

CQ Beef

Information for rural business in Central Queensland

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Issue 25 WINTER 2015



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A RECENTLY completed DAF and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) co-funded research project examined the relative production and profitability of key alternative forage options for backgrounding or finishing cattle in the Fitzroy River catchment of Queensland.

Titled 'High-output forage systems for meeting beef markets - Phase 2', the project benchmarked six forage production systems at 24 sites across 12 commercial beef cattle properties in the Fitzroy River catchment over 2011-2014 (31 individual data sets in total).

The forages studied included oats, forage sorghum, lablab, leucaena-grass and butterfly pea-grass as well as perennial grass-only pasture as a baseline for comparison.

The researchers documented forage and beef production as well as paddock gross margins at each site. In addition, more complete economic analyses (farm case studies) were conducted with five beef producers to give insights into the effect of sown forages on overall farm profitability.

Finally, the factors affecting forage profitability were further investigated through constructed, or modelled, forage scenarios. In these scenarios, standard management practices were assumed and the performance of forages was modelled over a longer time-frame, therefore reducing the variation due to management, seasonal and market fluctuations.

This work has provided a better understanding of the expected forage, animal and economic performance from key forage options under commercial management conditions.

Overall, high output forages substantially increased beef output compared to perennial grass-only pastures but this did not always translate to a more profitable outcome for the farm business. Forage establishment and management costs, and cattle price margin, were also critical factors affecting profitability.

A summary of key performance figures averaged across all forage sites is given in the Table. The shaded cells indicate the highest values in each row. Leucaena-grass pastures resulted in the greatest beef production (198kg/ha/annum averaged across all sites and years) of all forage systems monitored. Production from leucaena-grass pastures was 2.6 times greater than the average annual beef production from perennial grass pastures (76 kg/ha/annum). Furthermore, there was less variability between sites and years in total beef production from leucaena-grass pastures compared to butterfly pea-grass pastures or perennial grass-only pastures.

The next highest average total beef production was for butterfly pea-grass pastures (125 kg/ha/annum). Forage sorghum, produced twice as much forage biomass as the other two annual forages, oats and lablab, but on average resulted in only slightly higher total beef production (108 vs. 93 and 99kg/ha/annum, respectively). This was because forage sorghum was often poorly utilised and low in digestibility due to less-than-ideal grazing management and therefore grazing of the crop once it was already mature. There was a wide range in paddock gross margins, for annual and perennial forage options in the Fitzroy River catchment. In broad terms:

- Leucaena-grass sites had the highest average gross margin (\$184/ha/annum across all sites and years).
- Butterfly pea-grass produced the second highest average gross margin: \$143/ha/annum.
- Oats forage produced a higher average gross margin

Getting the most out of high output forages

	Summary of key performance figures for forage options					
	Annual forages			Perennial forages		
	Oats	Forage sorghum	Lablab	Leucaena-grass	Butterfly pea-grass	Perennial grass
Forage biomass measurements in the grazed paddocks (kg DM/ha) ^a	4,555 (2,278-5,425)	12,150 (2,069-30,197)	6,014 (5,484-6,543)	417 (196-744) Grass: 3,809 (2,700-5,620)	528 (143-1,138) Grass: 4,591 (3,480-5,519)	3,702 (2,186-4,549)
Total grazing days per annum or total period	116 (91-158)	107 (52-139)	107 (103-111)	284 (140-476)	181 (139-223)	224 (0-476)
Total LWG (kg/ha per annum or total grazing period) per total grazing area	93 (38-144)	108 (41-253)	99 (41-156)	198 (129-306)	125 (50-245)	76 (0-169)
Forage costs (\$/ha per annum) per forage area only, owner rates ^b	136 (93-193)	96 (16-169)	99 (85-113)	34 (17-47)	21 (21-21)	2 (0-5)
Gross margin (\$/ha per annum or total grazing period) per total grazing area, owner rates	131 (54-197)	54 (-48-243)	44 (38-50)	184 (90-304)	143 (34-379)	98 (-5-285)

DM: dry matter; LWG: liveweight gain.

