



Government of South Australia
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Natural Resources Management Board



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



The BIGG Bulletin

November 2014

BIGG's Native Grass Field Day



Producers learn about native grasses at the BIGG field day



Millie Nicholls examines a native plant on the BIGG field day at Keyneton

A field day hosted by the Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG) last week educated local producers on identification and management of native grasses and the role they play in native pasture production systems.

The event was held as part of a BIGG project investigating native pasture recovery following the 2014 Eden Valley bushfire, funded by Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges and Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin. The day was attended by 26 producers, stakeholders and natural resources officers.

BIGG technical facilitator and Keyneton landholder Georgie Keynes said the field day featured native grass expert Millie Nicholls who helped producers identify native grasses and make their own plant reference guides.

“The native pastures we observed have recovered very well after the fires, with a lot of regeneration occurring, however Millie showed us the importance of monitoring these pastures carefully to ensure they are not overgrazed and will continue to recover,” Ms Keynes said.

Key lessons learnt during the field day included the benefits of growing a variety of species, such as grasses and herbs, to provide a complete diet for livestock, and the critical nature of resting pastures to promote growth, recovery and species regeneration.

“Allowing periods of grazing and resting is particularly important following this year’s bushfire. At the field day, we learnt that destocking burnt pastures now, while the grasses are setting seed, is important for recovery,” Ms Keynes said.

In 2015, the project will continue monitoring pastures in areas burnt-out by the fire to assess recovery, with soil testing starting over the next two months and fertiliser trials in 2015.

To learn more about the native pastures project visit www.biggroup.org.au or contact BIGG communication officer Rebecca Barr on 0402 788 526.

Marginal to Mainstream

Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin (SAMDB) is seeking graziers interested in being involved in the Marginal to Mainstream project, to attend a workshop at Keyneton on November 27.

The project will be conducted in grazing country in the SAMDB region with the aims of:

1. Demonstrating feasible and repeatable methods of grazing and grassy understorey management.
2. Assisting the farming community to implement positive change.
3. Improving productivity and the natural resource base.
4. Increasing soil stability, pastoral resilience and biodiversity.

The workshop will feature discussion on the constraints in maintaining and/or improving grasses (native or introduced pastures) on grazing properties within the hills grazing country from Eden Valley to Truro, and collectively decide:

1. What is the biggest constraint to grassland management in the region (that can be addressed within the scope of the project)?
2. What management tools could be implemented in the area? The workshop facilitators will present the options available, and provide advice on each option.
3. Whose property/properties the demonstration sites will be set-up on.
4. Brainstorm the demonstration site design and monitoring program.

The Details:

- **Where:** Supper room, Keyneton Hall
- **When:** Thursday November 27 at 7:30pm-9:30pm
- **RSVP:** to Bec by clicking the 'Register Now' button below, or by phoning 0402 788 526.
- **For more information:** contact Elisa Sparrow from the SAMDB by [email](#) or 0428 861 613.

Register Now: please email admin@biggroup.org.au

Next Generation Property Planning

Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin is running a new free workshop, the Next Generation Property Planning program. The program is designed to assist primary producers evaluate the current performance of their property and make informed decisions regarding productivity for a sustainable farming business.

Next Generation Property Planning will be supported by a range of experts, field trials and demonstrations sites, field days and workshops.

Outcomes from the program include:

- Identifying the most profitable areas of the farm for the enterprise, such as cereals, livestock, horticulture production, to optimise future farm production.
- Developing an action plan to address the risks to optimising production.
- Learning from leading researchers to build understanding of the emerging risks and opportunities.
- Identifying knowledge gaps.
- Being mentored through the process of developing a property plan based on improving production and minimising the risks.
- Recognising the decision making tools to achieve the property goals.

Next Generation Property Planning will include two one-day workshop sessions with specialist speakers on soils, water security, climate variability, financial planning, decision making and natural resource management.

There will be additional field trials, expert speakers, and demonstrations to cover information and knowledge gaps that limit agricultural productivity improvements, or where there is a requirement to better understand a risk or limitation.

Workshops will be undertaken in groups of between five and ten properties from your local area with all family members encouraged to attend.

To register your interest in this program, contact [Bec](#), or for more information about the program contact Tony Randall from the SAMDB by [email](#) or on 0427 834 396.

Our Shout: Let's Talk

Presented by the 2014 Bushfires Recovery Group

The 2014 Bushfires Recovery Group invites family and friends to a free afternoon of reflection and information for the community at Keyneton Primary School On Sunday November 30 3:30pm-7:30pm.

The event features special guest MC Peter Goers, inspirational speaker Derrick McManus and professional counsellors and psychologists. Dinner and drinks will also be provided by the Barossa Rotary Club and games for children by the Mid Murray Council and Keyneton Primary School.

For more information, view [the event flier](#).

From the Inbox...

- Did you see BIGG's latest monthly soil moisture monitoring report? View it anytime on the [BIGG website](#).
- Putting the life back into farm soils: Natural Resources AMLR is offering a free workshop in Gawler for producers keen to improve their soil health. The workshop will be held on Monday December 1 from 1:30pm-5:00pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church hall. [Find out more](#).

- Bringing back the birds: Another free workshop by Natural Resources AMLR for producers looking to improve bird numbers. The workshop will be on November 27 at 6:30pm to 8:00pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church hall, Gawler. For more information please contact Kate Graham by [email](#) or at 8303 0702.
- Native Seeds Pasture Information Session: Wednesday November 19, 1:30pm at Farmer Johns. [Find out more.](#)
- Creating resilient landscapes: The BGWA is hosting a bus tour visiting local vineyards who have used various practices to improve the resilience of their properties on Wednesday November 19 at 8:00am. [Find out more.](#)
- Enrich Perennial Forage Shrubs: Field day at Monarto Zoo, Friday November 4, 9am-11:30am. [Find out more.](#)
- Heavy vehicle freight routes: PIRSA and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) are partnering with Primary Producers SA (PPSA) to prioritise solutions to problems and inefficiencies being experienced by primary producers. To this end, an online survey is being conducted for the community to provide feedback. [This survey](#) is open until Friday November 21.
- Regional wellbeing survey: The University of Canberra is conducting a survey to support research that improves the wellbeing and quality of life of people living in regional and rural Australia. Anyone who takes part can enter in a draw to win prizes worth a total of \$7,000. [Take part here.](#)

Your BIGG Contacts

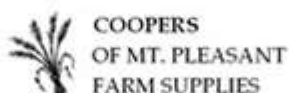
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Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources