Northern Territory Government

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Climate Clever Beef- 2. Barkly Adaptation Site

Introduction

Through consultation with Barkly Tableland cattle producers, researchers and a collation of all grazing management research, four key grazing land management priorities have been recognised for optimising the profitability, sustainability and productivity of beef enterprises in Northern Australia. These include: infrastructure development, stocking rate management, pasture spelling and prescribed burning.

Aims

A demonstration site at Alexandria Station located on the Eastern Barkly Tablelands has been established to demonstrate the benefits of wet season spelling and sustainable stocking rates for maintaining good land condition at new bores; and to demonstrate the benefits of wet season spelling and sustainable stocking rates for improving land condition at old bores.

Methodology

A 5 km transect has been established at each of the three bores being monitored (Figure 1). Each bore is a different age; No. 10 bore was drilled in the 1910, and apart from a wet season spell in 2008 and 2009, has been grazed continuously. No. 124 bore was drilled in 2004 and has not yet had a wet season spell, while bore No. 153 is a new bore that was only put to use prior to the first sampling. All three bores will be monitored on a yearly basis with changes in land condition documented via observed changes in ground cover, pasture yield and species composition. An economic assessment of the spelling and stocking rate regime is also being completed by obtaining cattle data to calculate effective stocking rates and pasture utilisation rates.

Figure 1. Pasture monitoring transect methodology.

Outputs

It is envisaged the demonstration site will increase our understanding of the interaction between pasture spelling, stocking rates and land condition in the Mitchell grasslands of the Barkly region.

A field day will be held in August 2011 to showcase the preliminary results obtained from the pasture monitoring conducted at the end of the dry season in 2010 and end of wet season 2011.

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