ASPIAC Update
Chris Nott, Alcoota Station and Sally Leigo

During June Alice Springs Pastoral Industry Advisory Committee (ASPIAC) met to discuss the R&D needs for central Australia. Jim Napier has stepped down from his position on the committee and Andrew Clarke has become a new member to the committee.

The committee received a presentation from Jocelyn Coventry about measuring bull performance based on her experience in monitoring the Old Main Plains Research Station (OMPRS) bulls. This presentation saw plenty of discussion about bull performance in the breeder herd. ASPIAC also received updates from the department about the current projects that are being run. From these updates the committee was interested in:

- Determining how topfeed was being factored into the carrying capacity and Grazing Land Management (GLM) projects.
- Seeing the final report from the project about ‘understanding the relationship between fire, woody vegetation and pasture production’, as they believe woody vegetation could be a priority for central Australian pastoralists.
- The difficulty in the use of faecal NIRS in central Australia and if it is possible to be used for measuring the amount of topfeed in a diet.

The committee also came up with some areas of research that they would like to see the Dept tackle. These included:

- Improving cattle nutrition by spike feeding with the assistance of an auto-drafter, as developed within the 21st Century Pastoralism Project
- Soil Quality and better mapping for stations in the region
- PEG and its use for supplementing cattle given that there is only one study into its use with cattle
- Topfeed in the diet, could NIRS determine this in a dry period?

News from Meat Livestock Australia (MLA) is that they are developing a Beef Business Management workshop with assistance from Phil Holmes that will run over 2 days and will cover a range of topics.
Managing Climate Variability R&D
Sally Leigo, DRDPIFR, Alice Springs and Dionne Walsh, Katherine

If like most primary producers the BOM website and many other weather sites are saved in your favourite sites, then it may be once a day or even more. Making sure this information is reliable is important for not just primary producers but also the meteorologists who produce it. Researchers are continuing to learn all the time about how Australia’s climate works and what the key drivers are for it.

Dionne and I recently attended a forum that gathered some of the leading meteorologists and their researchers in Australia. We heard a number of presentations ranging from the drivers of Australia’s climate to how climate change will affect the rock lobster industry in Tasmania. We certainly learnt a great deal, some of which we will try to share in this article.

Figure 1 – See Below

Central Australia is at the whim of a number of different weather systems. The current models used by the Bureau of Meteorology have low skill for predicting rainfall for central Australia because the region is influenced by a large number of weather systems.

The shift to more dynamic models (that can better model the influence and interactions of these competing systems) may improve the forecasting skill in the future. However, the timeline for improved forecast skill for most of the NT is a long way off.

The Bureau of Meteorology is transitioning from a statistical-based forecasting model to a dynamical model called POAMA. POAMA is an exciting model but has some flaws, due to the lack of understanding of the Indian Ocean Dipole. The IOD is influenced somewhat by ENSO but this relationship needs further research.

For northern Australia, there is some skill in predicting multi-week forecasts for the Madden-Julian Oscillation and the monsoon and the Bureau of Meteorology intends to do more work on these.

For anyone who has not checked out the Water and The Land (WATL) portal, it is a “one stop shop” for rural-related weather/climate information on the Bureau of Meteorology website.

The continued development of a new website (Climate Kelpie) will eventually allow producers in the NT to access regionally-specific climate information.

Figure 1: Australian Weather Systems
Looking for your Mad Cows……
Peter Saville, Pastoral Production Alice Springs

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PROGRAM WHICH IS SAFE GUARDING OUR EXPORT MARKETS AND MAINTAINING OUR REPUTATION AS A SUPPLIER OF HIGH QUALITY LIVESTOCK AND BEEF PRODUCTS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), more commonly known as Mad-Cow Disease, is a fatal disease in cattle that causes a spongy degeneration in the brain and spinal cord. BSE has a long incubation period with symptoms only showing when cattle are adults. All breeds of cattle are equally at risk of the disease.

The disease has not been reported in Australia to date.

BSE belongs to a group of fatal disorders called Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy’s (TSE’s) that have been reported in both humans and animals. It is believed that certain proteins called prions, produce “holes” in the brain causing it to appear like a sponge, hence the name ‘spongiform’.

Although the origin of the disease remains unknown, it is believed that the UK epidemic was caused by feeding cattle with rendered meat and bone meal (MBM) which was manufactured from the remains of other cattle. Fortunately Australia prohibited the importation of MBM from all overseas countries except NZ in 1966, imposed a voluntary ban on feeding ruminant material in 1996 and prohibited feeding in 1997. The prohibited feed is now known as Restricted Animal Material (RAM).

RAM is meat, meat and bone meal, blood meal, poultry meal, feather meal, fish meal and compounded feeds made from these products. RAM does not include milk and milk products, tallow and gelatine or oils extracted from poultry and fish.

RAM audits are carried out each year on (i) stations which are feeding supplement, (ii) feed suppliers and (iii) feed manufacturers, to ensure that the products being fed to cattle do not contain RAM. This is a measure to reduce the risk of cattle developing BSE.

