

The latest news from the Barossa Improved Grazing Group

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Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

November 2018

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Maximising Pasture Production in a Variable Climate- WEBINAR

Across two below average years, learn about how different livestock producers maximised their pasture production to fill feed gaps and increase the number of grazing days on their property.

WEBINAR: Thursday 6th December 8.00-8.30 pm (SA time)

(***if you are unavailable you can still register to receive a recording of the webinar the

following day)

REGISTER HERE

Presented by BIGG technical facilitators, Georgie Keynes and and Adelaide Uni intern Jackson Adams, covering:

- Finding and utilising alternative feed sources in a dry year
- Benefit of spring sown brassicas
- A flexible pasture to fill the summer feed gap
- Hay and grazing using perennial grasses
- Annual ryegrasses for grazing and silage for cattle
- Utilising early forage cereals to increase lamb growth rates

These results come out of the three-year Meat & Livestock Australia's Producer Demonstration Site, Maximising Pasture in a Variable Climate



Local Producer Case Studies

With only a few months left of the Meat and Livestock Producer Demonstration Site Project, all of the case studies of local producers and how they have maximised pasture production are being collated into a Case Study Booklet. This will be released in mid December, however in the mean time, check out these two local case studies about producers determination to find feed in tough seasonal conditions.....

Dry Times- Where There's a Will There's a Way
Karl Zerner, Eudunda



Karl removed 130 tonnes of hay 'offal' from local hay sheds, this is usually a waste product removed from the sheds and burnt.



The use of the hay 'offal' provided Karl with additional feed to maintain his core breeding mob through winter.

Karl Zerner, a producer from Ellimatta near Eudunda sowed a demonstration paddock with an early maturity Fleet Barley at 75 kg/ha on the 18th of June 2018 with the aim of a light grazing during the season before being locked up and eventually harvested. However, in early June Karl decided to reconsider his strategy in maximising production off the paddock, as at that stage they had only received approximately 43mm of rainfall in a 350mm average rainfall area.

Come late July/ early August, Karl's hay stores were disappearing fast and he needed to organise more in order to maintain his core breeding merino ewes.

In mid August, Karl managed to secure two semi loads of straw and two semi loads of hay. To increase the palatability of the straw and thus reduce the quantity of wastage, Karl poured vegetable oil over the straw. Karl was also feeding Molafos at 100g/head/day in 20L chemical drums that had been cleaned, cut in half and rocks placed in the bottom prior to use. Sourced from local distributor, Bruce Schutz from Pt. Pass via Eudunda, Molafos is a balanced supplementation of energy, protein and minerals. It increases rumen bacterial function which encourage stock to forage further and less selectively. It also increases dry matter intake and therefore can result in improved growth rates. The Molafos feed analysis shows energy at 10Mj of Metabolisable energy and dry matter at 68%. Karl would prefer to be feeding barley however at \$0.60/kg compared with more than \$3/kg for barley, Molafos was the more economical option.

With the straw and hay stocks again running low, Karl was forced to think outside of the box, as fodder was becoming increasingly sparse and expensive. At the beginning of September Karl had organised the hiring of a tele-handler and a semi whilst JT Johnson's scouted hay sheds with adequate amounts of hay offal on the shed floor. Hay offal is the hay remaining on the shed floor, after the main bales have been removed. It is often removed from the sheds and simply burnt, however this time Karl had plans to load it into the semi to then feed out onto the ground to his valuable breeding stock.

Karl and his team managed to clean out seven sheds in total from Kapunda, Riverton, Marrabel and Manoora. A total of 130 tonnes of hay offal was captured and fed to stock requiring 29 semi loads (4.5T/ semi).

Karl's innovative solution to an unavoidable tough season bought them around 6-8 weeks' worth of feed at a fraction of the cost of buying hay. Using an average freight cost of \$440/ semi load and \$80/hr for tele-handler hiring the total cost equated to around \$125/T of hay offal excluding labour, almost a quarter less than cereal hay per tonne. Eight of the 29 semi loads went to neighbouring properties to help where Karl was extremely kind and generous in charging a minimum of \$20/hr for the loads.

Aside from keeping his stock maintained, Karl said it was the conversations he had and the relationships he built that was the most fulfilling part of the experience. Cleaning the sheds out was one less job the hay shed owners had to do and thus there were good symbiotic relationships to be made.

In the end 2018 was a tough, unavoidable season endured by all. However, thinking outside of the box, combined with quality team work, helped to keep Karl's spirits high and his core breeding mob maintained.

Producing Quality Lamb and Managing Pasture under Organic Principles

Bruce Hancock, Eden Valley



Bruce Hancock and Jackson Adams measuring the pasture. Bruce's main goal was to produce high quality fodder during late autumn and winter and produce high quality silage.



The paddock produced a total of 18.7 tonnes of dry matter through grazing and conservation of fodder, which provided feed for Bruce's Dorper ewes

Bruce Hancock leases the grazing country of organic grape growers, Ben & Gill

Radford of Eden Valley. The vineyard, pastures and livestock are run under organic principles.

