



Northern muster

Information for rural business in north Queensland

Producing quality food and fibre
for a healthy bottom line

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Issue 21 April 2009

editorial

Do you know someone who would like to receive the *Northern muster*, but is not currently on our mailing list?

If so, fill in the Feedback Sheet with their correct mail address and fax or mail it in to us.

We do need accurate postal addresses. Every issue we get *Northern musters* ‘returned to sender, unknown at this address’. We are obliged to delete these from our mailing list, so please take the time to check that we have your correct mailing address.

Did you know that we now have an electronic alternative? We can send you an email with a download link to a PDF version of the *Muster*.

Remember to fill in the Feedback Sheet to ensure we include topics and issues relevant to you or your business.

Alan Laing
Editor



Different urea percentage in dry licks

This is one of the questions that we got in feedback to the *Northern muster*.

'Results of any research done showing effects from feeding dry lick containing different concentrations of urea.'

I will answer the question from the perspective of how much protein supplement do cattle require and delivery of that supplement.

Protein supplement

We feed urea dry licks in the dry season as an option to supply a protein supplement. If cattle need a protein supplement in the dry season, adult cattle need 150 g per day of protein and weaner/yearlings need 100 g of protein.

These are long proven levels having been researched and developed over 40 years or more.

Supplying the protein supplement

Urea supplies these levels of protein at

- 55 g per day for adults
- 30 to 35 g per day for weaner/yearlings

Different percentages of urea in a dry lick mean different amounts should be eaten per day.

Lick	1	2	3	4
Urea %	30	25	20	15
grams per day of dry lick	160	193	240	320

For adults, at 30% urea they should be eating 160 grams of dry lick per day. At 15% urea, they should be eating 320 grams of dry lick per day. Urea is bitter and at higher levels, intakes are likely to be lower.

Alan Laing
Extension Officer (Beef)
DEEDI, Ayr
Ph 07 4720 5115

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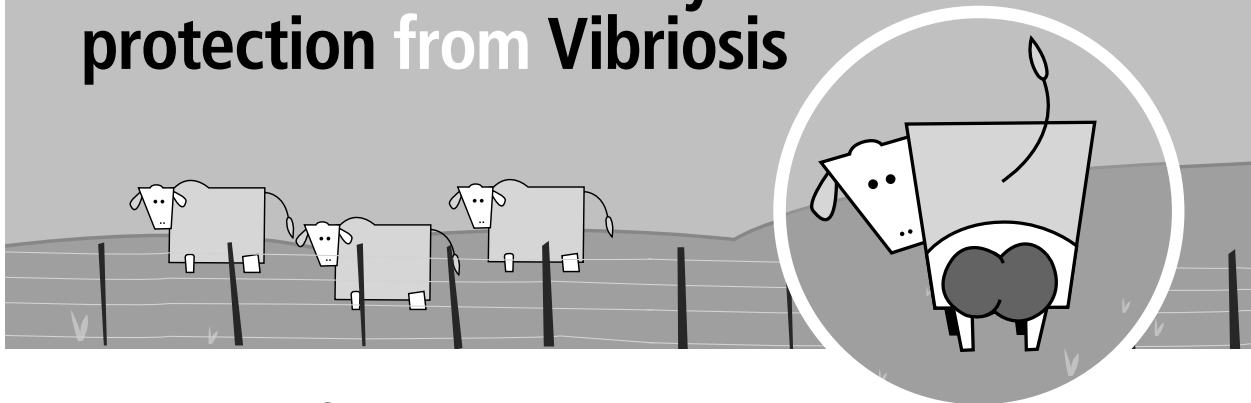
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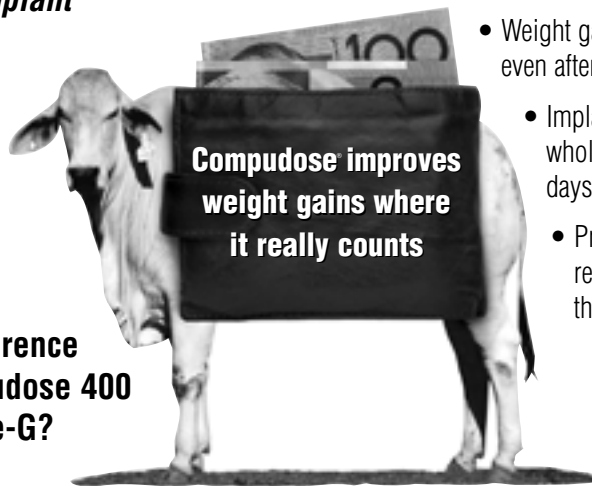
Compudose 400 is the proven way of maximising growth rates in steers and spayed heifers, regardless of the season. It is the only implant independently proven to have a functional life of 400 days.

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Compudose-G (which has the same active ingredients as revalor[†]-G) is a short-acting implant which has a functional life of less than 100 days. While it delivers superior short-term liveweight gain advantages, these benefits can be lost if cattle are not re-implanted. As such, Compudose-G should be implanted 100 days before anticipated turn-off, or ideally, as the terminal implant as part of a whole-of-life strategy.

For more information, please contact Elanco on 1800 226 324



Compudose 400 at a glance

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- Works year round – implant when it suits you
- Weight gain benefits are maintained, even after the pay-out period expires
- Implant at branding as part of a whole-of-life strategy, or 400 days before anticipated turn-off
- Provides an economic response, regardless of the season

The implant specialists

Elanco has a complete range of long, medium and short-acting implants suitable for maximising growth rates in grassfed cattle. No matter what your target market, the strategic use of Compudose implants can maximise the profitability of your beef operation by helping your cattle achieve market specifications sooner.

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Better decisions in the Business of Beef workshop July 2009

(Breedcow and Dynama software and budgeting methods training)

A training workshop for existing and intending users of Breedcow and Dynama herd budgeting software will be held in Townsville in July.

