

Paddock Power Update for BRAC

Project Leaders: Dionne Walsh & Kieren McCosker

Paddock Power aims to answer three questions:

1. How much impact is paddock area and distance to water having on production?

How? Use existing data and new paddock trials to measure:

- Calf wastage, Breeder body condition, Re-conception rates, Mortality rates, Steer growth rates
- How many kilograms of beef are produced in a paddock and how many could potentially be produced

2. Where should we put new water and/or fencing infrastructure to get best bang for buck?

How? Use GPS tracking devices to measure:

- How cattle utilise paddocks of different size and watered area
- How far cattle are walking – with and without calves
- How far from water calves are being born
- How paddock usage patterns change through the year

3. Which infrastructure development option/s will deliver the best return on investment?

How? Develop and promote the “Paddock Power Calculator”:

- Compares development options identified by the producer
- Works out return on investment and payback period on the basis of your specific cost base, land types and livestock productivity
- Will result in increased confidence for you, your financiers and management team about how much you can afford to invest

Progress to date

- MLA contract signed in March 2019
- Animal Ethics approvals granted
- Rocklands and Brunette Downs confirmed as locations for property trials
- Research completed on best GPS units to use for the project
- Study paddocks selected at Brunette Downs and pasture data collected
- Tour of potential study paddocks at Rocklands
- Started analysing existing breeder data from Rocklands and Brunette Downs
- Started a Paddock Power Facebook group – currently has 89 members
- Worked with Phil Holmes and Michael Wellington to refine the prototype of the Paddock Power Calculator
- Heaps of articles in industry newsletters etc. The project was also promoted at the Northern Beef Research Update Conference and Australian Rangeland Society Conference

What's next in the coming months?

- Purchase GPS collar components and build them
- Deploy GPS collars at Brunette and Rocklands - 1st round 2020
- Collect pasture and cattle measurements at Brunette and Rocklands - 1st round 2020
- Finalise the prototype Calculator and test it with interested producers
- Invite more producers to provide their breeder data so we can better understand the impact of paddock area and distance to water on reproduction and calf loss
- Keep promoting the project to industry as much as possible

Want to get involved?

- You can join the Paddock Power Facebook group:
www.facebook.com/groups/326686724590667/
- Check out our Paddock Power project page on FutureBeef by scanning this QR code with your phone, or go to the website:
<https://futurebeef.com.au/projects/paddockpower/>
- We're looking for good quality station data from big paddocks – contact us to discuss how we can analyse your data to see what your calf loss rates and reproductive performance is in paddocks of different sizes and watered area.
- We'll be needing producers to test the Paddock Power Calculator early next year
- Email Dionne Walsh (dionne.walsh@nt.gov.au) or Kieren McCosker (kieren.mccosker@nt.gov.au) to discuss how you could get involved!



Some recent articles about the project

“Northern Muster” lift out published in the North Queensland Register:

Read it on-line here: http://specialpubs.austcommunitymedia.com.au/e-oo/2019/NQPS/0926_01/

Or download it to read later:

<https://futurebeef.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Northern-Muster-September-2019.pdf>

July 2019 Barkly Beef:

https://dpiir.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/716825/Barkly-Beef-July-2019.pdf