^aThese figures are the peak biomass measured in the paddock for annuals, and the average biomass measured in the grazed paddock over the duration of monitoring for perennials. They do not indicate the total biomass grown during that period due to being the net result of what was grown and what was consumed by grazing livestock. Figures for leucaena biomass represent only the edible material (i.e. leaves and stems up to 5 mm in diameter).

^bAnnual forage costs for perennials were calculated by amortising establishment and maintenance costs (determining an average annual cost over the life of the forage).

(\$131/ha/annum) than perennial grass pasture (\$98/ha/annum).

- Forage sorghum and lablab resulted in lower average gross margins than for perennial grass pasture (\$54 and \$44/ha/annum, respectively).

Key management issues that commonly limited optimal performance were identified:

- Low soil fertility and lack of fertiliser application at the majority of forage sites indicated that both soil nitrogen and phosphorus may be limiting production of many annual forage crops in the Fitzroy River catchment while phosphorus may be limiting production of perennial legume-grass pastures.
- Poor grazing management of forage sorghum crops

KEY MESSAGES

- Forage crops or perennial legume-grass forages can substantially increase beef output compared with perennial grass-only pastures.
- However, an increase in beef production does not always translate to a more profitable beef business.
- Forage costs and cattle price margin (sale price less purchase price, \$/kg liveweight) also have a significant effect on the profitability of forages.
- Furthermore, a positive gross margin for a forage crop does not necessarily mean that the forage is going to be the most profitable option compared to other alternative uses of the land (e.g. perennial grass, perennial legume-grass or grain cropping).
- Perennial legume-grass pastures, particularly leucaena-grass, had a substantial advantage in terms of profitability, compared to perennial grass-only pastures and annual forage crops.
- Download the new guide to forage use: 'Feeding forages in the Fitzroy' and forage gross margin spreadsheets from the FutureBeef website: <https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/projects/high-output-forage-systems-for-meeting-beef-markets/>

at the majority of sites resulted in poor quality forage, poor utilisation of biomass and poor beef production per hectare.

- Some producers were not inoculating cattle grazing leucaena-grass pastures with the rumen fluid inoculum or using carrier cattle. This may be causing sub-clinical mimosine and dihydroxypyridine toxicity, which will reduce cattle growth rates.
- Hormonal growth promotants (HGP) were not commonly used in cattle grazing high quality forages in this project despite their use not being restricted in the producers' selected target markets in most instances. There may be an opportunity for either (a) premium, HGP-free markets to be targeted or (b) for the cattle growth rate benefits (10-30 per cent) and feed conversion benefits (5-15 per cent) of HGP to be realised.
- Many producers do not regularly monitor weight gain of cattle on high quality forages. More regular monitoring of cattle weight gain during grazing periods on high quality forages may allow more optimal timing of sale and assist in maximising cattle price margin which, in turn, has a major effect on gross margin.
- A significant proportion of cattle grazing annual forage crops were not sold directly to market but were returned to perennial grass pastures after grazing the crop. Especially where cattle graze perennial grass pastures in the summer season after grazing a forage oats crop it is highly likely that compensatory gain effects would erode most of the liveweight and financial advantage provided by forage oats. This would likely make the venture unprofitable when considered in the context of overall profitability.

Case studies examined the value of the sown forage systems to the 'whole farm' or business,

relative to other alternatives, which could also be undertaken on the same area of land, such as grazing perennial grass pasture or growing a grain crop.

Perennial legume-grass pastures, particularly leucaena-grass, had a substantial advantage over perennial grass-only pasture and annual forage crops in terms of profitability at the whole farm level. However, legume-grass pastures were not as profitable as grain cropping when grain cropping was a feasible alternative. Annual forages were unable to add economic value to the beef enterprise due to their higher average growing costs and greater variability when compared to perennial forages.

Results from the constructed or modelled economic scenarios, in which best-practice management was assumed and a long-term seasonal view taken, supported the conclusions from the commercial co-operator sites and farm case studies.

Top tips to help beef producers maximise productivity and profitability of sown forages include:

- Ask the right questions
 - What is the purpose of the forage?
 - What forage types are best suited to my land type and production system?
 - What is the expected forage and cattle production?
 - What is the likelihood of the forage improving my business profitability?
- Plan ahead
- Use best-practice agronomy and animal management
- Collect data and do the sums.

