary.

Prior to any grant, renewal or transfer of a licence, an inspection of the emu farm site is to be carried out by an inspector to ensure compliance with the prescribed requirements concerning -

- (i) internal and external fencing;
- (ii) handling facilities;
- (iii) watering facilities; and
- (iv) general suitability of the site in relation to geographic, topographic and other required physical characteristics.

Duties with respect to fencing

The licence holder has a duty to erect and maintain the fencing as prescribed.

The prescribed fencing is to be as follows:

The area of a licensed emu farm, or that part of a licensed emu farm on which emus are farmed, shall be enclosed by a perimeter fence which shall -

- (a) be constructed -
 - (i) to a minimum height of 1.9 metres;
 - (ii) of -
 - A) line posts of pressure treated pine, hardwood, metal or such other material of adequate strength and durability, which line posts shall be placed at a minimum depth of 760 mm in the ground and at a maximum spacing of 10 metres between line posts;
 - B) of strainer posts of pressure treated pine or hardwood of a minimum diameter size of 200 mm or of metal or such other material of equivalent adequate size, strength and durability, which strainer posts shall be placed at a minimum depth of 900 mm in the ground; and
 - C) of chain mesh, welded mesh or such other wire of equivalent strength which mesh or other wire shall be properly strained and affixed to the line posts to the side of the fence; and
- (iii) in such a manner as shall prevent the movement of emus into or out of the licensed emu farm;

- (b) incorporate sufficient gates for the efficient operation of the licensed emu farm, which gates shall be -
- (i) constructed to the same height, of the same or similar material and in the same manner as that specified in paragraph (a); and
 - (ii) in the case of gates used for the ingress and egress of farm emus, no less than 2 metres in width.

Current code of practice stocking densities for captive bred emus

Juvenile (blackhead) emus - 12 weeks to 6 months

Young emus require protection from the extremes of hot or cold, wet and windy weather. At this age, emus can be kept in groups of up to 250 and should be housed initially in sheds at a maximum density of 2 per m² and should be provided with an outside run of at least 40 m² per chick. Older blackhead chicks should be reared entirely in open conditions.

Yearling emus - 6 to 18 months

Yearlings should be housed in open conditions and provided with at least 60 m²/yearling.

Mature emus

Free range

Emus older than 55 weeks of age which have been reared in separate yards until that age, should not be housed at a density of greater than 16 birds/hectare, that is 625 m² per bird.

Breeding pairs

Where emus are kept as breeding pairs under optimal conditions, each pair should be provided with a minimum area of 20 m x 20 m which should be securely fenced. This applies to well-drained, high rainfall areas with plenty of vegetation to provide protection and to obscure the birds' view of adjoining pens. These dimensions should be increased where there is little vegetation, and in low rainfall areas. A pen size of 50 m x 50 m has been found to be satisfactory for breeding pairs.

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