

Grazing industry needs education – not regulation

The grazing community has been blamed for many problems in recent years, as science has lagged behind the innovators in the industry. We all want to conduct Best Practice – grazing management. After all, no-one wants to see their land less productive than last year & production means profit. However, the so called educated country is lagging behind the rest of the world in many regards. Now Grazing BestPrac has combined the latest science and hands on practical information to enable producers to become savvy and responsible. Best Practice in the grazing industry has been discussed for many years & has always been placed in the too hard basket by many organisations, until now. The grazing & cropping industries have been faced with many issues and regulations in the past decade, including vegetation management, water reform, cultural heritage & land ownership, council rating systems, overland flow management, cost price squeeze & many more. However, many of these issues are largely being controlled by government bodies & forces outside our direct producer control on a day to day basis. In fact, best practice for grazing only becomes an issue when government begins to regulate against the grazing industry, such as the Vegetation Management Act or the recent Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Act 2009. This regulation, like many others is the big stick approach being used when it is perceived the industry is not managing itself well. It may be that there are only a few cowboys who are causing the problems, but every producer in the industry is being accused of mis-management. The innovators in the industry are doing a wonderful job in managing for best practice and we need to highlight them to the community.



Mick Alexander comparing grazing systems

Just reading the list makes you exhausted. No two people would see the same property exactly the same & so no two property plans or grazing systems would be the same unless we have a set of guiding principles or concepts that help us to understand best practice. Ideally our goal would be to:

“Operate a grazing business which was highly productive and highly profitable, while having healthy soils, plants and animals in an ecologically diverse environment that is able to adapt to changing climatic conditions”.

We are managing a highly diverse system & so we must remember that every decision has an impact on the pasture, the soil, the stock, our production & profit. Best Practice comes down to managing the sun, rain & soil as a basis to ecological health. The things we have total control of include the management of the land, the health of the land, groundcover, stocking rates, pasture health & how we use the rain that falls. In fact, the things that really make us the profit are the things we can control. Mick Alexander is the Principal of Grazing BestPrac, Yeppoon, and works with innovative farming and grazing families & is developing and delivering the Healthy Grass, Cattle and Soil Workshop series, including “The Technology of Growing Grass”, Soil and Plant Nutrition and Property Planning Workshops. For more information, contact Mick on 49 383919 or 0438 395255. The next Soil & Plant Nutrition workshop will be held in Pittsworth on the 31st May and 1st June.



Group of producers at a Landcare field day at Warwick in March

Best Practice in the grazing industry may include:

- Property design & layout
- Grazing management for resting country
- Livestock husbandry
- Climate/rainfall management.
- Soil Nutrient & biology management
- Chemical management
- Fertiliser & soil input management
- Animal Nutrition
- Pest Management
- Sediment/ erosion management
- Vegetation & pasture management
- Biodiversity & managing for farm system diversity
- Marketing
- Workplace health & safety
- Record keeping & monitoring



Group of producers at a Landcare field day at Miles TOGG

Healthy Crops, Cattle & Soils Program

‘Make the most of your rain & grass in 2010’

SOIL AND PLANT NUTRITION WORKSHOP

Cutting edge 2 day soil & plant management workshop for the 21st Century

WHO - Bart Davidson (Bio-Nutrient Solutions, Moree)

WHERE TOOWOOMBA – 31ST MAY/ 1ST JUNE

WHERE EMERALD - 3RD AND 4TH JUNE

- Read and interpret soil tests
- Understand the interactions between soil and plants, biology and nutrients
- Implement a best practice monitoring program for soil, crop & pastures
- Increase the efficiency of your fertiliser program and practices
- Identify the three phases of plant growth in grains that make the money and how to maximise them
- Improve the biological health of your soils

For more information Contact: - Grazing BestPrac

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