The following tools and products have been produced in the project to assist producers in answering these questions and in getting the most out of their high-output forages: A producer guide to forage use, 'Feeding forages in the Fitzroy', brings together information on the agronomy, management, cattle production and economic performance from high quality forages. This guide is designed to assist graziers to make informed decisions about what forages may be best for their enterprises, and how to get the best out of them. This guide can be downloaded from the FutureBeef website: <https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/projects/high-output-forage-systems-for-meeting-beef-markets/>.

A series of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets containing the example ('constructed') gross margins presented in the forage guide can be used to test alternative scenarios based on individual property production and input figures.

More information sessions and presentations will occur over the next 12 months as part of the program of FutureBeef extension activities. Contact your local DAF beef extension contact to register interest.

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HAVE YOU HERD?

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www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/beef

QUEENSLAND Country Life

Grazing BMP drives change in practices

Family puts focus on fertility and structural qualities

BRUCE and Trudy Roberts operate three grazing properties in conjunction with their son and his wife. Two of the properties are used as fattening properties, while the home block Callistemon is used as a breeding block. The Roberts target the EU and PCAS markets. Steers are turned off into these markets at two-and-a-half years old, as well as cull heifers.

The herd consists of a Santa base, with Angus and Droughtmaster bulls being introduced into the herd over the last few years.

Approximately 4000 head are grazed across the three properties, 1600 of these being breeders.

Breeders are joined at a rate of three bulls per 100 females. The Angus bulls were introduced to assist with meeting MSA standards. Angus bulls are selected on sheath structure, testicle size and structural soundness.

A proportion of females are joined to Santa bulls to breed replacement heifers and maybe some herd bulls for their own use. Most of the Santa cross Angus heifers are spayed and sold to slaughter.

The breeding heifers are joined at 15 months of age. Bulls enter the breeding paddocks in November and are removed at the end of March. Any empty heifers at the pregnancy test are spayed, 350 heifers are joined each year.

Besides fertility, females are culled on structural faults, size and temperament. Bulls stay allocated to the same paddocks for their entire breeding career.

The Roberts family have adopted several best management practices from the animal production module of the Grazing BMP program.

During the dry season of 2014, heifers were separated from the main breeder herd and will be managed separately until their second calf. Historically, heifers have been dispersed throughout the breeding paddocks once they were pregnant.

Since the heifers have been managed separately until their second calf, the Roberts have been able to monitor their performance more intensely.

"Since we have kept them separate, we have been able to look after them more. We have been able to feed them lick without feeding all the other breeders and wean the calves earlier to maintain the mother's body condition.

"Although we haven't completed the pregnancy test yet, we are hoping that there is an increased conception rate in the



Bruce and Trudy Roberts visit the DAF site at Beef Australia 2015.

KEY POINTS

- Roberts family implement changes to how breeders are managed after attending a Grazing BMP Animal workshop
- Previously heifers were dispersed into the main breeder herd in first pregnancy
- Heifers are now managed separately until their second calving
- "Grazing BMP is a great opportunity for graziers to strategically assess their business"

heifers due to these management factors," Mrs Roberts said

It has enabled the Roberts to save money, as in the past when the heifers were starting to slip in the breeder mobs all the breeders received lick.

Now if the heifers start to slip in body condition, they can be fed separately to ensure they are getting the lick – hence not feeding animals that aren't requiring the lick.

Another management practice that the Roberts have adopted since completing the program is the use of EBVs when selecting bulls, another standard within the Grazing BMP Animal production module.

As well as the other characteristics stated

previously, the Roberts are using EBVs as a tool to increase the genetic progression of their herd.

Angus bulls are selected to improve the fat cover on slaughter animals. Therefore the Roberts have selected bulls with superior figures in Angus EBVs such as rib fat (mm), rump fat (mm), retail beef yield (mm) & intramuscular fat percentage.

In regards to the Grazing BMP program Mr and Mrs Roberts believed that participating in the module workshops was beneficial to their business.

Mrs Roberts believed that the program offered a lot of useful information that would bring attention to grazing practices. She also believed the program promoted information available to producers, enabling them to access and use the information. Mr Roberts believed the program had merit with banks, as it demonstrated that producers were trying to improve their profitability and sustainability.

"Grazing BMP is a great opportunity for graziers to strategically assess their business," Mr Roberts said.