This workshop will train users to apply standard farm business management budgeting and project assessment techniques using the Breedcow and Dynama software. The workshop and the software will enable you to:

- Compare projected profit from age of turnoff and husbandry choice options
- Estimate future profit, cash flow, indebtedness and net worth based on herd growth and turnoff projections
- Compare purchase options for pasture fattening or backgrounding

- Compare forced sales options for drought or cash relief
- Estimate return on investment, e.g. property purchase or improvement, when the investment occurs over several years and the return builds up over time.

Dates, cost and information on the FarmReady training reimbursement grant will be advised as planning progresses.

Interest in this workshop will also be canvassed at Beef Australia 2009.

If you wish to come to this workshop, or think you might but are still uncertain, an initial expression of interest will get you on to the temporary email list. Email replies will be preferred. Firm enrolments will be taken closer to the date.

WE (Bill) Holmes

Principal Agricultural Economist

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Bill.holmes@dpi.qld.gov.au

One-on-one technical assistance at Beef 2009

In a first for the tri-annual beef expo, Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries is offering producers the chance to book one-on-one meetings to discuss issues specific to their property needs.

Meeting spaces will be created in the the government pavilion's FutureBeef display area and an extension officer with expertise in your area of interest will be available to meet with you.

FutureBeef manager Brigid Nelson said that this was a first for such an activity at the beef expo and she hoped many producers took up the opportunity.

'It is important that producers book a meeting time prior to Beef Australia 2009,' Brigid said.

'That way we can ensure we have an extension officer available that meets your needs.'

Brigid said she hoped that producers would also take the opportunity to listen to the FutureBeef – Smart science, new technologies, and profitable beef businesses seminars at the expo from 8:30 am to 1 pm on Tuesday 5 May.

'We will take you under the microscope to look at the work our scientists are doing in the fields of

molecular and genetic technologies, and will also go behind the cheque-book and learn about the economic drivers of a beef business and then "go out to the paddock", meet some producers, and hear how they are integrating new technologies into their business. The seminars will inform you about the latest advancements in sustainable leucaena production.'

'There is sure to be something for everyone there and afterwards we will invite you back to the government pavilion for a sausage sizzle!'

Producers can book meetings to discuss any issues pertaining to property management including:

- animal nutrition
- sustainable grazing
- reproduction and genetics
- animal health
- greenhouse emissions and carbon
- business management.

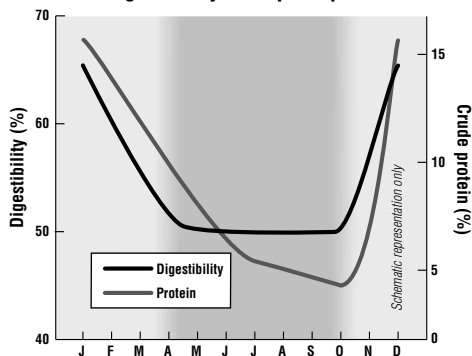
Beef Australia 2009 runs from the 4 to 7 May. To make an appointment you can book on-line at <http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/beef> and click the Beef Australia 2009 feature button to secure your preferred meeting. Alternatively, you may book a meeting by phoning 13 25 23.

The essential ingredient

Overcoming the “nutrient gap”

Tropical pastures can sustain high growth rates during the wet season. But after a relatively short growing period, their nutritional value declines rapidly. Protein and energy levels quickly fall beneath minimum requirements, leading to dramatic liveweight loss in cattle.

Protein and digestibility of tropical pastures



Pastures become more fibrous as they mature, further reducing digestibility and voluntary feed intake. In many cases, cattle become physically full before they can consume sufficient levels of nutrients. These deficiencies can have a significant impact on the growth rates, health, fertility and overall performance of your cattle.

Supplementation via loose licks and molasses aims to bridge the “nutrient gap” between what the animal needs and what the pasture actually supplies. This “nutrient gap” is most evident during the dry season.

An effective supplementation program keeps your cattle moving forward through the dry season, thereby improving your ability to achieve demanding market specifications for grassfed and live export markets.

For further information, contact your feed manufacturer or Elanco on 1800 226 324

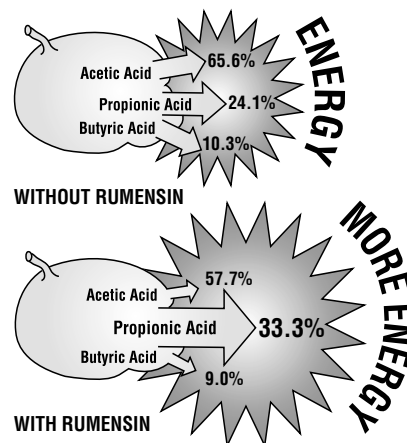
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Rumensin® is the essential ingredient in all feed supplements. No matter what type of feed is provided or at what time of the year, Rumensin helps cattle to digest their food more efficiently.

Put simply, this means more energy in the feed is made available to the animal from every mouthful consumed, thereby improving feed conversion efficiency (i.e. liveweight gain relative to feed intake) regardless of the pasture quality or the level of supplementary feeding.

Besides improving feed efficiency, Rumensin is the proven way of improving growth rates and reproductive performance in grassfed cattle, as well as controlling coccidiosis.² If your lick or molasses doesn't contain Rumensin, then you're not getting the most out of your investment in feed supplementation.

Effect of Rumensin on volatile fatty acid production (molar percentage)¹



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¹BF2703. ²Rumensin is registered for improved feed efficiency and as an aid in the control of bloat in feedlot cattle; for improved feed efficiency, weight gain and reproductive performance in heifers; and as an aid in the prevention of coccidiosis caused by *Eimeria zuernii* and *E. bovis*. *Elanco®, Rumensin® and the diagonal colour bar are trademarks of Eli Lilly and Company. Rumensin® is a trademark for Elanco's brand of monensin sodium. WORDSMITH28051



Sustainable tree stocking rates increase overall productivity

Achieving a sustainable stocking rate is a crucial step towards boosting beef production and ultimately every cattle producer's bottom line.

Likewise, sustainable tree growth and timber production in native forests can also be affected – positively or negatively – by the stocking rate or number of trees per hectare.

