



Winter Pasture NRM Update

MAY/JUNE 2013

BIG Group Website

The Barossa Improved Grazing Group website is now active at www.biggroup.org.au. This site has been funded by the Winter Pasture NRM Project to provide a go-to point for producers, stakeholders and the local community to gain information on the local producer groups, agricultural related events and agricultural & NRM related projects. Each of the producer groups currently engaged with the Winter Pasture NRM Project have their own page providing the opportunity for these groups to share their individual news stories, items of interest, project information and historical data. Other producer groups such as the Koonunga Ag Bureau, will be included here in the future. The 'Projects' page shares current information on the on-going Winter Pasture NRM Projects. The recent Soil Moisture Monitoring Probe project will be included and soil moisture data will be updated weekly to allow all producers to access this information. The 'Events' section will provide an opportunity to keep updated on the events occurring in both the local and regional areas. The upcoming winter and spring Winter Pasture NRM Projects will be updated as they are finalised over the coming months. Please take the opportunity to take a look at the website, it is designed to be easy and simple to use and will keep you updated on all of the local agricultural information! Comments are greatly appreciated to Georgie.

Upcoming Events

- Biochar Field Day
Freeling- Friday 21 June 2-5pm
[Further Info](#)
- MLA Pastures Update
Clare- Tuesday 25 June
Contact- Georgie
- Barossa Sustainable Soil Forum
Barossa- Wednesday 21 August
Contact - Georgie

Winter Pastures are Growing!

The recent Lifetime Ewe Management Session with the North Rhine Sheep Group confirmed what producers have been waiting for- green and growing pastures! The Lifetime Ewe Management Course provides sheep producers with the opportunity to benchmark ewe performance through condition scoring and feed budgeting. The group measured an annual pasture in Moculta which had been lightly grazed which measured 500kg/DM/Ha, which to maintain late term pregnant ewes, is just below their requirements. A two year old perennial pasture at Keyneton measured 1200 kg/DM/Ha and an annual and perennial base pasture in Eden Valley also measured 1200kg/DM/Ha. These levels would maintain pregnant and lactating ewes. Soil temperatures were also measured with 16oC at Koonunga and Eden Valley and 15oC at Keyneton. This indicates that there is still some warmth within the soil which coupled with soil moisture will allow the pastures to continue growing at an estimated 20kg/Ha/Day through the early part of June. Through the winter months, once the soil gets too cold, it is expected that pastures will slow to growing 10kg/Ha/Day. The Sheep Group, through the Sheep Connect Project, are currently utilising satellite imagery of pastures to benchmark the actual seasonal rate of pasture growth on local properties to facilitate feed budgeting and stock management decision making.



Measuring the soil temperature with Adelaide Uni vet students at the recent Lifetime Ewe Mgmt Session

Case Study: Angaston Ag Bureau



Members of the Angaston Ag Bureau at a recent 'stickybeak' meeting at current president, Bruce Henderson's property.

The Angaston Agricultural Bureau is the oldest Bureau still operating in Australia today, and currently has a membership of 40 producers from the Angaston and surrounding Barossa Valley areas. Most members run a mix of farming operations including sheep, cattle and cropping being the major enterprises.

The Bureau provides avenues for farmers to network and learn together. Members meet monthly at meetings, field days, farm walks, training courses and EXPO's relating to their diverse interests in sustainable agriculture.

They also work together at wood chopping days, organise scrap metal runs and join the Vintage Parade on their specially designed float.

The Bureau hosts a variety of annual events including the Merino Hogget and the Dairy

Heifer Competitions. These events are open to all producers in the region and provide the opportunity for networking and sharing of information among local producer groups.

This year the Bureau is celebrating its 125th Anniversary of providing a forum for local producers to discuss local issues, socialise and collectively become involved in agricultural related projects. These projects include the Farming Resources Forum which was held in March 2012. This facilitated discussions on soil health, pasture management and achieving good NRM outcomes on farm. This process lead on to the development of the Winter Pasture NRM project and other projects associated with this which the Ag Bureau facilitates on behalf of the other producer groups in the district.

Soil Moisture Monitoring Probe Grant

The Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project has been successful in receiving a 2013/14 Caring for Our Country, Community Landcare Grant to explore the use of soil moisture monitoring probes in dryland pasture situations.

The soil moisture monitoring probes, which are invaluable in horticulture and cropping, will allow livestock producers to monitor soil moisture and temperature, providing decision support tools in a time of increasing seasonal variability.

The technology will allow producers to make informed decisions on pasture establishment, fertiliser usage and most

importantly when to de stock. De stocking early leads to increased productivity gains through feed utilisation and market opportunities. It also allows improved NRM through greater soil cover, greater pasture recovery and reduction in wind and water erosion.

The soil moisture information will be shared on the new BIGG website and workshops and pasture walks will be facilitated to help all local producers analyse and utilise the data.

If you are interested in hosting a site please let Facilitator Georgie know.



Monitoring soil moisture in an almond orchard.

From the INBOX

Activity Plan Template

The Winter Pasture Project encourages producers to develop an individual activity plan to facilitate sustainable pasture management. These plans will provide the opportunity for individuals to trial an aspect of pasture management and also to share the information through pasture walks.

If you have not yet filled in your plan and would like to be involved please visit the new BIGG websites [RESOURCES](#) section and email completed plans back to Georgie.

Dairy SA Energy Assessments

Dairy SA are offering free on-farm independent energy assessments and benchmarking of farm electricity usage for Dairy Farmers across the state. For further information contact [Monique White](#).

Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project on FACEBOOK

Don't forget to 'like' the Winter Pasture NRM Project to keep updated with latest news and events. Simply search 'Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project'.

Further Information

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