The National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Surveillance Program was initiated in Australia in 1998. NT producers have actively supported the program with 18 submissions in 2008. We continue to encourage all producers to report cattle eligible for the program in 2009. Eligible cattle must be over 30 months of age and showing behavioral or nervous signs.

Producers will receive a payment of $300 for eligible cattle (up to a maximum of TWO per property). The cattle are euthanised and the brains removed for examination for BSE.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON BSE PLEASE CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL VETERINARY OFFICER OR STOCK INSPECTOR


Peter Saville
Regional Veterinary Officer
08 89518181
0401118181

Greg Crawford
Regional Animal Health Officer
08 89518125
0401118125

ALICE SPRINGS RURAL REVIEW – SEPTEMBER 2009
DIFFERENCES IN CALF GROWTH

J. Coventry, Pastoral Production, Alice Springs NT

COWS UNDER ONE GRAZING STRATEGY

After dry conditions in 2008, pregnant cows from the two mated-groups (Table 1) were used to restock an area for a rotational-grazing strategy in the Central Australian Grazing Strategies Project (CAGSP) on OMP. These cows were rotated together onto fresh feed in one paddock for calving, and then onto fresh feed in another paddock after branding. However the calves from the original two mated-cow groups grew at significantly different rates between birth and weaning.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mated-group #1</th>
<th>Droughtmaster cows</th>
<th>Droughtmaster bulls</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>young</td>
<td>mature</td>
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<tr>
<td>* ex Douglas Daly Research Station</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mated-group #2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>** ex Kidman Research Station</td>
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CALF GROWTH AFTER BIRTH

There was only one kilogram difference between the average branding weight of calves from each original mated-group, but the pre-weaning rate of weight gain was on average, 0.2 kg per day higher in calves from mated-group #1 (Table 2).

Table 2

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<tr>
<th>Mated-group #1</th>
<th>Example of calves</th>
<th>Average branding weight</th>
<th>Average pre-weaning weight gain</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>157 kg</td>
<td>1.1 kg/day</td>
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<th>Mated-group #2</th>
<th>Example of calves</th>
<th>Average branding weight</th>
<th>Average pre-weaning weight gain</th>
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<td></td>
<td>156 kg</td>
<td>0.9 kg/day</td>
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Significant difference (p = 0.96) Yes (p < 0.01)

MILK MATTERS

The major influence on pre-weaning growth of calves is milk production by the cows, which in turn is influenced by the age, genetics and nutrition of the cow. In the above case, a difference in ‘cow-factors’ (age and genetics), rather than ‘feed factors’ (feed growth, grazing pressure) before and after calving appears to have been the major influence on calf growth between birth and weaning. The relative influence of bull genetics on calf growth over this period appeared to be small.

FUTURE PROJECT DESIGN

This noted difference in calf growth on OMP in early 2009 has supported changes in the CAGSP project design. The cows have been re-mated to one group of herd bulls and randomly distributed into two grazing strategies. These two strategies will provide objective information on the effects of pasture-rest on land condition and cattle production for the arid rangelands of central Australia.
Hendra Virus (HeV), previously known as *equine morbillivirus* (EMV) is a disease for which emergency response measures are necessary, because it has the potential to be a serious zoonotic disease (transferable to humans) and there are serious public health and occupational safety issues.

Hendra Virus first emerged in Australia in August 1994, killing 13 horses and 1 person. Since then there have been 12 outbreaks of the disease, six people having become infected and three people have died. The mortality rate for horses is extremely high with 70% of infected animals dying from the virus. People become infected after coming into contact with nasal discharge of an infected horse. The virus is not thought to be highly contagious in people.

The onset of the virus is very swift, with people becoming extremely ill within 24 hours. The virus commonly affects the respiratory system and symptoms can resemble influenza. It can also affect the brain with encephalitis type symptoms including headaches, fever and drowsiness. Horses suffer from similar symptoms including frothy nasal discharge, fever, respiratory distress and increased heart rate.

Studies by QPI&F and CSIRO has found that the virus is commonly spread by fruit bats. They are hosts of the virus, meaning the virus is carried by the bats but it has little effect on them, and are thought to spread the virus through their urine, faeces and reproductive fluid. A virus like this is very hard to control and predict when cases will occur. The key is early identification, so exposure to humans and horses is kept to a minimum. So far there have been no recorded cases in the Northern Territory; however we must remain vigilant, especially where bat populations exist. The map below indicates the distribution of henipavirus (Hendra and Nipah virus) flying fox reservoirs.

There is currently no vaccine for the virus, but scientists are working to develop one.

**Prevention**

Stabling horses or moving them away from areas of bat activity during the high risk months of August to January should decrease the risk of exposure. All cases to date have occurred in horses kept in open paddocks where bats were active. Placing horses in paddocks that do not contain trees attractive to bats for either feeding or roosting should also decrease the risk of exposure. Horse feed bins or watering points should not be placed under trees where there is a risk if bats coming into the tree to feed, rest or roost.

Image courtesy of Wikipedia

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**A Northern Territory update:**

Hendra virus infection has been demonstrated to occur in fruit bats in the Darwin and Katherine areas. There have been no known cases of Hendra virus disease in horses or humans in the Northern Territory. All vets and horse owners should be aware of the risk of Hendra virus infection in horses and the risk of transmission of infection to people in close contact with infected horses.