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Managed spotted gum forest can provide a significant secondary income through timber production to complement a grazing enterprise

AgForests coordinator Sam Ellis said that if trees are overcrowded then growth is inhibited, which can cause a lockdown for many years during which no tree growth is achieved.

However, by appropriately managing the native forest environment it is possible that significantly more timber production potential can be achieved over the long term.

The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* provides an exemption for forest practice, which is referred to as the code applying to a native forest practice on freehold land.

Under the code, producers can continue to conduct an ongoing forest business on freehold land in remnant or coloured country.

Legitimate forestry practices include activities such as thinning, harvesting, planting, or burning to manage regeneration or hazardous fuel loads, soil disturbance to encourage regeneration and removal of non-native vegetation.

AgForce's training division AgForests is part of the AgForward project and provides nationally accredited one-day workshops aimed at assisting producers to understand their rights under the code.

Producers can also learn how to manage a native forest to increase its productive potential by having the optimal 'stocking' rate.

Through the workshops, producers can develop skills to:

- Measure the volume of timber per tree
- Assess timber quality
- Conduct a forest practice thinning operation
- Determine the correct stocking rate for their country
- Take control of the situation when selling timber
- Find a balance between trees and grazing that increases farm income.

The training is free to producers and workshop locations are determined by expressions of interest. AgForests is looking for landholders interested in hosting workshops between May and September.

More information about AgForests can be found at www.agforests.com.au or by contacting Sam Ellis on 0427 694 771 or emailing sam.ellis@agforests.com.au

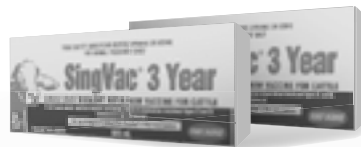
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Market report

March 2009

Since our last report many districts in the north have experienced heavy rain and flooding. The southern gulf area had been particularly bad with the flood water causing severe damage to infrastructure and cattle numbers. Stock losses are sure to be severe with the flood waters covering vast areas of the gulf for many weeks. Producers on those affected properties will suffer the impact of the damage and cattle losses for many years. Many other districts that received the heavy rain still have problems with boggy roads and paddocks that is restricting any sort of repair or cattle work. Water springs have appeared in all sorts of places that havn't been seen for years.

Over the last few months the cattle market has been fairly ordinary, with southern abattoirs opening in late January with slaughter rates for best milk and two tooth cattle just over \$3/kg

With the widespread rain, ordinary rates and lack of cattle, most abattoirs have lost plenty of kill days.

Our export market analysts have reported that Australian cattle prices are predicted to improve slightly during 2009 on the basis of the low value of the Australian Dollar and our export competitiveness, but the market is still fairly flat.

2008 figures from ABS report the food service market was valued at \$36b which shows a growth factor of only 0.6% year on year, well below the previous years 6.5% growth in sales.

The world wide economic woes – lacklustre beef export demand and declining prices is having significant flow on effect for our domestic market. Demand and prices for feedlot – grainfed beef has also taken a serious fall. With lower grain and cattle prices towards the end of 2008, our numbers on feed jumped to 719,000 head (426,000 Queensland) but demand and prices look bleak for any of these fed cattle on export markets.

Exporters report the credit squeeze is resulting in orders being cancelled or renegotiated at lower prices. Our low AUD doesn't seem to be giving us the expected advantages yet. Grinding and manufacturing beef is holding up fairly well but high value cuts are suffering.

Our beef abattoirs are facing two new serious costs in the near future, full cost recovery on AQIS inspection fees (approx. extra \$32m) and a \$63m carbon tax starting in 2010. If both these new costs are passed on and taken from beef producers' slaughter returns, it will put them further behind in the never ending cost/price squeeze.

Australian cattle numbers in 2009 are expected to rise and be slightly over 28.5 million head this year.

2009 cattle prices factors

Upside	Downside
Lower value Aust. \$	World economic recession
More rain about – tighter cattle supply	Credit availability
Lower beef stocks	Rising unemployment lowers consumer spending
Lower feed – fuel prices, interest rates	More spot buying by overseas wholesalers
	Competition from cheaper chicken and pork
	Value of hides and by-products falling
	Market fear

Australia

With rising unemployment and declining economic conditions, Australian food service outlets are reporting falling sales as consumers cut back on dining out.

Live export

Our exported numbers in 2008 reached 869,545 head, the highest annual total since 2002. Indonesia again being our best market with 651,196 head.

Major ports	Number loaded 2008
Darwin	340,418
Townsville	76,013
Broome	72,648
Wyndham	50,969
Geraldton	35,501
Fremantle	29,484

The heavy flooding rains in North Queensland during January/February has severely disrupted live export shipments from Townsville and Mourilyan.

Japan

Australia exported a record amount of beef and veal during 2008 – 957,479 tonnes. This exceeds the previous record of 953,932 tonne in 2006.

Japan maintained its place as Australia's best export market importing 364,302 tonnes in 2008. Our good record of food safety is an important key in attracting consumers to buy our product. Our February 2009 sales into Japan totalled 29,800 tonnes similar to last year's Feb. sales. Food safety was again highlighted in late 2008 with the Chinese melamine food contamination saga.

No one can predict what the declining economic situation will mean for our Japanese beef sales, but February 2009 surveys show consumers were becoming more price conscious but had a strong desire for safe food products.

India is fast becoming an important player in Asian beef markets, especially cheap buffalo beef. India's cattle herd of 281 million head includes 100 million buffalo. India exports approximately 850,000 tonne of beef annually.

Korea

The good news from this market is the continuing talks on establishing a Free Trade Agreement between our nations. South Korea is the 13th largest economy in the world. The Australia – Korea trade volume is \$23 billion USD:

- South Korea to Australia: \$5.17 billion trade
- Australia to South Korea: \$ 18 billion trade

How beef will fare is unknown at this stage, our 2008 sales worth A\$750m.

The Free Trade Agreement discussions between Korea and USA have continued to stall.

The USA has been back into the Korean beef market since mid 2008 but there is still lingering public concerns over its safety and Australian beef still has the lion's share. January 2009 saw very low beef sales into Korea with the worsening financial situation and trading difficulties with the fluctuation of the Korean Won and US Dollar.