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Emerald focus group improving record-keeping

SOMETHING I am asked over and over again as a beef extension officer is "can you recommend a herd recording system or a herd recording program for my business?"

We know that the beef game is a hard industry to make a return in and the fact that many producers are wanting to get a better handle on their records to make better business decisions is worth encouraging, hence the invention of the herd record keeping project.

Participants from the CashCow project's Breeder Management Information Days in February were invited back to form groups based around Emerald and Clermont.

The Emerald group met mid-May to share their existing record keeping systems and discuss their record keeping needs.

Since then many participants have received visits to discuss their current systems and needs further.

Existing records of one of the businesses involved confirmed a fertility problem within their breeder herd, leading to a focus on the following activities:

- Vibrio vaccination of bulls and leptospirosis vaccinations of breeders.
- NIRS testing, particularly for phosphorous after the next wet season.
- Body condition scoring of breeders, particularly at joining.
- Shifting the joining date so that there is less time between the calf drop and the expected break in the season (as predicted by Rainman).

Another business has been grainfeeding steers and cull cows.

It is now their intention to obtain better records about grain intake and kilograms of beef produced, to firm up the accuracy of gross margin calculations.

A third business will be investigating EU

certification after using the Breedcow Dynama program to compare their current operation with an EU version of their business. Breedcow Dynama is a decision support tool developed and used to analyse the economics of livestock management strategies.

This business also spent time analysing dry season supplements using the department's Feedcalc spreadsheets.

The project has also led to DAF staff developing experience with existing record keeping programs through organised webinars and free trials of the programs.

Templates are available to assist producers with their information organising where required.

For a copy of the templates please contact me.

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Editorial: Local activities help gather data

YOUR participation in the Grazing Best Management Practices (GBMP) program has led to many activities in central Queensland developed specifically to meet your needs.

The Herd Recording Project is but one of them and to find out what's going on please read the article below.

The BMP is your opportunity to document your good management practices and AgForce, a partner in BMP, is the keeper of this information.

This data can be used to support industry and showcase good work. It's interesting to note that completion of BMP is now part of many private leases.

Rockhampton-based beef extension officer Matt Brown has summarised some of the feedback received from the animal modules of BMP.

It's interesting to note what topics producers have investigated after comparing their practices to industry standards. Matt has also followed up with Bruce and Trudy Roberts of Callistemon, Springsure, and the breeder segregation and bull selection changes they have made since Bruce and Trudy completed BMP.

Accelerated Grazing BMP workshops, which involve all five modules completed over two days, have recently been completed at Biloela, Rolleston and Emerald.

If you are keen to be involved in a workshop or need help to complete the modules one-on-one, please contact Kylie Hopkins by phoning 07 4923 6215, 13 25 23 or emailing kylie.hopkins@daf.qld.gov.au.

Maree Bowen has summarised the key messages from the high output forages (HOF) field days held recently at Clermont, Moura and Taroom.

For a copy of the feeding forages in the Fitzroy guide developed through the HOF project please contact Maree, Kylie or myself.

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Getting most out of high output forage production systems

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These spreadsheets are available from the FutureBeef website: <https://futurebeef.com.au/knowledge-centre/business-management/beef-business-tools/#hofspreadsheets>

● The Final Report to MLA, including two technical appendices, gives full details of all project results and findings and can be downloaded from the MLA website: <http://www.mla.com.au/Research-and-development/Search-RD-reports/RD-report-details/Productivity-On-Farm/High-output-forage-systems-for-meeting-beef-markets-Phase-2/2910>.

Project results have been presented at Beef Australia, a webinar and three field days, resulting in 23 enquiries for further information to-date.

The BeefConnect webinar in May had 200 people register. If you missed out you can watch it or download the presentation slides at: <https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/projects/high-output-forage-systems-for-meeting-beef-markets/>.

Field days at Clermont, Moura and Taroom attracted a total of 47 producers who heard about the research outcomes from the project team.

The feedback has been excellent with 85pc of respondents indicating they intended to make at least one change to their business as a result of the key messages presented.

Dr Maree Bowen
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Grazing management key to better beef business

Improve the long-term profitability and sustainability of your enterprise

THE Grazing Best Management Practice program is a voluntary, industry led process which helps you to identify practices which can improve the long term profitability and sustainability of your enterprise.