The area of interest comprised of three individual paddocks managed as one, with a total area of 8ha. On the 20th of April after 16mm of rain, Bruce used a twin disc seeder with press wheels to sow an annual forage crop mixture of Oretet ryegrass, Narrikup sub clover and Zulu Arrowleaf clover at a rate of 30kg/ha. BioAg Phosphate fertiliser was also added on the 30th of April at 250kg/ha. Soil amelioration through the application of lime has increased soil pH from 4.7 in 2012 to 6.2 in 2017, and with annual production of silage and bi-ennial application of organic fertilisers, the soil P (Olsen) has remained at 7ppm. This annual forage crop mixture was sown into a background of Phalaris and a mixture of sub clover species. Bruce specifically chose to include the Narrikup species of clover as it has Red Legged Earth Mite tolerance and with limited insecticide options to control as a result of the organic status, the new pasture variety warranted trialing.

Bruce's main goals were to produce high quality fodder for his ewes and lambs at foot, or later lambing ewe lambs to graze during late Autumn and early winter. Later in the season Bruce stopped grazing the paddocks, allowing the pasture to grow before being cut down and baled for silage to feed during times of low feed availability. Bruce's aim was to bale at least 10 silage rolls to the hectare. Mowing the paddock and producing silage also helps to provide a fire barrier around the homestead and control the seed set of broadleaf weeds and annual grasses. Also the pasture regrowth in Nov-Dec provides good quality seed-free grazing.

On the 30th of June, 65 dorper ewes with 80 lambs at foot began to graze the annual pasture mix with an approximate 2500 kgDM/ha Food On Offer (FOO). Assuming 3.2 Dry Sheep Equivalent's (DSE's) per ewe and lamb unit, this is a grazing pressure of 26 DSE/ha/day. The ewes and lambs grazed the paddocks for 51 days until the 20th of August equaling a total of 1,326 DSE grazing days. Following the grazing period it was estimated that there was 1500 kgDM/ha remaining.

As the ewes and lambs came out of the paddocks, the gate was shut and locked to allow the feed to grow sufficiently to produce enough biomass to permit producing silage. Bruce had decided to shut his paddocks up two weeks earlier than normal based on plant available moisture levels indicated by the local Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG) soil moisture probes, paired with a number of climate forecasting tools.

Bruce normally rests the paddocks for six weeks before cutting for silage, however at the six week mark, due to the dry season, there was insufficient biomass to justify contract silage baler, Regari Contracting, to come and get the job done. Luckily there was 24.4mm of rainfall during October which provided a significant growth response

from the pasture, providing justification for silage to be produced.

On the 30th of October, ten weeks after the paddocks had been locked up the pasture was cut, raked and baled. 55 round bale silage rolls were produced from the 7ha of un-grazed pasture, which falls just short of Bruce's target of 10 bales/ha. The bales had an average weight of 750kg, with an estimated 45% dry matter equating to approximately 18,700 kg of dry matter being stored as silage. Paired with an approximate 9,000 kgDM being consumed whilst grazing results in a total of 27,700 kgDM or 3,500 kgDM/ha being utilised throughout the growing season.

Hamish Dickson wins Livestock Consultancy Award



Bruce Hancock, Rural Solutions SA:PIRSA, and Chris Scheid, ProAdvice, Victor Harbor and both members of the SA Livestock Consultants who nominated Hamish Dickson AgriPartner Consulting, Clare (centre), for the 2018 AIA-Jim McColl Young Consultant Award. (Source- The Stock Journal)



Joe Keynes, Chair Livestock SA, and BIGG member, Keyneton congratulates Hamish Dickson on his AIA-Jim McColl Young Consultant Award (Source- The Stock Journal)

Local Livestock Consultant and one of BIGG's go-to presenters on livestock management, Hamish Dickson was recently awarded the 2018 Australian Institute of Agriculture (AIA) Jim McColl Young Consultant Award. He was nominated by the SA Livestock Consultants for his dedication, leadership and knowledge that has supported producers, businesses and the livestock industries.

BIGG Chair Graham Keynes commented that "A number of BIGG's webinars and workshops are presented by Hamish Dickson and are proving a huge success in addressing topical and seasonal issues and favouring producers from across Australia with practical and succinct advice to manage our more variable climate,

while at the same time delivering exceptional value for money for the stakeholder / funders”.

On behalf of BIGG we would like to congratulate Hamish on his award and look forward to working with him in the future!

From the Inbox.....

- Farmers Meeting at the Production Animal Health Center at Roseworthy- Wednesday 5th December 11am- 2pm- calves, cattle and sheep reproduction and sheep profitability- Contact dianne.whatling@adelaide.edu.au
- BIGG's Livestock Containment Areas webinar provides great advice for those still contemplating implementing one for summer [CHECK IT OUT](#)
- One Biosecurity is a new state-wide approach to managing, protecting, and promoting South Australia's strong biosecurity regime across its livestock industry- Visit the website for [MORE INFO](#)
- Dry Times Resources Website- Natural Resources SAMDB [Check it Out!](#)

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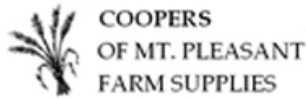
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