

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

August 2018

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Working with the Season WORKSHOP

Make proactive decisions to create an effective strategy for the coming months

WORKSHOP: MONDAY 10 September 2018: 1.30-5pm

Keyneton Hall

Followed by a bbq

With soil moisture still low, fodder reserves difficult to find and forecasts for a short

spring, this workshop will provide you with proactive decision making information to help you make the most of opportunities and manage the risk for the coming months.

Focusing on the livestock, the land, the business and the people.

[FULL PROGRAM](#) on our WEBSITE

Time	Topic	Presenter
1.30	Introduction- review of current situation	Georgie Keynes & Brett Nietschke- BIGG
1.40	Feeding livestock in dry times	Hamish Dickson- AgriPartner Consulting
2.30	Looking after the people	Abby English- SA Health
2.50	Biosecurity SA	Joe Keynes- Livestock SA
3.00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
3.30	Developing a plan to guide your strategy	Chris Scheid- ProAdvice
4.15	Opportunities to support the rural business	Julianne Fiebig, Rural Business Support
4.30	Local producers' experiences with containment areas	Hamish Dickson and local producers
4.50	Wrap-up	Georgie Keynes, BIGG
5.00	<i>Please stay and join us for a free BBQ dinner thanks to Angaston Ag Bureau</i>	

Email georgie.keynes@biggroup to RSVP!

This event is supported by Barossa Improved Grazing Group, Angaston Agriculture Bureau, and is jointly funded by Meat and Livestock Australia, the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board through the NRM Levies.

Local Pasture Case Studies

The MLA Producer Demonstration Site Project is in its final 6 months after three years of measuring local pastures. The minor site components of this project allows us to work one-on one with producers to follow a pasture paddock through the season to see how the varieties perform. Jackson Adams, Livestock Consulting Intern has been running this component of the project and has developed the

following case studies.

Local Pasture Case Study: Craig Hage, Angaston



It has been a slow and dry start to the season. However, Craig Hage, located at Angaston, proceeded to sow a pasture mixture of ryegrass and clover with the aim to provide feed for cows and calves, ewes and lambs and then cut for silage later in the season.

The pasture was sown on the 17th of April in a 20ha paddock at 25kg/ha (20kg of ryegrass and 5kg of clover). The Ryegrass proportion consisted of a blend of Vortex, Arnie and Tetila Seedcare Annual Ryegrass species from the “Coopers Hay Silage ARG Blend” whilst the clover proportion consisted of a blend of Lightning Persian, Vista Balansa and Zulu II Arrowleaf Clover AgriCote from the “Coopers Annual Clover Blend”.

Despite the dry conditions, the mixed pasture established well and received its first grazing at around 1200kg DM/ha by cows with calves on the 16th of May for two weeks at a stocking rate of 83 DSE/ha. Following the two weeks grazing there was around 700kg DM/ha remaining.

Around the start of June Craig noticed that in some areas the clover had begun to change colour from green to yellow and under closer inspection decided that it was due to the presence of red legged earth mite. Subsequently, Craig sprayed the paddock with the aim to reduce the burden the red legged earth mites were placing on the clover.

Controlling the pests, along with the addition of 120kg/ha of pasture prime (N/P/K) fertiliser on the 20th of June saw the pasture bounce back well from the first grazing, receiving it's second grazing by cows with calves on the 2nd of July, with 1800kg DM/ha until the 16th of July at 81 DSE/ha.

With well below average rainfall to date, the pasture is still progressing well with a third grazing from ewes with lambs at 10 DSE/ha for two weeks in late July/ early August. Following this third and final grazing, Craig applied a hay booster and has now locked the paddock up ready to cut for silage in late September.

A number of dry matter cuts have been collected as well as FeedTest samples to monitor how much of the pasture is being utilised and of what quality. We have also placed three portable panels within the paddock to represent an "un-grazed" representation of the pasture to calculate pasture growth rates. Following mowing and bailing, silage bales will be assessed for quality and quantity which will aid in a whole of paddock analysis of production.

Local Pasture Case Study: Ian Koch, Moculta

With such a variable climate, local Moculta producer, Ian Koch, relies heavily on a number of different management strategies to remain as productive as possible. Even in the dry seasons such as the one we are experiencing now, Ian is managing to produce some outstanding results.

Around the 8th of May Ian sowed a poly culture pasture which included Wimmera Rye, Oats, Barley, Vetch, Lunch Radish and Clover (Balansa and Arrow Leaf) into his 56ha paddock. It should be noted that parts of this paddock had been subject to Grape Marc over the past three years, aimed at improving soil health.