It involves an online, self-assessment tool that allows you to benchmark your current grazing and business practice against an industry-developed set of standards.

It allows you to identify opportunities and develop a plan to improve your business performance, and access information and support to achieve your plan. The five modules are:

1. People and Business
2. Soil Health
3. Grazing Land Management
4. Animal Production
5. Animal Health and Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

One of the five modules covered within the Grazing Best Management Practice program is the People and Business module. Getting the dollars and cents under control is the first and foremost step towards business security.

Once you know the important, financial drivers in your business, it is all about managing productivity (grass and cattle) in ways that are cost effective and sustainable.

You know your business better than anyone-you live it, breathe it and put your blood sweat and tears into it.

How well do you know the financial side of your business? How profitable is it and how has that changed over time?

What is its debt position and serviceability? Are you under or over budget for this year and what is your track record for budget accuracy?

In the good old days, working hard and keeping the cheque book locked in the bottom drawer when things got tough may have been enough to get by.

However declining terms of trade and reducing industry profitability mean that understanding and managing the financial side of the business is as important as the never-ending work outside the office.

There are many resources available to help you assess and build your financial management skills. A great first stepping stone is the GBMP People and Business module.

A key focus of GBMP is helping people understand where they are at and identifying areas where they are doing well and where there is need for improvement.



Steve Banney discusses the business of beef in the Burnett Mary

DRIVE YOUR BUSINESS WITH A FINANCIAL DASHBOARD

Having a financial dashboard in your business; that is good with records and the ability to identify profit drivers through business analysis, is an absolute necessity.

Once your financial dashboard is in place, you can quickly tell how your business has performed, is performing and is likely to perform into the future.

Having some simple systems and processes in place for your business to provide you with key information will help you make informed decisions in your business.

Having the following information documented year to year (having it in your head isn't documented) is valuable for key decision makers in the business:

- Cash flow information
 - historical and budgeted cash flows broken up into operating cash flow, capital expenditure and finance costs.
- Herd information
 - historical and budgeted annual stock flows which show accurate stock numbers by class
 - annual weight gains
 - average sale weights
 - annual adult equivalents carried.
- Land information
 - long-term carrying capacity of land under management
 - short-term carrying capacity based on a feed budget
 - overall land condition and strategies to address problem areas.
- Debt information
 - debt level and how it is changing over time
 - equity level (assets-liabilities) as a per cent of total assets
 - interest rate and total interest cost
 - number of times your cash flow before interest

covers the interest bill.

- Operational Information
 - annual operational calendar
 - capital expenditure budget for this year and future years and the process for prioritising capital expenditure options.

BUSINESS PROCESSES

Having a well-structured chart of accounts and accurate herd records are two key business processes that will help you generate this information.

The Northern Beef Report – 2013 Northern beef situation analysis, benchmarked the overall performance of the northern industry over 12 years. This report has solid evidence collected from real producers to show that long-term profitability is more affected by cost of production rather than price, and again in the long-term, not affected by rainfall, locality or land type.

It is all about managing the resources you have in the most productive and cost-efficient way.

CHART OF ACCOUNTS

Your chart of accounts is the account categories where you enter transactions. Is your chart of accounts set up and structured in a logical way? Can you print the high level headings for income and expenditure on one page and have a concise overview of how your business has performed by month(s) or year(s)? If not, redesign it so it does. Talk to your accountant and advisor while doing it, but make sure the focus is on a structure that will give you, as the business manager, the best information to use week to week, month to month and year to year.

HERD RECORDS

Having accurate herd numbers is a critical to understand and improve your business performance. Getting some

whizz-bang, herd management software is unlikely to do much for you, if you haven't already got a simple system in place to keep track of stock numbers. If you have good systems in place then software options may be beneficial. Go back at least three years and record what you had at the start and end of each year, by class and movements between classes each year as a stock flow. The herd should balance each year, that is, your book opening numbers, plus your purchases, plus your natural increase, less your sales, less deaths and missing should equal, in the paddock, your closing number at the end of the year.

Use this information to determine what your reproductive rate is, i.e. calves weaned divided by breeding females joined and retained in a 12-month period, your death rate and average sale weight. Improving these benchmarks is the most effective way to increase the income (per adult equivalent) of your business.

