

The latest news from the Barossa Improved Grazing Group

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Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

September 2015

BLOCKBUSTER Pasture Walk

The Barossa Improved Grazing Group invites you to its blockbuster spring pasture walk to visit the major BIGG field trials and improve your pasture and natural resources management.

Including:

- Native grass management for the coming summer
- Fertiliser demonstration in native grasses
- Watercourse rehabilitation with different plant communities
- Sub-clover root disease and management strategies
- Assess the performance of 25 different clover varieties

Field walk agenda:

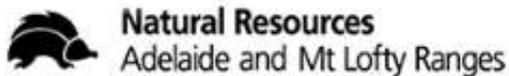
- 1pm (Sedan Hill) – Native Grasses/ Fertiliser Trial
- 2.30pm ('Gum Hill' 80 Gruenberg Rd, Moculta) –Watercourse Rehabilitation
- 3:30pm ('Bunyara' 467 Shannon Rd, Moculta) –Sub-clover Root Disease & Coopers clover demonstration site
- 5pm - Drinks and nibbles at Bunyara shearing shed!

The details:

- **Date:** Monday 21 September
- **Time:** 1:00pm
- **Where:** Meeting at Keynes BIGG site, the bottom of Sedan Hill, Keyneton-Sedan road (on the left).
- **Cost:** Free
- **Drinks and nibbles** will be provided
- **RSVP:** Rebecca Barr by email admin@biggroup.org.au or txt to 0402 788 526

[Register Now](#)

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Ben's a believer in vineyard grazing

Eden Valley livestock producer and grape grower Ben Zander is a strong advocate of sheep grazing in vineyards, with his family using the increasingly-popular practice for more than 30 years.

Ben was one of six local growers who last week participated in a focus group, run by BIGG and Barossa Grape & Wine Association (BGWA) to investigate barriers to vineyard grazing and identify methods of promoting its productivity and natural resources management benefits.

“We have grazed our vineyards for a long time, and believe it is something that everyone can take on. It has great benefits for livestock farmers and, for those who don't own stock, the fees from agistment can be an additional source of income,” Ben said.

Ben says the main reason he grazes stock is the combination of weed control with additional feed for his sheep.

“Putting the sheep in the vineyard can improve the condition of the vineyard as we can minimise herbicide costs and maintain good management of our vineyard floor. Because of our topography cultivation isn’t a viable option, so sheep can fill the management gap during winter and also return part of what they eat to the soil in a form that the vine can easily take up,” he said.

“But at the same time, the grasses that the sheep are feeding on in the vineyard mean we can rest our paddocks. By late autumn the paddocks are relatively bare, so by moving the sheep into the vineyards we can let the pastures rest and get away after the season break,” he said.

The BIGG and BGWA, with funding by Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, are encouraging grape growers and livestock producers to consider vineyard grazing.

“The main requirements are sound fencing and water access, which many vineyards already have in place, to keep stock out during the growing season and irrigate vines. There’s not a lot involved in setting up a vineyard for grazing,” Ben said.

In Ben’s experience, dripper lines are not generally an issue with sheep, and the stock can sometimes be left in after budburst, as long as there is enough feed available and trellis height is adequate.

“There aren’t many vineyards that I would think would be unsuitable for sheep grazing, especially during the vine dormancy period. Even younger vines, which sheep can cause damage to, can be alright if the sheep aren’t kept in too long and they don’t get regularly stressed or spooked and run,” he said.

Successful Pasture Update

Were you one of the over 50 producers who were able to make dollars and sense out of pastures at the recent BIGG Pasture Update?

Our producers spent the day learning about a wide range of pasture topics, from business management, to phorsphorus, to drones!

If you weren't able to attend, you don't have to miss out. The powerpoint files from each of the presenters will be online soon at the BIGG website, and we'll be featuring articles in coming newsletters with some of the presenters. You can read the article with Marcus Sounness on the [website now](#).

Here's a few snaps from the day - click on any of the images to see more photos at the BIGG website.



Young Producer Survey

Don't forget to complete the BIGG Young Producer Survey, which will help us make sure our projects are working in the right direction to benefit all of our members.

Complete the survey now at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIGG>

If you're not so much young as young-at-heart, please share our survey with family and friends involved in grazing.

We will use the results of this survey in organising two upcoming field days as well as an NRM themed conference planned for 2016, so it's critical that we get feedback to ensure we're focusing on the best topics!

From the Inbox...

- Registrations for the State Landcare Conference are open until [11 September](#), with the conference on 14-16 September. Come to Waikerie and support BIGG Presenter Georgie Keynes!
- The Barossa YiAg AgTastic Conference is next week, Friday 18 September. Featuring a bus tour to local farms, presentation on innovative food technologies and a dinner at Murray Street Vineyards for only \$30! [Register Now](#).
- It's field day month! Here's a few local field days coming up:
 1. Hart Field Day [15 September](#)
 2. Mid North Grasslands Working Group pastures and grazing day - [17 September](#)
 3. Riverland Field Days [18-19 September](#)
 4. Mid North High Rainfall Group field day [22 September](#)
 5. Upper North Farming Systems western spring crop walk [27 September](#)
 6. Yorke Peninsula Field Days, Paskerville, [29 September to 1 October](#).
- [Onsite production of biochar](#) workshop, 10 September, Murray Mallee LAP
- [Bringing back the birds](#) and [wildflower walk](#), 26 September, Natural Resources AMLR
- King Island Beef Day, 8 October, Tasmania. [More information](#).
- Science and innovation award applications are open now, closing Friday 9 October. [Read more](#).
- Have you heard of the [Pasture Improvement Initiative](#) website? It contains a wide range of pasture related information for your business.

Your BIGG Contacts

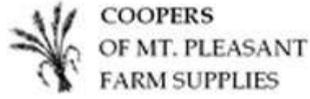
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Government of South Australia
Department of Environment,
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