USA

With the USA economy rapidly contracting, beef sales sluggish, high beef stocks on hand and higher than usual dairy cow slaughter rates, it all adds up to doom and gloom. The yanks produced a record amount of beef, pork, lamb and mutton

during 2008 due to the uncertainty in the market and high feed costs.

Their 2008 beef exports:

- Mexico 396,065 tonnes
- Canada 154,798 tonnes
- Japan 74,119 tonnes
- Korea (Jul-Dec 08) 57,267 tonnes

The recession is boosting demand for cheaper beef cuts from Australia and 21,900 tonnes of beef was shipped in Jan 2009 – the best figures since 2003.

On a positive note, the US beef herd has continued to decline in numbers and at 94.5 million head is at its lowest since 1959. This fall in total numbers has been reflected in lower feedlot numbers which could affect their beef supplies later this year which will be to our advantage.

South America

Brazil is now the world's largest beef exporter with 1,022,893 tonnes exported in 2008. This was despite the short term ban by the EU market over food safety and traceability issues early in 2008.

Their major export markets:

- Russia 37%
- Venezuela 9%
- Iran 8%
- Egypt 6%
- Hong Kong 6%

Brazilian live export numbers reached 400,000 head with Venezuela 71% and Lebanon 26% being the main destinations.

Their feedlot sector has continued to grow with most cattle being fed for 65-100 days. Of the 40 million head slaughtered each year, 10% are finished in feedlots.

Argentinean beef exports have been restricted since 2005 by government laws and export volumes have gone from > 433,000 tonnes to 230,000 tonnes in 2008. There has been recent information that these restrictions could soon be relaxed. Argentina's main export customers are Russia (30%), Germany (12%) and Chile (12%).

Bernie English

*Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries
Kairi Ph 07 4091 9440*

Greg Brown

Meadowbank Station, Mt Garnet

	Notes	Value total	Value / kg	Kg beef
Abattoir	500 kg live animal 53% dressing 265 kg hot carcass wt	\$795	\$3	265
Slaughter charge	\$70	\$865	\$3.26	265
Delivery to shop	20 c/kg = \$53	\$918	\$3.46	265
Hot weight Cold weight Shrinkage	3% -7.95 kg	\$918	\$3.57	257
Bone out cost Yield 68%	40 c/kg =\$102.80	\$1020	\$5.86	174
Butcher shop costs See Note 1	\$5.54 kg	\$1983	\$11.40	174

Beef supply chain costs

The table above gives an approximate outline of beef supply chain costs.

It outlines the major costs involved in getting beef on the hoof to the retail counter.

Starting with \$3/kg delivered to the abattoir and ending up on the retail counter at an average cost of \$11.40/kg ready for sale. For up to 40% of over the counter sales, (mince, sausages etc.) the retail price is below the average cost of \$11.40/kg. Therefore, the butcher must cover his costs and

extract his profit margin from the 'sweet cuts' from each body.

Note 1:

Butcher shop costs per week

Wages – 3 men	\$3600
Rent	\$600
Power	\$250
Dry goods and supplies	\$1500
Total	\$5950

Shop throughput per week

4 Cattle	1000 kg
4 Pigs	240 kg
12 Lambs	240 kg
Carton beef	200 kg
	1680 kg
Trim and wastage factor	x 0.7
Product sold	1176 kg

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cost/kg} &= \$5950 \div 1176 \text{ kg} \\ &= \$5.05/\text{kg} \end{aligned}$$

Fit out butcher shop	\$300,000
Opportunity cost @ 10%	\$30,000
Cost week/52	\$576

$$\begin{aligned} & \$576 + \$5950 \\ &= \$6526 \div 1176 \text{ kg} \\ &= \$5.54/\text{kg} \end{aligned}$$

Bernie English

Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries
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Chris Greenwood

Morganbury Meats
Ph 07 4093 3777



DAVID ANTHONY

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Daily Intake: 80 to 155 grams



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Analysis:

Min. Total Protein	27.84%
Urea Equivalent	8.26%
Min. Phosphorus	0.31%
Min. Sulphur	0.66%

Daily Intake: 1 to 2kg/head/day

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Contact: Craig Cook 0428 646 916

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Contact: Steve Flett 0429 970 081



Weed menace: Grader grass guide for northern graziers

It's good news for northern graziers following the release of the first grader grass management guide.

Biosecurity Queensland, Primary Industries and Fisheries weed scientist Dr Wayne Vogler has edited the eight-page guide, which explains in easy-to-understand language the control options available to land managers.

Grader grass is a significant threat to native and introduced pastures. Because it is unpalatable and often remains ungrazed, it can also generate large fuel loads that increase the risk and intensity of wildfire.

Dr Vogler, who works from the Tropical Weeds Research Centre in Charters Towers, is an authority on grader grass control and management, and the guide translates this wealth of knowledge into a handy reference tool for all graziers.

It is also a timely release, as grader grass can thrive following significant rainfall events, so as floodwaters recede in northern grazing lands, grader grass can out-compete beneficial grasses in the pasture reestablishment race.

Grader grass is of concern in northern Queensland as it can invade and become dominant in both native and improved pastures greatly reducing grazing animal productivity due to its low palatability.

It can also significantly reduce biodiversity in conservation areas where it increases fire intensity with potentially detrimental effects on native flora and fauna.

The guide sets out the extent of the grader grass problem, as well as the conditions in which it can thrive.

It then goes on to describe the various control options available to graziers, as well as hints to stop its spread to non-affected areas.

The guide has been published by Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM, Northern Gulf Resource Management Group and Southern Gulf Catchments and can be downloaded as a 1.5 MB pdf file from the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM web site at <http://www.bdtprm.org.au/resources/>

Management manual to help fight against bellyache bush

Production of a national management manual on the exotic weed bellyache bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*) is about to commence following the receipt of funding through the Australian Government's newly formed Australian Weeds Research Centre.

Bellyache bush is an increasing problem in northern Australia where it is replacing pastures, reducing biodiversity and suspected of causing significant stock losses due to toxic compounds.

