# Transcript of Ellen’s story

Shot of parchment background with text Ellen’s story.

Dry, dusty paddock with no grass, scattered trees.

Ellen:

My grandfather and uncle Jeffrey and my aunt Sue on properties four hours north of Brisbane at a place called Coalstoun Lakes.

Map detail of Queensland showing Brisbane and Maryborough on coast and Coalstoun lakes located inland.

Ellen:

They have not had any decent rain since January 2013.

Dry, dusty paddock with no grass, scattered trees.

Bare earth in hilly paddock, rainwater tank high on a hill, scattered trees.

Ellen:

Currently we are experiencing the worst drought that my grandfather has ever seen and he's almost 86.

Skinny cattle eating scattered hay.

Ellen:

There’s now no grass for the animals to eat and the water is disappearing. All the cattle that could be sold have been sold. The rest we are trying to keep alive by feeding.

My family have been feeding hay daily since July. The cattle also receive a molasses and mineral mix.

Dry hillside and paddock with no grass. Farm ute with girl sitting in driver’s seat.

Ellen:

Drought is difficult to define. The best definition is a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall leading to extensive losses of crops, pasture and therefore animals.

During a drought there is no rainfall for the grass and no rainfall to fill the dams. Without water the cattle will die.

Hollow in ground with very shallow water at the bottom.

Ellen:

This dam has run out of water. The cattle can get stuck in the dam mud and can die.

Mini caterpillar machine lifting large water tank.

Ellen:

To feed the water to the cattle during the drought we sometimes use bore water.

Tractor loaded with water tank driving up hill.

Ellen:

Here we are placing a tank on the hill.

Cattle drinking from trough.

Ellen:

We pump underground bore water up to the tank which feeds down to a trough for the cattle.

Boy lifting up weak calf. Two children hand feeding calf in stock yard.

Ellen:

A common thing that happens during a drought is the cattle have no food. If a mother cow dies and it still has a calf that is still suckling, the calf is left without food.

This is Fergus. His mum had died and we found him with his head down looking very unwell.

We are hand feeding him a special powdered calf milk mixture.

You can see how weak he is as he can’t stand and keeps falling.

Calf falls to ground.

Ellen:

Unfortunately after days of hand feeding, Fergus died.

Black screen with text Fergus died. Drought is deadly.

Man operating tractor in very dry paddock. Cattle in the background.

Ellen:

This is my 86 year old grandad, Raymond, putting out hay with my help.

Girl standing on trailer with large round hay bales. Tractor unloads bales.

Girl pulls mesh off hay bale.

Ellen:

I am taking off the plastic mesh from this hay. You can see how dry and dusty it is. There is no grass on the ground.

Hay is expensive.

Barn with stacks of hay bales.

Ellen:

We are feeding eight of these large bales a day. This costs $300 a day.

Tractor spreading hay across paddock. Cattle start feeding.

Ellen:

Drought is expensive. It is emotionally and energy draining, with dying cattle and calves.

It seems like forever until it will rain.

Tractor driving across paddock. Cattle moving towards hay on ground.

Ellen:

Please pray for rain for us and our farmers.

Man singing:

The water is low, but the spirit is high. The earth has been parched by the sun and the sky. And all that we need is for God just to cry, tears from the sky. Another dust storm sweeps on by. As her daughter tugs at her dress and asks her why do the city gardens glisten, when the gold this land is missing. Her mother starts to speak, her mouth is dry. The water is low, but the spirit is high. The earth has been parched by the sun and the sky. All that we need is for God just to cry, tears from the sky. And some folk they won’t listen, as in their pools they glisten, and the country, they stare into the sky. The water is low, but the spirit is high. The earth has been parched by the sun and the sky. And all that we need is for God just to cry, tears from the sky.

Images of dry, dusty paddocks. Teenagers by farm motorbike. Dry paddocks. Skinny cattle eating hay. Girl driving ute in paddock. Ellen’s family on the farm, tractor driving with hay bale, brother George, cousin Thomas, Ellen with puppy, granddad Raymond, family working on farm, farm dog LuLu, bore water windmill, tractor driving across paddock, tractor loading hay bales onto trailer, skinny calves eating hay, two farm puppies Tex and LuLu.

Text on black background:

Sometimes a hug will help, but what we need is, Tears from the sky. Please pray for rain for our farmers. An Ellen Gett documentary. Age 10.