On the 8th of June, 117 14-month-old rams were weighed with an average of 70.7kg. Shortly after, these rams began to graze the paddock with 1500kg/ha of dry matter ahead of them with a stocking rate of 2 rams/ha. On the 10th of July the rams were taken out of the paddock and subsequently weighed. An average of 85.4kg was obtained. This is a gain in live weight of almost 15kg, with an average of 455g gained daily.

During this grazing period, rams also had access lick feeders which contained 60% barley and 40% oats. Ian noticed that whilst initially the rams fed regularly from the lick feeders, towards the end of the grazing period the rams were hardly accessing the feed in the feeders.

Upon the rams being pulled out of the paddock, an estimated 1900kg/ha of dry matter was on offer. This is obviously greater than what Ian's paddock started with suggesting that the pasture growth rates exceeded the rate at which the rams could consume the pasture. Back calculating the pasture growth rates from an assumed consumption rate of 2kg/head/day showed that the pasture was growing around 20kg/ha/day.

Following on from the rams, Ian's pregnant ewes grazed the paddock before it was locked up and allowed to grow ready for the weaners to utilise once coming off shears in early August.

The weaners are currently grazing the pasture and their entry weights have been taken. At the end of the grazing period, weights will again be taken allowing average daily gain to be calculated. The potential to calculate feed conversion ratios will also be explored.

Angaston Ag Bureau Adelaide Bus Trip



Rehn Freebairn, Pasture Genetics, Anthony Ellis, Farmer Johns, Tom Damin, Pasture Genetics and Dick Evans, Angaston Ag Bureau at the Ag Bureau visit to the Pasture Genetics Research Farm.

In early August, 35 members of the Angaston Agriculture Bureau visited the Pasture Genetics Research Farm at Penfield. They were hosted by Anthony Ellis from Farmer Johns and Pasture Genetics Territory Manager, Rehn Freebairn and Tom Damin the Pasture Genetics Research and Technical Services Manager and were treated to a 'behind the scenes' look at the pasture variety trials, seed multiplication areas and the seed treatment facility.

The group observed the grazing trials which measure live weight gain in cattle on different varieties of ryegrass. The cattle are rotationally grazed across the different varieties and grown from 250kg to 400kg. The growth rates and pasture quality are measured to determine the varieties which provide the greatest performance. These trials provide valuable information which demonstrates the potential of the products and helps guide future plant breeding direction.

With the tough seasonal conditions, drought proofing pastures were the topic of conversation. Tom mentioned that the 'bullet proof varieties' for the local region include Lucerne which is extremely drought proof once established due to its deep tap root which allows the plant to respond quickly to a rainfall event producing high quality feed. In addition, it can be utilised for high quality hay and silage, allowing further opportunities for providing feed in the form of supplementation.

Another bullet proof option for providing early winter feed, are medics which will produce a high volume of good quality feed early in the season, when feed resources are traditionally low. These can then be followed on with sub clover varieties which produce volumes of feed in spring. Annual clovers also provide high quality feed in spring and provide an opportunity to bulk up ryegrasses for winter and spring production.

The group also observed the new varieties of fescues, which are being utilised in grazing trials to demonstrate liveweight gain in sheep. The new varieties have a much finer leaf which holds its quality as the feed matures making in more palatable and a good perennial grass option.

Many of the lucernes, medics and new fescue varieties have been included in the Koonunga and Mt Pleasant pasture demonstration sites to observe their performance in local conditions. With high pasture dry matter production for the lucernes and a great regeneration of medics at the Koonunga site in 2018, the Pasture Genetics 'bullet proof' varieties are also proving their value locally.

Save the Date- Koonunga Pasture Walk Wednesday 26th September- 4pm



Come along and check out the huge array of different pasture species including the 2016 established lucernes and new 2018 varieties, regenerating clovers and medics, perennial grasses and new forage cereals.

BIGG are incredibly excited to be a finalist for a National Landcare Award for 'Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices' which will be awarded at the National Landcare Conference in October.

You can get involved and vote for us for the PEOPLES CHOICE AWARD- [Click to VOTE!](#)

From the Inbox.....

- Dry Times Resources Website- Natural Resources SAMDB [Check it Out!](#)
- Barossa Regional Outlook Conference- Nuriootpa- 26th Sept- [More Info](#)
- Growing SA Conference- Hahndorf- 14 Sept= [More Info](#)
- Managing Livestock in Dry Times- Waikerie (3 Sept) and Loxton (14 Sept) - [More Info](#)
- Strong Sheep, Strong Business- Mintaro- 5 October [More Info](#)
- National Landcare Conference: 10-12 October: [REGISTRATIONS OPEN](#)

Your BIGG Contacts

Technical Facilitators:

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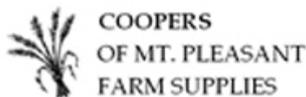
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