

# Bissett – better than oats at Foresthome

It could be mistaken for a paddock of oats from the distance and it will yield as good as any oats crop. Innovative graziers, Stewart and Glenda Jones and Jack Jones "Foresthome" Marlborough, invested heavily to renovate a steep forest paddock more than 17 years ago and establish a shot gun mix of pasture which would be the envy of any grazier in Queensland. Stewart Jones commented that the pasture really has stood the test of time

as it has been through the most severe drought in past years and is always the best paddock on the property. The Bissett Creeping Blue Grass really is a highlight of the property as it is consistently carrying 350 - 500 weaners through dry periods from April to December.

After assessing the future value of pasture renovation, Stewart contracted well known dozer operator Bill Chapman to survey the steep forest paddocks of Foresthome, build

level keyline type contours to manage the overland flow, renovate with a deep ripper and plant a mix of improved pastures. He began in 1990 and completed the more than 280ha (700 acres) by 1994. In total, the projects cost more than \$100,000 or more than \$350/ha (\$140/acre), an extremely high price at that time. However, the cost was justified as the paddocks were all but useless until renovated. The deep ripping was carried out using a D6 dozer and long ripper tynes with a WASCA wing (Water and Soil Conservation Attachment), which subsoils without inverting the soil.

The pasture mix included Aztec Atro, Butterfly Pea, Bissett Creeping Blue Grass, Seca and Verano Stylos, Win Casia, Buffel, Katamboora Rhodes and Cunningham Leucaena. The Bissett Creeping Bluegrass seed was only just released prior to the paddocks being renovated. Mr. Jones continued, from the air, it looks like an irrigated paddock,



and still today, it continues to pay off. Even during dry periods, the ground cover remains at 90 - 100%, due to the density of Bissett runners. It is better than a hay patch, because it holds the water on the paddock, in contour banks, and releases it slowly and just continues to get better each year. This paddock has been locked up since December and has had 24 inches or 600mm in the past 4

months, with negligible erosion. To find out more about this innovative practice and other exciting grazing management tools don't miss the next "Technology of Growing Grass" workshops, being held at Jericho 29th and 30th April, Emerald 17th and 18th May and Wandoan 27th and 28th May. For more information, contact Noela on 0749 383919 or Shane on 4995 8330.

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Selected Seeds have been serving the needs of Queensland graziers for forty years. The company was founded by Phil Smith in 1970 in Biloela. Mr Smith currently runs the company from the Head Office in Pittsworth. A branch was opened in Rockhampton in 1979 and Rod Mooney who started the branch with Nigel Richardson is still there today.

As well as supplying a network of agents and graziers in northern Australia from their branches in Rockhampton and Pittsworth, Selected Seeds market their BPR varieties of Rhodes grass to export markets

in the Middle East, Japan and South America. Selected Seeds Finecut Rhodes grass is by far the most popular variety in these markets.

The company also employs an agronomist on the Atherton Tablelands to ensure that only good quality seed is produced. Selected Seeds market Finecut and Topcut Rhodes, Bisset and Medway bluegrass and Aztec Atro under Plant Breeders Rights. The company is also close to releasing some new salt tolerant Rhodes grass varieties which have been bred with Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries.

