

## Gra\$\$ to Dollars grazing course gives confidence to increase stock numbers.

NAME: CARRARA FARMS

LOCATION: Eden Valley & Stockwell

ANNUAL RAINFALL: 650MM / 550MM

FARM SIZE: 298HA

ENTERPRISES: Beef

Carrara Farms run a beef enterprise across two properties – one near Eden Valley and one just out of Stockwell in the Barossa Valley.

They currently run around 70 Murray Grey stud cows over the 298ha.

### Enterprise

Greg and JJ Schubert run Murray Grey stud cows and are keeping heifers as self-replacing breeding stock. They retain steers for two years, growing them out to around 500 – 600kgs before selling them over the hooks. The Schubert's had been practising a split calving with some cows calving in autumn and some in spring. They have decided to simplify their operation by slowly switching the spring calvers to autumn calving.

### Pasture renovation

#### Clean up and renovations

Greg and JJ have been gradually renovating their pastures. They begin by cleaning up the annual grasses using a sown forage cereal such as Outback oats or a forage barley variety. They have also sown some annual Italian ryegrass for meadow hay. Once the paddocks are cleaned up, they sow a phalaris and sub clover perennial pasture.

They have renovated a high portion of the pastures on both properties and have found with the adequate rainfall they have received during the 2020 growing season they have high quantities of feed across both of their farms.



*Schuberts stud Murray Grey cows on the Eden Valley property.*

Due to the extra feed on the Eden Valley property, they have locked up some phalaris paddocks to reap for seed. This seed will be used to renovate extra paddocks across both properties next season.

### Individual coaching

As part of the Gra\$\$ to Dollars course the Schubert's had a half day individual coaching session where Deb Scammell and Tim Prance visited their Eden Valley farm and helped JJ develop a pasture plan going forward.

Prior to the course JJ had been planning to do additional pasture renovation, but during the farm visit we discussed an alternative strategy of increasing stocking pressure plus grazing paddocks more effectively to increase the preferred species.



*Cattle grazing a paddock with excessive feed which will be grazed with extra stocking pressure going forward.*

By constructing a feed budget, a plan was made to cut more paddocks of surplus feed for hay and to spray top poor quality paddocks to help control barley grass. This plan enabled extra grazing and stocking pressure to be applied to newly renovated paddocks to allow the newly sown pastures to become well established before summer.

A farm plan was also established for the Eden Valley property to fence a few paddocks into smaller areas and to construct extra water points so that paddocks can be grazed more effectively.

### **The future**

Participating in the Gra\$\$ to Dollars course and learning to measure pasture quantities, growth rates, stocking rates and stocking pressure has allowed the Schubert's to understand the quantities of pasture produced in an annual growing season on their farms. JJ has realised they can potentially generate huge quantities of high-quality feed over the growing season, but they do not have enough livestock to effectively utilise this pasture. The plan going forward is to increase cow numbers substantially over both properties.

Soil testing will also be undertaken to check soil acidity along with available phosphorous, sulphur and potassium levels, as the Gra\$\$ to Dollars course reinforced the strong relationship between adequate soil nutrition and pasture quality and quantity.

*The Gra\$\$ to Dollars training course was supported by the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA). The course was presented by Tim Prance (T Prance Rural Consulting) and Deb Scammell (Talking Livestock).*