Meetings will be held in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs over the next few months to update vets and horse owners. Internet and printed material will also be updated.

Brian Radunz  
Chief Veterinary Officer – DRDPIFR  
Phone 08 89992130  
Email Brian.Radunz@nt.gov.au

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* Hendra virus outbreaks  
* Nipah virus outbreaks  
◆ = distribution of Hendra virus flying fox reservoirs  
◆ = distribution of Nipah virus flying fox reservoirs

* Nipah virus is a virus similar to Hendra which affects pigs and humans who come into contact with pigs. It has similar symptoms and is also spread by flying foxes.
Launch of the Arid Zone and Tropic Zone
HorsesLandWater Resources

The Australian Government Caring for Our Country Program has funded the adaptation of the HorsesLandWater resources to suit Arid and Tropic peri-urban horse keeping areas of Australia. Project partners also included the Natural Resources Management Board, Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources. The HorsesLandWater team would also like to thank the Darwin Horse & Pony Club and many other horse owners in the NT who assisted through sharing information in forums, workshops and the provision of photographs.

MUCH NEEDED RESOURCE

“It has become quite apparent throughout this project that there is precious little information available for horse keepers on small properties in either tropic or arid areas of Australia” said Project Manager Julie Fiedler “With increasing population in key regional areas including Darwin, and with greater government and community expectations putting pressures on small farm managers to care for the environment, further research and extension work is greatly needed in these fields.”

The documents are available for free download from www.horseslandwater.com. Horse organisations and natural resource management advisory groups are invited to link to the site. Organisations delivering workshops or field days are invited to add their logo to the resources for special print runs or distribution to members.

For further information, please contact Julie Fiedler email horsesa@horsesa.asn.au or mobile 0402 488 306
This looks to be ready by next year. MLA is also keen to hold a Beef Up Forum in Alice Springs in February 2010. Chris Nott is currently gathering ideas for issues to be addressed on the day and would welcome any ideas from pastoralists.

The committee also did a tour around OMPRS and were able to view some of the Brahmans brought down from the Kidman Springs Research Station. With so much pasture growth over the summer the Dept is making the most of the feed available for their cattle.

Chris Nott will be attending the next NABRC meeting in Longreach at the end of August. The next ASPIAC meeting will be before the end of the year. If you have any issues or you would like to see any R&D issue addressed then please contact any of the members.

Current ASPIAC members:

Chris Nott, Alcoota Station (Chairman)
Liz Bird, Indiana Station
Dick Cazdow, Mt Riddock Station
Andrew Clarke, Numery Station
Lance Cramer, Temple Bar Station
Jamie Evans, Yambah Station

Tracey Hayes, Deepwell Station
Anne Kilgariff, Lyndavale Station
Sally Leigo, DRDPIFR (Secretary)
Chris Materne, DRDPIFR
Paul Smith, Tieyon Station

Commencement of the Livestock Act and Regulations

On the 1st July 2009 the new Livestock Act and Regulations will commence in the Northern Territory. The new legislation is an amalgamation of five previous Acts.

- Stock Diseases Act and Regulations
- Brands Act and Regulations
- Exotic Diseases (Animals) Compensation Act and Regulations
- Stock (Control of Hormonal Growth Promotants) Act and Regulations
- Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Act and Regulations

The new legislation focuses on a consistent national approach to livestock market access and the adoption of industry managed quality assurance programs. The purpose of the Livestock Act and Regulations is to support market access by providing protection to livestock industries through disease surveillance and control, identification, traceability and effective disease responses in the event of a disease outbreak.

Livestock welfare is covered by the Animal Welfare Act. The use of chemicals in livestock, chemical residue surveillance and control are covered by the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Control of Use Act.


If you have questions concerning the Livestock Act and Regulations contact your Regional Livestock Biosecurity Officer

ALICE SPRINGS RURAL REVIEW – SEPTEMBER 2009
More Grass Than Cattle – What to Do?
C Materne, Pastoral Production, Alice Springs

Good pasture growth on the Old Man Plains Research Station (OMP) over Nov/Dec 2008 has left us questioning the question “What to do with this extra feed?” An issue, but a welcomed one!

DRDPIFR is demonstrating two variable stocking rate strategies on OMP under the Caring for our Country funding program, and require stock numbers to be adjusted every year depending on feed availability.

Grazing strategies demonstrated on OMP:
1. Variable Stocking + Paddock Rotation
2. Variable Stocking + No Paddock Rotation

Seasonal Variability on OMP
Following an exceptionally dry year in 2007/08 stock numbers on OMP dropped to 0.1AE/km² of watered area (Figure 1).

The pasture growth in Nov/Dec 2008 increased the potential stocking rate to 8.1AE/km²—an increase so great that the grazing strategy project was short of cattle numbers to utilise the available feed.