For the past seven years, several state, federal and territory agencies have worked together to better understand the ecology of bellyache bush, to develop integrated control strategies and to mass rear and release biological control agents. Whilst several scientific publications have been produced from this research, the proposed manual will convert these scientific findings into practical

information for use by land managers who are faced with the task of trying to control bellyache bush.

The experiences of land managers will also be incorporated through the inclusion of several case studies which will demonstrate how they have gone about tackling the problem on their land.

To pull all the information together and write the manual, Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries have appointed Anita Randall who will be based at the Tropical Weeds Research Centre (TWRC) in Charters Towers. Anita has a background in weed management having previously worked in weed programs for both the Queensland and Northern Territory governments. Most recently she was employed in an environmental role within the mining industry.

While Anita will be responsible for pulling the information together, she will rely heavily on the input of scientists, extension officers and land managers who have had first hand experience with bellyache bush to ensure that the information is correct and representative of the current status of knowledge.

If anyone has suggestions of information they



would like to see included in the manual please contact Anita. She will also be very keen to hear suggestions of appropriate land managers who could be interviewed for case studies. Anita can be contacted by phone 07 4761 5710 or via email Anita.Randall@dpi.qld.gov.au



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A new project for the Dalrymple Landcare Committee – Piloting Adoption of Grazing Best Management Practices for Improving Water Quality in the Burdekin Rangelands

The Dalrymple Landcare Committee Inc has received approval for funding as part of the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country: Landcare – Sustainable Practices grants. The three year project aims to closely work with a core group of landholders in an active engagement, review and roll out a recently released document relating to grazing management and water quality.

The document *Managing for water quality within grazing lands of the Burdekin Catchment – Guidelines for land managers* was developed under NHT2 with input and support from a host of organisations including Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, ACTFR, MLA and AgForce. Landholders in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region were also involved in the drafting of the document through 2006/07/08. The guidelines present a number of recommendations for grazing

management in various situations relevant to different parts of the region such as:

- Management of riparian areas
- Management of upland areas
- Management of braided river systems
- Property wide management (such as location of supplement and road development).

The key focus of this new project is to work with a small group of 10 landholders to adopt aspects of these guidelines for use in the planning, management and development of their grazing businesses. As part of the project, participants will receive up to date training in the following areas:

- Grazing Land Management
- GPS and computer mapping
- Forage budgeting and pasture monitoring
- Property management planning
- Water quality sampling and monitoring.

Through the various training on offer, landholders will also be introduced to the grazing guidelines. Participants will also complete a property management plan one-on-one with the project officer which clearly identifies existing infrastructure as well as highlighting the potential improvements or future developments to improve productivity, land condition and ultimately water quality.

A key feature of the property management plan will also be a completed property infrastructure map. Such maps will be completed with the assistance of both the training provided and the project officer. By the end of the training, landholders will have clear maps of their enterprises, satellite imagery and completed lists of paddocks and paddock areas, water points, distances between waters, poly pipe as well as other infrastructure such as sheds or airstrips.

As the project and the guidelines are based on achieving water quality based outcomes, monitoring of land condition as well as event based water sampling will be undertaken as part of the project. The project offers landholders a great opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge of recommended practices, property planning, pasture budgeting and water quality monitoring.

Landholders interested in the project should contact John Nicholas on 07 4761 5170.



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DLC to take the city to the country

The current DLC committee, led by Phil Cook, is undertaking the inaugural 'City Country Day' on the 31 May 2009. In a similar approach to other groups and events run around Australia on the same day (such as MLA Farm Day), the DLC will take three bus loads of urban residents of Charters Towers to look at three primary production enterprises in the region.

It is expected that up to 60 residents will get the chance to visit either *Hillgrove* or *Wambiana* to learn more about grazing while *Riverview* will host those interested in intensive agricultural cropping. It is hoped that the day will benefit both the hosts and the guests at each property, by gaining valuable insight into the unknowns or misconceptions of both groups.

The day ultimately aims to highlight the importance of the local primary production enterprises, the activities which occur on them and the role of environmental management in each enterprise. It is hoped that these days help to re-create a valuable but sometimes wavering link between the properties in the region and the urban residents in and around Charters Towers, and hopefully will be run again in future years.

3Cs forums across the region likely for May 2009

The very successful 3Cs Forum held in November 2008 as part of the CREB project (Funded through the Australian and QLD Governments National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality) will be replicated later this year in other parts of the region. Negotiations over dates are still underway, but it is likely that sometime during May 2009, a series of forums will be run throughout the region, starting in the Charters Towers district and heading west towards Winton and potentially Longreach.

The forums offer landholders a great opportunity to hear from selected professionals first hand, what the issues for the northern Australian grazing industry are in the carbon debate. Similar guest speakers to talk on the carbon cycle, methane emissions and carbon sinks and sources on property will be secured. Keep an eye on the mail, as notices of venues and dates will be sent once the dates are secured.

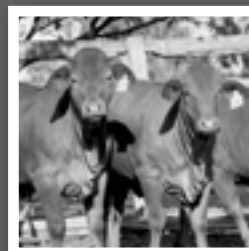
Composed by
John Nicholas, Project Officer
Dalrymple Landcare Committee Inc.
PO Box 976 Charters Towers QLD 4820
Ph 07 4761 5170 john.nicholas@dpi.qld.gov.au

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Caught in the web

If you've ever used the internet, you'll know just how gargantuan it is. The information (and misinformation) available is mind-boggling.

Below are some examples of useful sites relating to livestock and other farming topics. Information contained on these websites is often a mixture of free and saleable content. Please keep your bandwidth speed and megabyte allowance limits in mind if choosing to download files.

Queensland Government's primary industries

website contains information on Queensland's beef and sheep industries, and information products and services available from the Department.

