



# Winter Pasture Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2012

## Keyneton Pasture Walk

At the recent Winter Pasture Project's Keyneton Pasture Walk the group visited Darren Fiebiger's dairy property and observed a perennial phalaris, cocksfoot, ryegrass and clover paddock which had been sprayed using ProGibb. This is a product containing Gibberellic Acid which is developed to elongate the cells, and therefore leaves within the grass plants. Darren sprayed at the end of June and believes he received double the winter growth on this paddock.

In comparison, Joe and Graham Keynes's annual ryegrass pasture paddock across the road was sprayed using the ProGibb product and there was very negligible results. This could indicate that the product produces varied results depending on the pasture species.

The group also visited Hans Graetz's property and observed a lucerne, plantain and subclover pasture which was dry sown in May. As a result of the late season the lucerne germination was low however the plantain was reasonably good. The group also observed a well established lucerne stand that was planted in October 2010. In the first year of utilising this lucerne, Hans managed to increase the live weight of his rams by 15kgs as a result of having green feed through summer.

## Upcoming Events

### Winter Pasture Project

- Grazing Management- Moculta  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 8.30am
- Step Up Soils Wkshop- Keyneton  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2.30pm
- Pasture 'Walk' Regional Bus Trip  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October

### Other Events

- Dung Beetle Workshop- Spalding  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm  
[judith@sommervillepartners.com.au](mailto:judith@sommervillepartners.com.au)

## Dairy Discussion Group's Pasture Walk

Maximising pasture quality to improve production was demonstrated at the recent Dairy Discussion Group's Pasture Walk at Nick Masterman's property at Auburn.

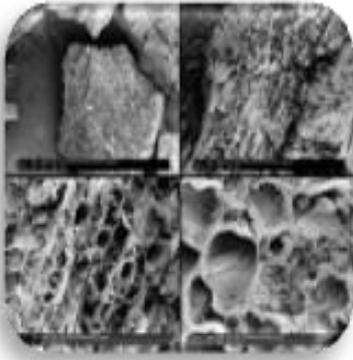
The group observed an early producing Munga barley and annual ryegrass pasture which was producing 3.5t of Dry Matter/Ha, however the quality was rapidly declining (the barley plants were already beginning to move to reproductive stage) as a result of underutilisation of the pasture.

It was discussed that cutting the crop for silage would ensure that the pasture quality would be utilised. This would also allow the ryegrass to grow, improving the available length of grazing for the pasture and therefore maximising the inputs placed on the paddock.

Nick was also worried that if he grazed too hard he would run out of feed so importance of feed budgeting was discussed and demonstrated. This also helps to match the cow's production requirements with the pasture growth. To further target the cow's nutritional requirements Nick runs a split herd with an early and a late lactating mob, saving the higher quality feed for the early mob.



# Step Up Soil Condition Workshop



**Carbon: A module that provides a better understanding of soil organic matter.**

The first workshop for the Step Up Soil Condition Program was run in Keyneton with 22 participants registering to attend the next four workshops.

The aim of the program is to develop an Individual Carbon Action Plan. It focuses on the role of carbon and compost within our farming systems and helps to identify areas which are lacking and suggest ways of improving these deficiencies.

This will involve soil testing, using professional soil testing labs and also a range of 'do-it-yourself' tests which can help to measure soil compaction, water infiltration, pH and soil texture.

The Action Plans will help to drive the final workshops as they will identify the knowledge gaps within the group. The final workshops will focus on filling these gaps.

There is also the opportunity to link with other Step Up Soil Condition Grower Groups including the Barossa Viticulture Group who are exploring the role of carbon and composting within vineyards.

The program is funded through Caring for Our Country and Hortex.

## Individual Activity Plan Case Study- Michael Evans

At the beginning of the season the Winter Pasture Project encouraged producers to develop an Individual Activity Plan to observe and measure an aspect of pasture management to help improve the capacity of their pastures.

Michael Evans developed a plan to compare the differences between annual ryegrass species, Tetila and a 75% diploid/25% tetraploid ryegrass mix. The diploid mix is expected to provide feed further into the season than the Tetila. Michael over sowed both mixes into a perennial ryegrass pasture with urea however did not use a broadleaf herbicide. This occurred in early June, just after the 'break' in the season. The pastures have been grazed in a rotation with approximately the same grazing intensity. In the first week of August the Tetila measured 2160kg/DM/Ha and the diploid

mix measured 1960kg/DM/Ha. Measurements a month later, in early September, the Tetila was still producing 2,606kg/DM/Ha in comparison with the diploid mix 2,290kg/DM/Ha. In comparison with these results, Joe Keynes in Keyneton, trialed the same mixes. In August the Tetila was also producing more however in September the measurements showed the diploid mix was 2,400kg/DM/Ha and the Tetila was 2,300kg DM/Ha. This could indicate in the drier area Tetila is beginning to move into the reproductive stage earlier than the diploid.

Michael's property is also being used as the Sheep Connect 'Focus Farm' and the measurements are being correlated with a 'Pasture Watch' computer program using satellite imagery which estimates growth and expected carrying capacity.



**'Use it or lose it' - There was no difference between the growth inside and outside the pasture cages, even after a grazing. September - Tetila Paddock.**

## Sustainable Soil Focus Paddocks

The Winter Pasture Project was successful in receiving a State NRM Community Action Grant to develop six soil focus paddocks on dairy farms in the region.

This is building on a Dairy SA Soil Testing Project which the Barossa Mid North Dairy Discussion Group have been involved with.

The aim of the project is to look closer at what's happening in the soil in relation to different management techniques.

The paddocks will be spread across the Barossa region.

The Group have decided to look at

effluent water management, soil biology, alternative fertilisers in the form of chicken and cow manure and the difference in soil characteristics within an annual and perennial pasture.

One paddock will also focus on an unimproved paddock and developing a cost effective management plan to improve the soil and pasture production.

Pasture walks and field days will be held so that all producers across the region can be involved in the learning opportunities provided by these focus paddocks.

## Further Information

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