What options did we have with this extra feed?
1. Use the extra feed
   - Increase cattle numbers for short term profit
   - Strategically burn for woody vegetation control and long term sustainability
2. Save the feed
   - Spell for land condition improvement
   - Spell for drought mitigation

Options we chose
1. Use the extra feed (increased cattle numbers)
   - By transferring all available cattle on OMP to the two paddocks used by the grazing strategy project. This only raised the stocking rate to 20% of the paddocks' grazing potential.
   - By agisting 144 Brahman cross cows from the Douglas Daily Research Station in a destocked paddock.
2. Save the feed
   - By default, under-stocking the grazing strategy project paddocks. This leaves 24-months worth of feed for the existing stock irrespective of the coming seasonal conditions.
   - By spelling paddocks for drought mitigation and an AI program.

**What is a Variable Stocking Strategy?**
Annual stock number adjustment to match seasonal conditions and feed availability, and prevent pasture degradation. The alternative is a ‘Set Stocking Strategy’, which involves limited stock number adjustment but aims to achieve long-term pasture sustainability by matching periods of heavy grazing pressure during poor seasons with pasture recovery during good seasons.

**Biosecurity Issues with Restocking**
The herd management strategy on OMP is to maintain a ‘closed’ breeder herd to minimise the disease risk from fertility-related diseases, such as ‘Vibrio’ and ‘Trich’. A ‘closed herd’ has limited the more conventional restocking options available through buying or agistment of additional animals.
Changes to 1080 Management of Pest Animals in the Northern Territory

Dr Helen Neave, Senior Scientist, Conservation and Wildlife, Alice Springs

Pest animal species are a serious concern throughout the Northern Territory because of the potential negative impacts on the natural and agricultural environments. To increase flexibility and improve management opportunities for landholders, the Northern Territory Government has made significant amendments to the use of 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate) for the control of pest animal species in the Northern Territory.

Amendments to the use of 1080

Prior to January 2009, the Northern Territory Government performed a lead role in all baiting activities for pest animal management in the Territory.

However, amendments to the use of 1080 now mean that landholders have several options for managing pest animals. Landholders can:

1. Undertake the relevant training so they can lay manufactured dry meat baits themselves.
2. Engage a suitably qualified contractor to lay manufactured dry meat baits on their behalf.
3. Continue to use the existing fresh meat baiting service provided by the Northern Territory Government, which will continue to be offered free of charge until 31 August 2009. After this time, a fee for service will apply.

Training requirements for landholders

In the Northern Territory, 1080 is a Schedule 7 (S7) Dangerous Poison and a Restricted Chemical Product. Landholders who wish to lay manufactured dry meat 1080 baits on their property must complete the following training:

- ChemCert® Certificate Level 3 or SmartTrain® Chemical Application Course AQF3 through an accredited training provider;
- 1080 training program through an accredited training provider (RTE3406A: Implement a Vertebrate Pest Control Program).

Documentation and authorisation

Once landholders have completed the relevant training, they will need to obtain:

1. A 1080 User Authorisation. This authorisation remains current for 5 years and is issued by the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources (DRDPIFR).
2. An Approval to Purchase a 1080 Chemical Product and Conduct a 1080 Baiting Program. This authorisation remains current for 2 years and is also issued by DRDPIFR.
3. A Permit to Take Protected Wildlife for 1080 Pest Animal Control. This is issued by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) and remains current for a period of 90 days.

Safety

- Always store and transport 1080 baits in a secure, lockable and fixed container away from pets, livestock and children.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing.
- Always read the label before using the poison (including the small print).
- Avoid contamination of the skin, especially the eyes and mouth.
- Never eat, drink or smoke when mixing or applying pesticides.
- Always have plenty of water available for washing.
- Never leave baits unattended.
- The 1080 material safety data sheet and appropriate first aid instructions should be available at all times.
- Never allow children or other unauthorised persons near the baiting operation.
- Always ensure your property is signposted and neighbours are notified when baiting is occurring.

Future plans

To further improve pest animal management opportunities for landholders, DRDPIFR plans to introduce a training program to enable accredited Pest Animal Controllers to become authorised to prepare and lay fresh meat baits using liquid 1080.
A QUICK GUIDE TO THE NEW 1080 BAITING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE NT

1- **Dry Manufactured Baits such as Doggone® etc. are now available for use in the NT.**

A landholder wishing to conduct a baiting program with them on their property must obtain BOTH –
- ‘Approval to purchase a 1080 Product and Conduct a baiting Program’*
- ‘Permit to Take Protected Wildlife -1080 Pest Animal Control’

The actual collection and laying of the baits must be done by a person holding a ‘1080 User Authorisation’*

2- **Fresh Meat Baiting**

Currently this is carried out by NRETAS Staff at no cost to the landholder. **NRETAS will commence charging for this service on 1 September 2009.**

After September 1 a landholder wishing to conduct a baiting program with either Fresh Meat or Dry Manufactured Baits on their property must obtain both –

‘Approval to purchase a 1080 Product and Conduct a baiting Program’*
‘Permit to Take Protected Wildlife -1080 Pest Animal Control’

The actual collection and laying of the baits must be done by a person holding a ‘1080 User Authorisation’*

A strictly controlled number of persons in addition to NRETAS staff will be Authorised to produce and supply fresh meat baits under stringent conditions and subject to regular audits. Contact Chemical Services Section DRDPIFR for details.