<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/beef>
<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/sheep>

Of potential interest is the Department's business software page with links to the *Breedcow and Dynama* software that assists in herd management and evaluation of beef business and the free to download 'Australian farm software directory' that lists more than 650 titles of agricultural-related software http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/dpi/hs.xml/30_6875_ENA_HTML.htm

Other saleable publications on livestock topics are available from the Queensland Government Bookshop – browse or search for a topic <https://www.bookshop.qld.gov.au>

CSIRO also has a range of quality saleable livestock publications available.
<http://www.publish.csiro.au>

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) contains a wide range of information for beef, sheep and goat producers, including tips and tricks, to calculators, market information, research project results and more. Also includes information on the Meat Standards Australia (MSA) quality program
<http://www.mla.com.au>

Cooperative Research Centre for Beef Genetic Technologies has more than 60 000 articles in its 'Livestock Library', a range of information factsheets and a downloadable 'BeefSpecs' calculator
<http://www.beefcrc.com.au>

Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation has a range of industry tools and information as well as reports on the latest research
<http://www.sheepcrc.org.au>

The livestock section of the **NSW Department of Primary Industries** site contains a wide range of cattle-and sheep related information.
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock>

Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) Contains links to a large selection of cattle breed societies in Australia and worldwide. They also link to the BREEDPLAN software below.
<http://abri.une.edu.au>

BREEDPLAN is a modern genetic evaluation system for beef cattle. Using Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) technology, BREEDPLAN produces Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for cattle for a range of important production traits
<http://breedplan.une.edu.au/>

Sheep genetics is the national genetic information and evaluation service for the meat and wool sectors of the sheep industry delivered as LAMBPLAN and MERINOSELECT.
<http://www.sheepgenetics.org.au>

Kondinin Group's **Farming Ahead** website contains a range of news, market information, publications and product reviews. Access to the full site requires a membership subscription.
<http://www.farmingahead.com.au/>

The **Bureau of Meteorology** contains a wide range of climate-related information, including weather forecasts, a rainfall radar, flood warnings, frost potential, wind forecasts, and a large set of historical weather data
<http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/qld/>

The Danish site **Wetterzentrale** provides a set of maps for predicted rainfall over the next 9 days
<http://www.wzkaarten.de/pics/ausavnpanel4.gif>

And because life is not all work, also included are some sites on the lighter side...

Some tasty sites for recipies

- <http://www.themainmeal.com.au>
- <http://readysteadycook.ten.com.au/recipes.htm>
- <http://www.aussiecooking.com.au>
- <http://www.cuisine.com.au>

And finally...

We all know that Americans have a love affair with burgers, but this takes the cake...
<http://www.firemeetsdesire.com>
(for a limited time – Burger King eau-de-cologne). Please note: this site uses flash media and may be unsuitable for slower connections.

Tonia Grundy

Primary Industries and Fisheries Information Officer,
Ayr Research Station Ph 0409 034 960

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

2009 Cooperative training schedule

Australian Agricultural College Corporation
and Beef Breeding Services



Artificial insemination courses

20 – 23 April – *Berrigurra*, via Blackwater
9 – 11 June – *Narayan*, via Munduberra
7– 9 September – *Swans Lagoon*, via Ayr (subject to change)

Pregnancy diagnosis courses

18 – 20 May – *Narayan*, via Munduberra
15 – 17 June – *Berrigurra*, via Blackwater
27– 29 July – *Swans Lagoon*, via Ayr (subject to change)

Custom delivery

Locations for alternative delivery are also being sought –
if you can assist, please contact Beef Breeding Services on 4936 0212

NB

Courses subject to change, dependant on environmental
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Places are limited.
To book, please
contact
Donna Goodall
at AACC on
4982 8807



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AgInvest forum 2009 – profiling agribusiness opportunities in North Queensland

Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, (DEEDI) is pleased to invite you to this investment forum for agribusinesses and investors.

The AgInvest 2009 Forum aims to assist both businesses seeking investors and those organisations seeking investment opportunities by:

- profiling North Queensland's current agricultural situation, capability, and infrastructure
- providing business discussion on agribusiness sectors and potential opportunities
- profiling primary industries and fisheries services, investment and development strategies
- investment matching through business profiles, exhibitors booths, delegate's directory and introductions during the forum.

Wednesday 10 June 2009

Jupiters Townsville Hotel and Casino

Sir Leslie Thies Drive, Townsville Queensland
4810 Australia

AgInvest Forum 2009 - 8:15 am to 5.30 pm
forum dinner - 7 pm-10 pm

Thursday 11 June 2009

Infrastructure site tours, Burdekin and Townsville

Contacts

For more information on the forum:

Greg Mason Business Development Officer
Cairns, Ph (+617) 4057 3600 Fax (+617) 4057 3690
greg.mason@dpi.qld.gov.au

Vic O'Keefe Trade and Business Officer
Townsville, Ph (+617) 4760 1589
Fax (+617) 4778 2970 vic.okeefe@dpi.qld.gov.au

For information on exhibitor's booths, hotel accommodation, transport and other logistical issues please contact:

Deanne Cranitch Townsville Ph (+617) 4760 1602
deanne.cranitch@dpi.qld.gov.au

Melanie Turnbull Townsville Ph (+617) 4760 1564
melanie.turnbull@dpi.qld.gov.au

'Better Decisions' training now registered for FarmReady grants

'Better Decisions in the Business of Beef' (Breedcow and Dynama training) is now registered for the FarmReady Reimbursement Grants. The FarmReady course ID number is FRTC0213.

On page six in this issue of *Northern muster*, is a notice of intention to run a 'Better Decisions' workshop in Townsville in July (dates still to be set). This workshop is for people already using the Breedcow and Dynama herd budgeting software, or who are about to acquire it.

The cost of that workshop will be \$1,100 plus \$110 (incl GST) for a second family member on the same registration. For eligible applicants this is reimbursed by FarmReady. Assistance is available from FarmReady also for travel, accommodation and childcare.

FarmReady assistance is available for the workshop, but NOT for software purchase (\$495 incl GST).

Details of the FarmReady Reimbursement Grants program are on the website at www.farmready.gov.au

Prospective participants will be able to apply for pre-approval of FarmReady reimbursement grants using forms available for download on the website.