USE THE INFORMATION

Start summarising the key information on your business to help you make better decisions. Use the above guide as a start and adapt it to your business. What does this tell you about your business and how can you use it in management? Knowing how your business has performed in the past is crucial information to use to improve future performance. However, unless you use it to make changes and fine tune your business, all you are effectively doing is looking at the scoreboard after the game has finished!

THE NEXT STEP

All interested producers should take the bull by the horns and get involved in the self-assessments offered as part of the Grazing Best Management Practice project. The only cost is your own time and travel to a local venue.

Once you know where you want to improve your capabilities, the Grazing Best Management Practice partners can direct you to a range of training and educational opportunities.

These include Meat & Livestock Australia's cost of production tool, DAF's business modelling packages such as Testing Management Options and Breedcow/ Dynama and undertaking a Business EDGE workshop.

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Animal modules improve awareness

Workshops delivered over Fitzroy, Burnett, Mary and Burdekin

ANIMAL modules within the Grazing BMP program have been delivered in workshops within the Fitzroy, Burnett Mary and Burdekin basins over the past three years.

Feedback results collected from 266 participants indicate that the workshops have enabled producers to identify areas within their beef business that require improvement through innovative management.

Participants reported increased awareness of the standards presented in the Animal Production and Animal Health and Welfare modules since attending the workshop.

The top four were these:

- Role of bull breeding analysis and selecting bulls for genetic improvement
- Management of heifers to improve breeder performance
- Implementing a health management program
- Planning for biosecurity and quarantine.

BULL BREEDING ANALYSIS AND SELECTING BULLS FOR GENETIC IMPROVEMENT

Bull breeding analysis is a tool that can be used by cattle producers when purchasing bulls. It is now summarised as Bull Check, which is a comprehensive analysis of the bull performed by a vet. The analysis assesses all aspects of the animal's structure and given a score out of 10.

Semen morphology is also assessed to identify any defects that may be occurring that can affect the ability of the bull to get calves.

The complementary tool to Bull Check for estimated breeding values (EBVs) should be used as an estimation of the genetic gain that the bull can offer to the herd of cows he is joined to.

More information about Bull Check and EBVs can be found on the FutureBeef website www.futurebeef.com.

MANAGEMENT OF HEIFERS TO IMPROVE BREEDER PERFORMANCE

Many producers who attend the animal workshops are having trouble getting their maiden heifers back in calf for the second time.

Keeping heifers in a separate mob and not boxing them with the main breeder herd until they calve out for the second time is a tool that can be



Participants at the accelerated grazing best management practice workshop in Emerald.

used to improve reproductive efficiency within first calf heifers. Heifers can then be able to be managed more intensively.

Practices such as early weaning of calves and supplementary feeding of the heifers to maintain body condition during lactation can lead to improved conception rates.

Of course this strategy depends on how practical it is to keep the heifers separate.

More information about heifer management can be found on the FutureBeef website www.futurebeef.com.

IMPLEMENTING A HEALTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Vaccination of cattle can be compared to insurance cover. It can cost money but it can save producers huge economic returns in protection against diseases that decimate calving percentages and production gains.

Some producers vaccinate their cattle for a wide range of diseases, while others don't vaccinate for any diseases. The aim of the workshop is to provide producers with a guide on which vaccinations should be given to bulls, breeders and calves. Vaccination protects herds that are naive to disease.

More information about cattle diseases can be found on the FutureBeef website.

PLANNING FOR BIOSECURITY & QUARANTINE

Biosecurity is an important issue for the wider industry and individual beef businesses.

Farm biosecurity covers disease, pests and weeds. A farm biosecurity plan is a document that lists procedures that protect the farm from biosecurity issues.

It enables the producer to negotiate with mining companies and set standards for all visitors to prevent weed infestation and spread.

A strategy to minimise disease is quarantining new animals entering the property.

The quarantine area needs to be a place where animals can be monitored to ensure that they are in good health and don't spread weeds through faeces.

Animals should be quarantined for a minimum of seven days.

Any unusual disease symptoms observed in livestock should be reported to the relevant authorities. It is imperative that Australia keeps its disease-free status for market access.