**THE FIRST 1080 TRAINING WORKSHOP WAS HELD AT ERLDUNDA FROM THE 9-11TH OF SEPTEMBER**

Further information
Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources (DRDPIFR)
Chemical Services

(08) 8999 2344 or (08) 8999 2016
www.nt.gov.au/d/Primary_Industry/

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS)
Conservation and Wildlife Management
Darwin (08) 8995 5008
Katherine (08) 8973 8860
Alice Springs (08) 8951 8283
or (08) 8951 8266
www.nt.gov.au/wildlife/

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS)
Permits
(08) 8999 4486
pwpermits.nretas@nt.gov.au
www.nt.gov.au/nretas/parks/permits

Poisons Information Centre
131 126

Train safe NT
(ChemCert® plus 1080 supplement training)
(08) 8985 6827
www.trainsafe.net

Charles Darwin University
(SmartTrain® plus 1080 supplement training)
Darwin (08) 8946 7513
Katherine (08) 8973 8311
Alice Springs (08) 8959 5247
The Hon. Tony Burke MP

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Government accepts advice on Northern Territory EC region

The Government has accepted independent advice on a request from the Northern Territory Government to reinstate Exceptional Circumstances drought assistance for part of the South East Alice Springs area.

Exceptional Circumstances assistance for the area was not extended beyond 15 June 2009.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry figures show seven producers were receiving Exceptional Circumstances interest rate subsidies in the South East Alice Springs area. No producers were accessing income support.

In June, Northern Territory Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources Kon Vatskalis asked the Government to consider further extending the assistance for one section of the original area.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke referred the request to the independent National Rural Advisory Council for advice.

The council considered updated information from the National Agricultural Monitoring System and advice from the Bureau of Rural Sciences.

It found that seasonal conditions had improved sufficiently to enable the majority of producers to return to typical management practices for the area and that conditions had not changed significantly since its original assessment in April.

Mr Burke said the Government had accepted the NRAC’s advice not to further extend EC assistance in the requested area.

"Importantly, we recognise the current system is not working for farmers – that’s why we’re continuing to finalise our drought reforms," Mr Burke said.

"Under the current system of drawing lines on a map, one farmer could be eligible for assistance and their neighbour across the fence may not be eligible.

"We want to help farmers prepare for future challenges, including climate change, rather than waiting until they are in crisis to offer assistance.”
**NTLIS for Sheep and Goats**

**Greg Crawford, Pastoral, Alice Springs**

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for cattle has been up and running in the NT for 18 months. The time has come in the NT for sheep and goats to enter the system. All states and the NT have agreed that from 1 January 2009 NLIS for sheep and goats will commence therefore NLIS for sheep and goats is now compulsory in the NT.

As with cattle, NLIS for sheep and goats is used to enhance Australia's ability to quickly contain a major food safety or disease incident within Australia.

A few things to be aware of

- All properties with livestock or livestock travelling in the NT including sheep and goats are required to be registered with a Property Identification Code (PIC) and have a NT Waybill.
- Sheep and goat tags are NOT electronic tags like cattle. NLIS approved transaction tags will be used.

Breeder tags (leaving their property of birth) are colour coded for the animals year of birth and must be applied before the animal leaves the property. All subsequent movements to another property require a pink post breeder tag to be attached before the animal leaves the property. If a tag is lost it should be replaced with a post breeder tag. All attached NLIS tags must not be removed from the sheep or goats ear therefore any existing NLIS tags from the previous properties must remain in the sheep or goats ear.

If you are moving goats to the show, agistment or for service you are required to have an NLIS tag attached. You do not need to attach a new tag for the return trip providing ownership of the animal does not change and they are returning to same origin property.

A fact sheet and tag order form can be found at www.nt.gov.au/d/nlis or contact your local Stock Inspector for further information.

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**AZRI Library**

**Bid Rose, Policy and Services, Alice Springs**

The Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI) Library is the oldest special library in the Northern Territory. When libraries are described as “special” it refers to their client and collection focus being specialised, but the AZRI Library is pretty special in more ways than one!

AZRI Library has been operational in one form or another, under one Departmental name or another, since 1947. Originally established to support the Animal Industry Branch (AIB) the library has a long history of collecting and preserving material on Central Australian pastoralism, horticulture, land management and agriculture in arid lands. There are some rare gems on the library shelves; runs of hard-to-get journals that go back past most collections held in Australia, photographs, memoirs, internal reports and unpublished material that are of great historical interest, but which also map the development of many agricultural pursuits in the Northern Territory.

However, the majority of the collection and services of AZRI Library are firmly focussed on the future. Current books, journals, reports and electronic media relevant to primary industry are actively collected. Access to online databases such as CAB Abstracts, Scopus and the Australian Agriculture and Natural Resources Compilation are available through the library and accessible from all DRDPIFR pc’s. The library staff can help with training and familiarising DRDPIFR staff with all our on-line resources and catalogues. If you are time-poor or don’t spend much time at your desk, we are happy to help with literature searches and finding information at your request. If you have a particular field of interest we can keep you up-to-date on any new articles and research published on the topic.