Other FarmReady contact points are:

Email: admin@farmready.gov.au
Freecall: 1800 087 670
Facsimile: (02) 6125 5875



Land types of Queensland free CD

Healthy land underpins the profitability and sustainability of all Queensland grazing enterprises. Officers from Primary Industries and Fisheries have developed land type descriptions to assist grazing land managers' understanding of the characteristics, capabilities and limitations of their land in producing useful forage. The descriptions are based on a wealth of research and have evolved through consultation with producers, agency scientists and extension officers.

What is a land type?

A land type is an area of grazing land that has characteristic patterns of soil, vegetation and landform that are easily recognised by landholders in a region. A number of land types may be present on a single grazing enterprise. More than 230 land types from 16 Grazing Land Management (GLM) regions in Queensland have been described.

How is a land type described?

Land types are described in terms of their landform; woody vegetation; expected pasture composition, (including suitable sown pastures and introduced weeds); and soil characteristics. Limitations to use of the land and grazing management recommendations are also provided. Conservation features and relevant regional ecosystems are identified.

The use of land types in grazing land management

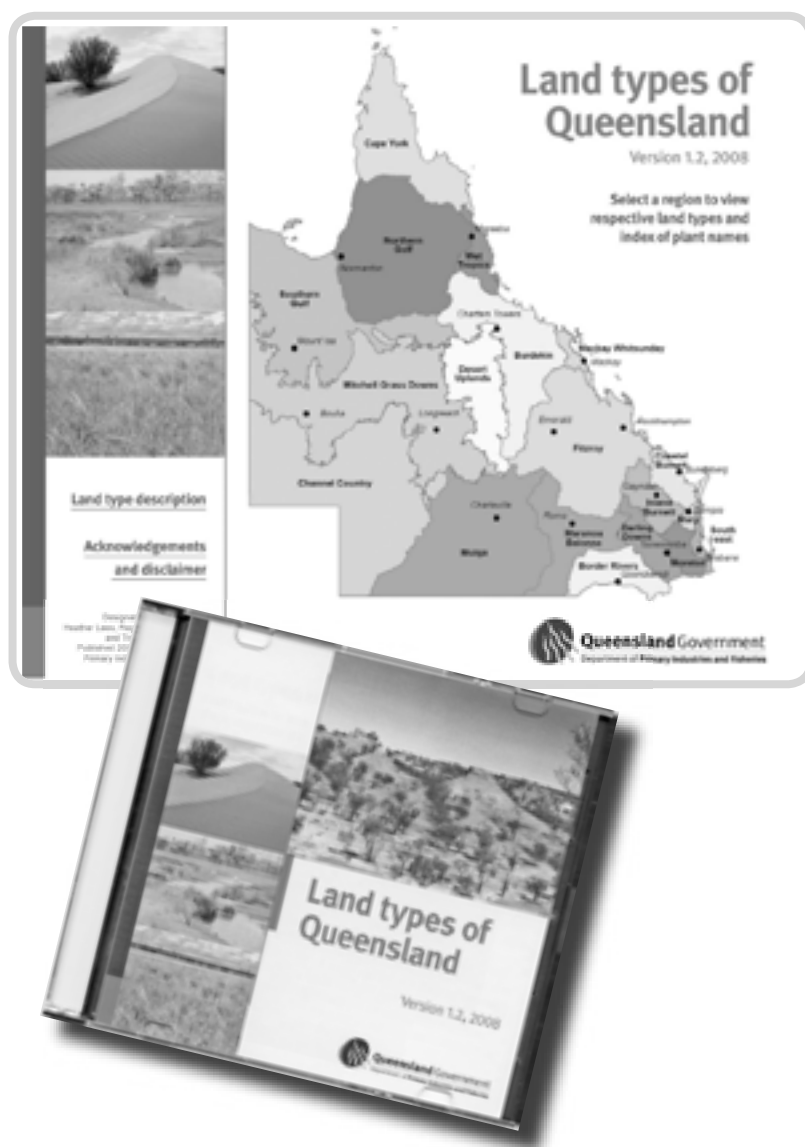
The *Land types of Queensland* were developed to provide grazing land managers with practical information to help assess land condition and carrying capacities, and to allow for better informed stocking and management decisions. Use of land type descriptions with a pasture growth model allow determination of grass growth predictions to assist in the management of land type areas. These predictions are specifically used in *Stocktake*, a paddock-scale land condition monitoring and management package, and *Grazing Land Management* workshops where managers are able to assess the suitability of different

pasture development options and determine the financial impact of grazing management options.

Land types of Queensland updates

Land types of Queensland version 1.2, 2008 will be revised as required to include any additional land types, resource information or land management guidelines updates subsequent to the current version.

Land types of Queensland will be launched in Rockhampton on May 6 as part of Beef Australia 2009. CDs containing the land types will be available after this date by phoning 13 25 23 or email callweb@dpi.qld.gov.au.



Save \$: use NIRS DMD:CP ratio to determine start of urea supplementation

Cost effective supplementation depends on knowing when, what and how much supplement to feed. It is also about predicting the 'response to feeding'. In the instance of commencing urea supplementation NIRS analysis of dung samples can help determine the likelihood of a response.

The amount of protein in a pasture diet will vary depending on a number of factors, one of these being the amount of green 'leaf' available. Depending on the land type if there is more than 30% green in the pasture, the stocking rate is right and there is a good body of feed to select from, then it may be possible for cattle to 'select out' a diet that has adequate protein for maintenance. If there is already sufficient protein in the diet, there may not be an economic response to feeding urea, until diet quality drops further.

NIRS (Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy) technology was developed primarily to give us a better understanding of the quality of the diet cattle are grazing and from this we can determine their 'expected productivity'. Analysis of dung samples using NIRS is the best tool we have to estimate dietary crude protein (CP), dry matter digestibility (DMD), dietary non-grass proportions and faecal N (Coates 2000). Although NIRS technology has many applications, one of the key applications is as a decision support tool to assist with determining when to start feeding urea.

How can NIRS be used to assist with determining start of feeding? MLA-funded research (Dixon et al., 2008) showed that a response to non protein nitrogen supplementation (i.e. urea) was most likely when the DMD:CP ratio was greater than

10:1 for spear grass pasture communities. For the Mitchell grass downs there is a greater likelihood of a response to urea when the DMD:CP ratio is 11–12:1 or greater.