More information about farm biosecurity can be found on www.farmbiosecurity.com.au.

Standards within the animal modules enable producers to assess where they stand in comparison to industry standards.

New Biosecurity Queensland staff for Emerald

BIOSECURITY Queensland has welcomed three new staff members to its Emerald team to ensure livestock producers in the region have the assistance they need.

Two new animal biosecurity inspectors Kimberley Hoy and Grant Parker, and a new vet Linda Forster, have hit the ground running, working across the livestock industry in the region.

Biosecurity Queensland operations manager Rowan Lambourne said the new staff members brought a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the team, and would play a vital role helping to safeguard the livestock industry.

"Our animal biosecurity team provides support to livestock owners in the region assisting livestock movement, property registration, disease investigation and surveillance, animal welfare and saleyard monitoring," he said.

"The team can help hobby farmers, livestock producers, agents, horse owners and anyone else involved with livestock.

"The Emerald-based team is responsible for the area from Moranbah in the north and down to Springsure in the south, east to Dingo and west to Alpha."

Mr Lambourne said the new staff members had filled vacant positions, meaning the animal biosecurity team in Emerald was now at full strength.

"Anyone who needs assistance with livestock biosecurity matters can contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 to get in touch with our local team," he said.

Biosecurity Queensland is committed to strengthening and protecting Queensland's multi-billion-dollar livestock industry.

For more information about Biosecurity Queensland, visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

Follow Biosecurity Queensland on Facebook and Twitter (@BiosecurityQld).

The animal modules enable the industry to demonstrate to the wider community that they take animal welfare seriously and they are willing to embrace new ideas to increase productivity through sustainable management pathways.

The program has reached a wide audience of producers from many different areas who are passionate about promoting their industry and improving their bottom line.

The program links directly to extension and producers are encouraged to work with DAF staff to further investigate avenues to improve their management.

Matt Brown
Beef Extension (FutureBeef)
DAF Rockhampton
07 4923 6211



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Andrew joins team to lend a hand for GBMP

Former jackaroo keen to help Queensland graziers adapt

IN LINE with AgForce's commitment to support sustainability in the Queensland grazing industry, the organization has recently recruited an additional staff member to bolster the growing Grazing Best Management Practice (GBMP) program.

Andrew Taylor will support AgForce and its partners the Fitzroy Basin Association, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and North Queensland Dry Tropics.

Andrew will support the expansion of the program into the Burnett and Mary River systems of south east Queensland.

Increased adoption of the Grazing BMP program will help graziers to identify opportunities for increased production efficiencies, provide improved environmental outcomes for the land, and improved credibility with consumers and the broader community with reference to land stewardship and animal welfare.

Andrew has a 'grass-roots' background in the grazing industry, having started his working life as a jackaroo in the Gulf and managing grazing properties in northern NSW.

Andrew has also worked as a rural loans officer for Rabo Bank, servicing north Queensland. Andrew spent 10 years working as a



Andrew Taylor.

consultant for a number of international organizations including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and GRM International (formerly known as Gunn Rural Management).

During his career, Andrew has been responsible for designing and implementing agriculture programs in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Serbia, and Sudan.

He has also been contracted to facilitate

agriculture extension programs in Philippines, Serbia, East Timor and Western Samoa.

More recently Andrew worked with graziers in the Northern Gulf Catchment region with sustainable grazing extension and regional Landcare activities.

Andrew has been passionately involved in implementing sustainable grazing systems for many years and is relishing the opportunity to work with a "like minded" team to support the industry with the Grazing BMP program.

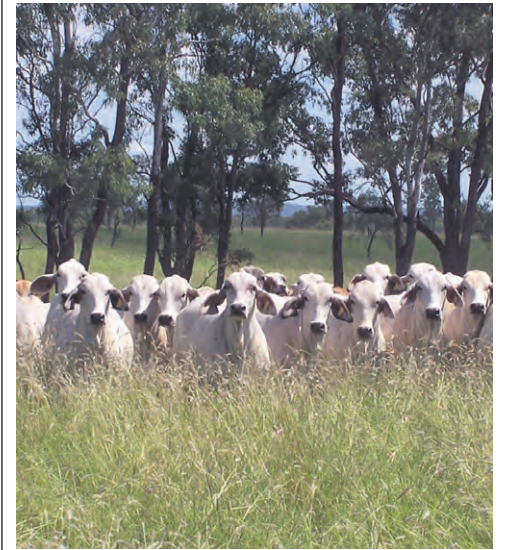
Andrew's role is based in Brisbane with regular travel throughout the natural resource management regions of North Queensland Dry Tropics, Fitzroy Basin Association, Burnett-Mary Regional Group, and south east Queensland to support the Grazing BMP team.