You can find us, along with the Berrimah Farm Library online at [http://uluru.nt.gov.au/lrc/](http://uluru.nt.gov.au/lrc/) or you contact us by any means listed below.

Phone 895 18134
Fax 895 18124
Email azri.library@nt.gov.au

Opening hours: Mon – Fri, 8.00am – 4.15pm.
Look what’s local
Gabrielle Ellis, Sustainable Plant Industries, Alice Springs

Most of the food available in Alice Springs is freighted from elsewhere via road or rail. Many people are often surprised to learn of the variety of fresh produce grown in the Central Australian region of the Northern Territory. With increasing interest in knowing where our food originates, and greater awareness about reducing the miles that food has to be transported, being able to source produce locally is gaining more attention.

While ‘local’ is certainly a flexible term, the basic concept is simple: local foods are produced as close to home as possible. Buying local supports a more sustainable food system because true sustainability goes beyond the methods used in food production to include every step that brings food from farm to plate.

Local food production can be thought of in concentric circles that start with growing food at home. The next rings out might be food grown in our immediate area - then region, state, country, and beyond. For some parts of the year or for some products that thrive in the local climate, it is possible to buy closer to home. At other times, or for less common products, an expanded reach may be required.

One easy way to start buying local is to eat seasonally. This essentially means eating produce that is currently being produced locally. This is an excellent way to support local agriculture and horticulture, and associated businesses. The table below outlines what is grown locally and when the produce is in season.

Sources

If you would like further information in relation to this article please contact:

Gabrielle Ellis
Industry Development Officer
Sustainable Plant Industries
Arid Zone Research Institute
PO Box 8760
Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: (08) 8951 8136;
Fax: (08) 8951 8126
Mob: 0427 796 854
Email: gabrielle.ellis@nt.gov.au

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Seasonal Eating, the table below shows some examples of seasonally available fresh produce grown in the Central Australian region. - Coloured areas indicate harvest times.
The Northern Territory is thought to be free from the major honeybee pests and diseases that occur in other areas of Australia. To ensure the Northern Territory maintains its free status, a biosecurity program has been developed to help protect the Northern Territory from the introduction and establishment of honeybee pests and diseases that are present interstate and overseas.

Part of the biosecurity program is the compulsory registration of bee hives. It is a requirement under the Livestock Act 2009 that every person keeping bees in the Northern Territory is registered. Registration is essential to identify the owner and location of bee hives in the event of a honeybee pest or disease incursion. The registration and owner contact details will be maintained on a database.

To register beehives in the Northern Territory, please complete a beehive registration form. The form will be available at the department's display at all Rural shows and is also available from the Apiary Officer or website at www.nt.gov.au/d/Primary_Industry/Content/File/biosecurity/crocodile/FS_PIC_RegForm_BEES.pdf

Another part of the biosecurity program is monitoring and surveillance for early detection of honey bee pests and diseases. It is important that beekeepers monitor the health of beehives by checking the production and appearance of brood, honey production and unusual signs of honeybee behaviour and appearance. A field identification handbook has been produced to assist beekeepers and is available from the Apiary Officer. Any suspicions should be reported to the Apiary Officer for diagnosis and to exclude notifiable diseases. A list of notifiable disease of honeybees is available at www.nt.gov.au/d/Primary_Industry/Content/File/biosecurity/Report_Form_for_Notifiable_Diseases%20bees%20v1.pdf

General surveillance is supplemented where necessary with surveillance targeted for the detection of specific pests and diseases. The department has recently initiated a Territory wide surveillance program to confirm the health status of Territory bees. A workshop will be held in August to discuss the potential risks for industry and develop strategies to prevent and manage the risks.

Please contact the Apiary Officer should you have further enquires or questions on honeybees in the Northern Territory.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Vicki Simlesa, Apiary Officer, DRDPIFR
GPO Box 3000, Darwin NT 0801 Ph: (08) 8999 2036 Fax: (08) 8999 2146 Mobile: 0401 115853 or email vicki.simlesa@nt.gov.au
Pastoral Production Welcomes New Director
Scott Wauchope
Richard Galton Chief Executive, DRDPIFR

The recruitment and selection process for Director, Pastoral Production has been finalised, with Mr Scott Wauchope accepting the position and started with us in the middle of September. Scott has lived and worked in the rangelands and worked with the pastoral industry and natural resource management in both arid and semi-arid tropical environments for the past 17 years.

Having lived in the Northern Territory for more than 30 years, Scott has had a close association with the pastoral industry in one way or another.

His keen interest in the industry saw him go to Roseworthy Agricultural College where he completed a Batchelor of Applied Science in Agriculture and pursued a career working in the rangelands. Through his career he has gained a sound knowledge and understanding of the pastoral industry in both the NT and WA.

Over the past decade Scott has held a number of management positions in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

He was the Director of the Pastoral Land Management Branch in the NT from July 2000 through until April 2005 where he was involved in the review of the Northern Territory Pastoral Land Act.