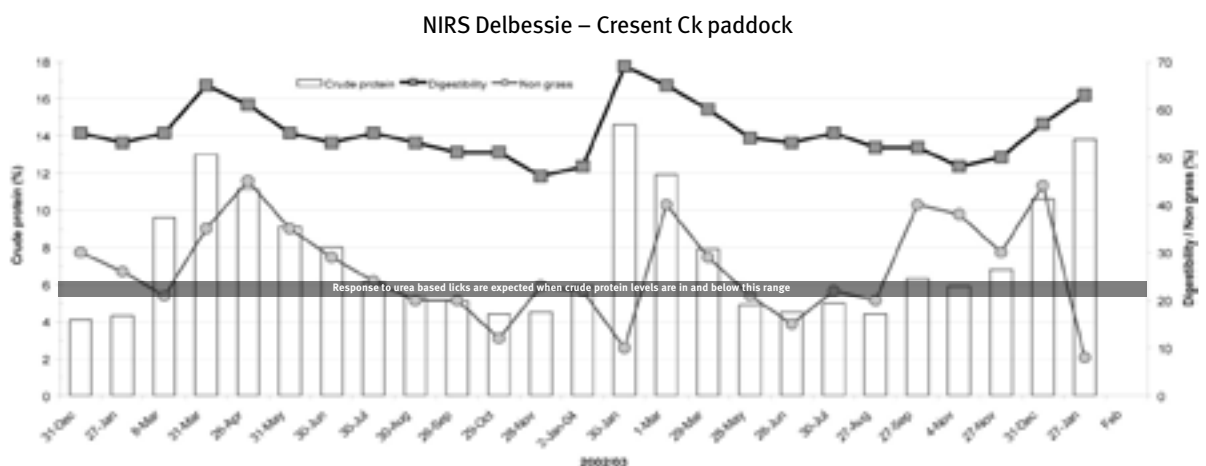
For example if DMD is 55% and CP is 5.5% then the ratio is 10:1. As diet quality deteriorates and CP% then drops in relation to DMD the ratio will increase. For example if DMD stays at 55%, and CP% then drops to 5%, the ratio will increase to 11:1. If NIRS results show the DMD:CP ratio is between 8:1 and 10:1 there is increasingly likelihood of a response to urea, and this becomes more certain when the ratio is greater than 10:1 or 11:1 depending on the land type.

The graph below from *Delbessie* shows DMD (top line) and dietary CP (striped bars). Notice there is a similar pattern of digestibility (DMD) from to May to November both years. However in the second year crude protein (CP) was significantly lower in May than in the previous year. This meant the DMD:CP ratio was higher earlier in the year, and necessitated supplementation earlier that year.

Note that on land types where there is quite high levels of native browse the NIRS results may show dietary CP levels well above that of the grass in the diet. These inflated figures present difficulties in assessing faecal NIRS predictions on high browse diets, which are high in condensed tannins. The tannins impact on digestibility and also the browse is often low in digestibility.

NIRS results should be used in conjunction with your own observations. These observations should include cattle condition, lactation status, pasture quality and quantity, pasture spoilage due to frost, grasshoppers, etc, plus recent rainfall events and how the rain fell.

Felicity Hamlyn-Hill
Senior Beef Extension Officer
Charters Towers Ph 07 4761 5157



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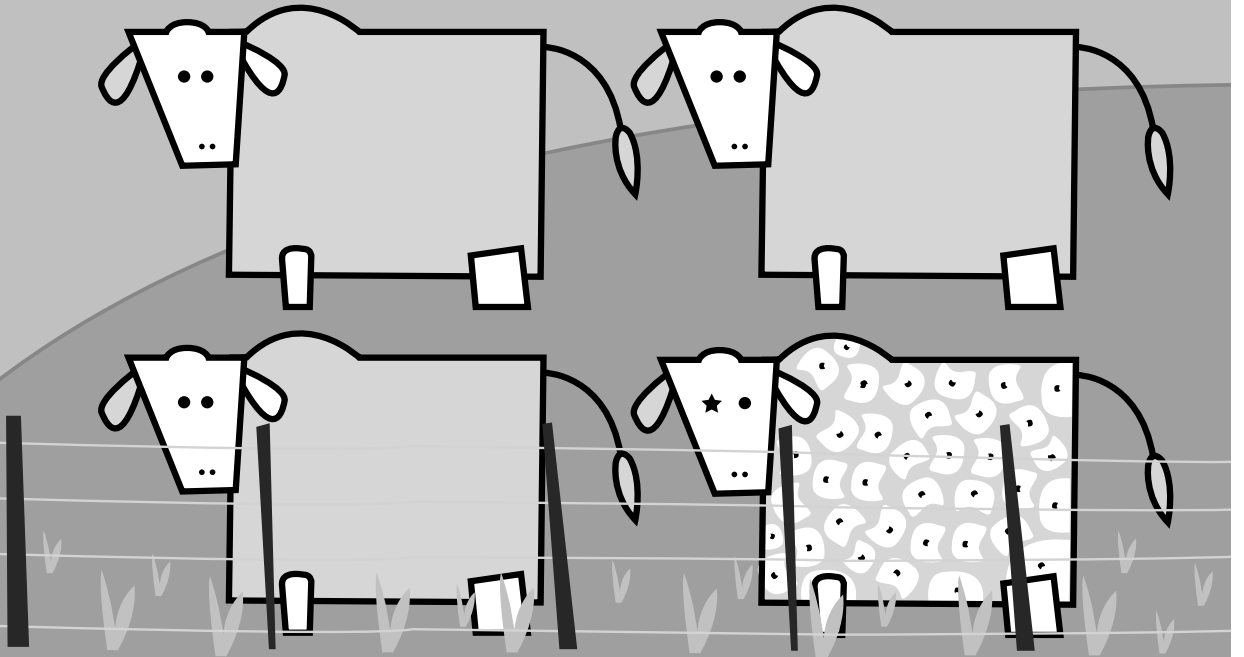
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