



Winter Pasture NRM Update

June/ July 2013

New BIGG Facilitator Appointed

After an extensive recruitment process the Advisory Committee are happy to announce that the new Facilitator/ Coordinator will be Brett Nietschke. Brett take over from Georgie who is about to go on maternity leave. He will undertake the role with the help of Sarah Weaver who is currently managing the Dairy Soils Project with the BIG Group. Brett operates a 270ha mixed farm at Koonunga focusing on wool, prime lamb and crop production. He has been back on the family farm since 2010 after working in mainly agricultural research roles for private industry, government and aid organisations. These included managing a national field trial program for Monsanto in Perth, working as a Research Agronomist for The University of Adelaide and trudging around rice paddies in Vietnam conducting trials to manage weeds in rice crops. Brett previously studied at Roseworthy and in 1998 completed a PhD in the management of herbicide resistant weeds in farming systems.

Brett already has a good understanding of BIGG having been the Koonunga Ag. Bureau representative on the projects advisory committee since its inception. He is currently undertaking the Lifetime Ewe Management course with the Nth Rhine Sheep Group and helps coordinate the Koonunga Lice Action Group. Brett is looking forward to meeting local producers and working with them to sustainably improve their enterprises

Upcoming Events

- **GSSA/MLA Pastures Update**
Clare– Thursday 25 July
[Further Info](#)
- **Feed Budgeting Workshop**
Barossa- Friday 2nd August
[Further Info](#)
- **Barossa Sustainable Soil Forum**
Barossa- Wednesday 21 August
[Contact – Sarah Weaver](#)

Koonunga Rappa Demonstration

Last year the Barossa Improved Grazing Group received funding from the Caring for Our Country Grant to run demonstration sites of the temporary electric fence system, the Rappa. The aim of the project is to facilitate rotational grazing which will increase grazing density and allow the pasture to recover, more diversity in pasture species, better animal production and retain groundcover.

Glen and Tracy Becker at Koonunga are currently using it to divide two 2ha paddocks. The paddocks were sown to barley in April to provide early feed for 10 weaner calves. Prior to grazing, the paddocks contained 3 tonnes of DM/Ha which would create a large amount of pasture wastage and under-utilisation if they had access to the entire area. Dividing the paddocks allows the Beckers to run a smaller mob of rams in conjunction with the weaner calf rotation.

This system and the benefits were demonstrated at the Koonunga Pasture Walk on Friday 12th July. The day included a grazing in vineyard demonstration, pasture capeweed control, lucerne pastures and grazing cereals discussion.

The Rappa is available to be rolled out across the district, please contact Brett Nietschke (details on page 2) if you are interested.



Rolling out the temporary electric fence at Koonunga to divide a paddock in half

Feed Budgeting Workshop



David Woodard, Georgie Keynes, Wes Seeliger and Damian Slade observing a ground measurement tool at last years Grazing Management Workshop

Feed Budgeting is an extremely important tool which involves assessing the pastures and livestock. A feed budget can be completed on a whole farm basis or an individual paddock basis depending on the information you require.

A feed budget can be used to plan grazing programs for an entire season or assist with short term grazing management decisions such as rationing dry feed over summer.

To complete a feed budget you must firstly define the grazing area, budget period and your target markets. Then, livestock requirements such as pasture intake, condition score and nutritional requirements must be compared with average food on offer, pasture quality, pasture growth rate, pasture species and ground cover targets.

A practical regional feed budgeting workshop will be run on Friday 2nd August to provide an opportunity to learn and refresh feed budgeting techniques and tools. This will involve a tour of participants paddocks to assess pasture and determine the current food on offer, ensure it is meeting livestock requirements and help plan feed requirements for the coming months. This will be achieved using simple pasture measurement tools and grazing and feed budgeting charts. The day will be facilitated by Daniel Schuppan from Landmark who ran a Grazing Management Workshop in Moculta in October last year. This day will provide follow up information to that session and provide the opportunity to observe growing pastures. For further information contact Brett Nietschke.

Exploring Methods to Improve Water Quality

In early June BIGG facilitated a regional tour with Environmental Protection Authority's Officers who are developing a Water Quality Plan for the Mount Lofty Ranges. This provided an opportunity for the Officers to learn about on-ground methods used to improve water quality. Chris Madigan and Jamie Pook from the AMLR NRM Board also attended. Wes Seeliger at Eden Valley began planting perennial pastures in the 1960s. Before being sown the soil was low in organic matter with poor structure causing erosion in large rainfall events. Since establishment he has seen a great reduction in erosion events as the soil is now held in place during heavy rainfall and helps to filter the water.

Perennial pastures also allows a rotational grazing system to be used so in areas where the watercourse is not fenced off, cattle have limited access, reducing the opportunity to foul the water. Creekline restoration sites were then visited at properties belonging to Joe Keynes and Ian Koch, both of which demonstrated the benefits of fencing off the watercourse to prevent stock access and allowing revegetation to re-establish. The benefits include the reduction in erosion, filtering of water prior to entering the watercourse and the encouragement of biodiversity. In both cases stock are still allowed access at strategic times to reduce the fire risk and provide grazing opportunities.



Restricting stock access to watercourses prevents erosion and helps to contribute to improving water quality

From the INBOX

CliMate- Website and App

CliMate is a suite of climate analysis tools delivered on the Web, iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch devices. CliMate allows you to interrogate climate records to ask questions relating to rainfall, temperature, radiation, and derived variables such as heat sums, soil water and soil nitrate, and well as El Nino Southern Oscillation status. Gives you a great look at how the season is progressing and possible future outlooks. [CliMate Website](#)

New LiceBoss Website Launched

LiceBoss contains the latest information on lice and management to prevent new infestations, detect infestations and eradicate infestations. [LiceBoss Website](#)

Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project on FACEBOOK

Don't forget to 'like' the Winter Pasture NRM Project to keep updated with latest news and events. Simply search 'Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project'.

Further Information

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