Scott and his family then spent time in Western Australia where he took up the role of District Manager in Kalgoorlie and later Carnarvon with the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA).

Scott and his family decided to move back to the NT in late 2008 where he has undertaken short term contract positions as the acting Executive Officer with the NT Natural Resource Management Board and more recently as the Manager of the Land Management Unit with NRETAS.

Upcoming Events

14-15 September – Northern Grazing Systems workshop – Katherine
17-19 September – Preg testing school – Mulga Park
1-2 October – NTCA meeting - Alice Springs
2 October – Old Man Plains Field Day - Being in the grass business
7-13 October – NTCA workplace relations workshop – NT WIDE
12-22 October – women as leaders workshop – NT WIDE
Hi folks!

I have met many of you through my previous work with CLMA and at many other industry gatherings in Alice Springs, various field days and other events on the local social calendar. For those who don’t know me much, I’ll give a brief background blurb.

Until moving to Alice Springs I have always worked in the pastoral industry, following the chain of production from Bos indicus breeder operations and stud herds to steer depots and live export operations in northern NT and East Kimberley regions, to finally feedlot production with Bos taurus cattle in southern NSW. I’m a bit of a Brahman/Santa/Droughtie girl at heart but definitely can appreciate the fine feminine frame of a Polli Hereford cow or two, or a mob of t-bones, scotch fillet and rumps (steers) walking slowly into water. Mmmm yum!

This year and into 2010, CA GLM graduates will be invited to follow-up days, throw their hats in the ring for group study tours and also discuss the next GLM workshop pencilled in for Oct/Nov/Dec this year. Over the next few weeks I will be keeping everyone informed with letters, phone calls and in time station visits. The GLM movement is again on track and it is exciting to follow on from such an awesome officer as Ellena Hannah, who took on the Katherine GLM position in late 2008.

To discuss anything about the Grazing Land Management workshop and dedicated support for graduates, I am available to come to you, even to assist you to re-float your plans if your GLM work has become grounded or has sank just out of port. Have saddle, will travel. Having worked in the industry I’m quite aware that you cannot drop everything when someone turns up to visit so I am quite happy to help brand a few(!) calves and am interested in seeing the country on a bore-run to get a feel for the place. Keep it in mind…

Hope to catch up personally over the next few months to see how Grazing Land Management can assist your operation. I’m just here to help!

Jillian Fisher
Central Australia – Grazing Land Management Officer
Ph: 8951 8143
E: jillian.fisher@nt.gov.au
All Pastoralists are asked to keep the following day free:

FRIDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2009

OLD MAN PLAINS RESEARCH STATION

FIELD DAY

“BEING IN THE GRASS BUSINESS”

The day’s agenda will be forwarded around in the coming weeks!

Please contact Sally Leigo if you have any questions 08 8951 8144 or sally.leigo@nt.gov.au
AussieGRASS – September 2009 Update

AussieGRASS is a valuable tool to help pastoralists make informed land management decisions. It is a spatial modelling framework that estimates various pasture characteristics, such as growth and total standing dry matter, over a given time period and compares it with historical records. It does this by using rainfall, climate, soil and pasture type information to estimate average pasture growth (among other parameters) over 5km x 5km square grids across Australia.

For more information on AussieGRASS see http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/ or view these maps along with numerous other valuable model outputs and production statistics on the new interactive National Agricultural Monitoring System (NAMS) website http://www.nams.gov.au/.

Past
Pasture Growth Relative to Historical Records since 1957

The past 6 months modelled pasture growth (figure 1) shows the majority of the NT has experienced below average growth conditions. This is generally expected for the majority of the NT during the traditional ‘dry season’. However, the Alice Springs region that can receive rain from southerly frontal activity has also experienced below to severely low rainfall and growth over this period.

The past 12 months modelled growth (figure 2) shows average to well above average growth across the Alice Springs Region and Northern Region. Good 2008/09 growing conditions over much of the northern parts of the NT and good November/December 2008 rains across the southern Alice Springs region, have been a major contributor to this. The Tanami and north western Alice Springs regions, however indicate only average to below average growing conditions have been experience over the past 12 months.
Present
Total Standing Dry Matter (TSDM)

Total standing dry matter (TSDM) is estimated by incorporating pasture carried over from previous seasons (less grazing, fire and detachment) and the current season’s growth.

The TSDM map in figure 3 indicates pasture quantity continues to vary considerably across the NT. The majority of the Alice Springs pastoral region shows generally less than 500kg/ha of standing grass.

Future
Growth Predications

Figure 3: TSDM (kg/ha) as of 31st August 2009

Figure 4 represents the chance of exceeding median pasture growth over the coming three month period based on the SOI index, and indicates that the chance of exceeding the median growth across the Alice Springs region is generally low.

Figure 5 shows the level of skill or confidence in these growth predictions across central Australia is relatively high.