Andrew's funding has been made possible through the Australian and Queensland government's commitment to enhancing water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.

If you would like to contact Andrew about completing your Grazing BMP self-assessment or other aspects of the program, you can write to him by email to TaylorA@agforceqld.org.au or call his phone on 0488 002 092.



Long-term research sheds light on grazing management



WITH 80 per cent of Queensland drought declared, graziers are constantly forced to cope with one of the most variable climates on earth.

In 1997 the first research paddocks were set up on the Lyons family's property Wambiana, south-west of Charters Towers, to compare different stocking strategies in a variable climate.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries officers Peter O'Reagain and John Bushell started and ran the project through the life of the research, implementing and monitoring stocking strategies season after season, after season.

"Strategies include heavy and light stocking, flexible stocking, rotational wet season spelling and combinations thereof, run in large, replicated paddocks," Dr O'Reagain said.

"After 18 years there are dramatic visual differences in land condition and animal condition between treatments.

"This is supported by long-term data on animal production, profitability, pasture condition, water run-off and faunal biodiversity, as well as carbon sequestration.

"With 2015 the fourth driest year since records began in 1910, there could hardly be a better time to witness the long-term effects of the different management strategies."

A field day will run at Wambiana on August 29, (RSVP 4761 5151).

You can also order or download the 60 page booklet from MLA: phone 1800 023 100 or visit <https://futurebeef.com.au/resources/projects/wambiana-grazing-trial/>.

The Wambiana Research Project has been co-funded by the Queensland Government, Meat & Livestock Australia, and continued support of the Lyons family.



DAFF updates Stocktake Plus app for android users

THE Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' popular beef business app Stocktake Plus has been updated for android device users.

Forget the pen and paper, GPS, camera and land type sheets – a smartphone and a new Stocktake Plus app are all a grazier needs to determine stocking rates and carrying capacity in any paddock.

The Stocktake Plus app was developed by DAF's FutureBeef team after extensive industry consultation, and is designed to be a practical, work-anywhere (including outside telephone range), decision support tool.

Supported through FutureBeef and Meat & Livestock Australia, the app is now available for use for all northern Australia beef producers.

The new Android update makes the app more user-friendly and accurate, and brings it in line with the updated Apple version. It includes:

1. Add 'available pasture' to the reports section.
2. Create a home screen on start-up instead of defaulting to properties tab.
3. Export data to a .zip file of a CSV, email or transfer file.

It is also timely to remind all users to routinely

back-up your data and here is how to do this:

1. Once logged in navigate to secure backup via more on the navigation bar (at the bottom), or
2. You can view the video tutorial <http://www.stocktakeplus.com.au/support/help-tutorials/#tutorial15>.

Should you encounter any problems please let me know.

Greg Bath
DAF, Toowoomba
(07) 4688 1212
greg.bath@daf.qld.gov.au



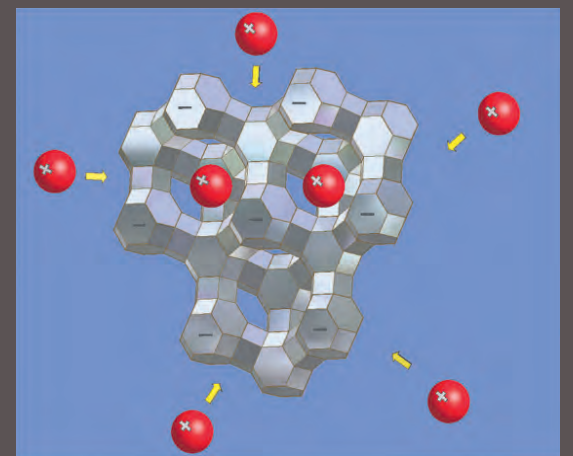
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