Figure 4: Chances of exceeding Median Growth from September to November 2009

Figure 5: LEPS Growth Forecast Skill Based on SOI Phase 5 in August 2009

PERSONALISED PROPERTY MAPS

Are you interested in any detailed AussieGRASS maps for your property?
If so get in touch with Chris Materne RDPIFR Alice Springs (89518135) chris.materne@nt.gov.au.
General NT and Australia scale maps are available on line at:
A reminder to all horse & livestock owners

If you are moving horses or livestock below the tick line they are required under the Stock Diseases Act to be treated for cattle tick under the supervision of a stock inspector before the movement commences.

Stock inspectors require 72 hours notice of forthcoming horse sprays and livestock dipping. This allows sufficient time for an inspector to be made available at the requested time.

**Darwin Region**

Ian Doddrell  
Regional Stock Inspector  
Ph: 08 8999 2030  
Fax: 08 8999 2146

**Katherine Region**

Greg Scott  
Regional Stock Inspector  
Ph: 08 8973 9765  
Fax: 08 8973 9759

**Tennant Creek Region**

Ted Martin  
Regional Stock Inspector  
Ph: 08 8962 4490  
Fax: 08 8962 4480

**Alice Springs Region**

Greg Crawford  
Animal Health Officer  
Ph: 08 8951 8125  
Fax: 08 8951 8123

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Brands Audit Letters still outstanding

Audit of Northern Territory Brands  
Commened January 2009

All registered owners of an NT Brand were sent an Audit letter dated 29th January 2009.

ALL Brands Audit letters MUST be signed off and returned to LISA / Brands Clerk urgently for processing.

If you did not receive this letter or you have misplaced it, please contact LISA urgently on 8999 2033 to receive another copy.

YES everyone must yes or no and return their Audit letter to LISA for processing.

If you do not return the letter, how does the Registrar of Brands know:  
Firstly, that you have received it; and Secondly, that your information is correct.

As the owner of an NT Brand, it is your responsibility to ensure your details are correct otherwise you risk having your livestock brand cancelled if there is no reply to correspondence.

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Property Identification Code (PIC)

Does your rural block / property have Livestock (Cattle, Buffalo, Pigs, Sheep, Goats, Camels, Deer)?

Is your property registered with a Property Identification Code (PIC)? If not, you need to do so as soon as possible. PIC Registration is free of charge – either complete PIC Registration form - [www.nt.gov.au/nils](http://www.nt.gov.au/nils) or contact your local Stock Inspector.

Legislation states:  
The owner of a holding on which identifiable livestock are kept or depastured must have the holding registered with a property identification code (PIC).

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Waybills – PINK COPIES

Have you sent your PINK copies in to your local Stock Inspector recently?

It is a mandatory requirement for cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, camels, deer and pigs owners to complete a waybill whenever stock are moved outside the boundaries of a property.

Note: Pink copies must be sent within 28 days.

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**Alice Springs Region**

Greg Crawford  
Animal Health Officer  
Ph: 08 8951 8125  
Fax: 08 8951 8123

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**NT Property Identification Code (PIC) Learner Database**

http://pic primary.industry.nt.gov.au/

**NT Brands Register Search Database**

http://brand.industry.nt.gov.au/
Live Cattle Exports via Darwin Port – AUGUST 2009

Please note that the “NT CATTLE” figures are NT cattle exported through the Port of Darwin only. Some NT cattle are exported through interstate ports.

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<th>Destination</th>
<th>TOTAL CATTLE (including interstate)</th>
<th>NT CATTLE</th>
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<td>2007 2008 Last year YTD 1-31 AUG Previous Month</td>
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<td>4,160 3,230 2,589 1,891 900 0 +900</td>
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<td>10,321 11,245 6,317 6,350 0 2,689 -2,689</td>
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<td>SARAWAK</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>283,046 264,944 251,007 185,115 20,376 28,052 -7,677</td>
<td>247,281 295,539 199,241 176,241 19,761 28,052 -6,272</td>
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August at a glance:

- 20,376 head of cattle through the Port of Darwin during August, 7,677 head less than July and 15,891 less than August last year.
- 2009 total cattle figures indicate 65,894 head less than the same time last year. NT cattle 21,100 less than last year.
**GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ASPIAC</td>
<td>Alice Springs Pastoral Industry Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>CAGLM</td>
<td>Central Australian Grazing Land Management</td>
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<td>CLMA</td>
<td>Central Land Management Association</td>
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<td>CSIRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Scientific &amp; Industrial Research Organisation</td>
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<td>DAFF</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture, Fisheries &amp; Forestry</td>
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<td>DCQ</td>
<td>Desert Channels Queensland Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education &amp; Training</td>
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<td>DK-CRC</td>
<td>Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre</td>
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<td>DNRETAS</td>
<td>Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport</td>
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<td>DRDPIFR</td>
<td>Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fishers &amp; Resources</td>
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<td>GRASSp</td>
<td>Pasture Growth Model</td>
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<td>MLA</td>
<td>Meat &amp; Livestock Australia</td>
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<td>North Australian Beef Research Council</td>
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<td>Northern Beef Research Update Conference</td>
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<td>Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association</td>
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<td>Radio Frequency Identification Device</td>
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<td>Victoria River District</td>
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PRODUCED BY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PRIMARY INDUSTRY, FISHERIES & RESOURCES