

AgForce Meetings in CQ ...

May 26: Bowen River Hotel/Strathmore Station grazing industry field day. Paddock demonstrations by DEEDI's Bob Shepherd and Bob Karfs on land condition, erosion and effects on producers' businesses. AgForce and AgForward staff will answer questions on reef regulations and how to complete an ERMP. Leasehold renewals under Delbessie Agreement and vegetation management covered where required. Register by calling (07) 3236 3100 or AgForward project officer Kate Dunn on 0429 123 099; email dunnk@agforward.org.au.

June 1: Mt Coolon Computer Mapping Workshop. For information or to register, contact Bree Hough no later than two weeks before the workshop on (07) 3238 6039, email bree.hough@agforward.org.au.

June 2: Clermont Computer Mapping Workshop. Details as above for Mt Coolon workshop on June 1.

June 3: Note change of date: AgForce Nebo branch meeting, Nebo Bowls Club at 2.30pm for 3pm. Speakers are AgForce senior policy adviser Drew Wagner CQ area manager Danielle Hogarth. The meeting will be followed by dinner at same venue at own cost. Contact Roger or Mary Ann Chaffey on 4950 7189.

June 3: Alpha Computer Mapping Workshop. Details as above for Mt Coolon workshop on June 1.

June 5: Sarina Grazing Field Day and Paddock Walk. Free, open to all landholders, school agricultural students and agribusinesses. Topics include: Improving pasture production; importance of legumes for animal nutrition and pasture nitrogen; understanding remnant vegetation and regulated regrowth maps; how to do a PMAV; and Reef Rescue water quality grants for grazing enterprises. RSVP by Tuesday, June 1, to Carrie Mayne on 0428 720 651 or email maynec@agforceqld.org.au.

June 16: Middlemount producer information day. For information or to register, contact Natalie Schick on 0428 154 803, email natalie.schick@agforceqld.org.au.

June 16: Eidsvold Computer Mapping Workshop. Details as above for Mt Coolon workshop on June 1.

June 18: Marlborough producer information day. For information or to register, contact Natalie Schick on 0428 154 803, email natalie.schick@agforceqld.org.au.

July 9: AgForce CQ Sundowner at Australian Agricultural College, Emerald, at 5pm. Contact Danielle Hogarth on 4927 6100 or 0427 021 370.

September 16-17: AgForce State Conference 2010 at Leichhardt Hotel, Rockhampton. Industry tour, welcome function, conference dinner, trade display and speakers. Contact Wendy Allen on (07) 3236 3100.



LEFT: Peter Andrews demonstrates NSF techniques.
db19-0510-2
INSET: Some of the 30-strong crowd at Mick Lavel's Springsure property for the field day.
db19-0510-1

Gains to come if we make land healthier

By DANIEL BURDON

NATURAL sequence farming is gaining a large following in Central Queensland, with some 30 people turning out to a Springsure cattle property to learn

from Peter Andrews and talk to Mick Lavel, the property owner who has already seen production benefits after just two years of use.

Mr Lavel said the system worked on the basis of re-hydrating land

by using waterways to feed the land – as a chain of ponds connected by shallower creeks – spreading water across floodplains in a land management technique essentially mimicking nature.

“We had Peter (Andrews – credited with creating the system) up a couple of years ago and recently and we had read his book and it seemed to make a lot of sense. The only way to see if it made more sense was to get him up and he helped get us started on a few things.

“It’s all about re-hydrating the landscape, keeping water on the floodplain for longer which, in turn, helps the land, which helps the plants and gets us better results,” Mr Lavel said.

“We are trying to create the same type of land management system as nature does by itself and overlay those principles with a grazing land management system. To do that, we need to get back to how nature does things and try to mimic that balancing act.

“But there’s a whole lot more to understand about this and, basically, we are doing rotational or cell grazing and we’ve got to match that with the growth rate of plants, so we match the carrying capacity of the land to the stocking rates of the animals,” he said.

Mr Andrews stressed the need to reduce runoff and improve infil-



Field day host Mick Lavel (left), of “Kelvin Downs”, Springsure, with participant Tim Patterson.
Pictures by DANIEL BURDON db19-0510-3

tration of rainfall, so more vegetation could grow, as well as the importance of keeping mulch on the ground and letting pastures recover from grazing.

“A good way of measuring the sustainability of the grazing system is to see how long it takes you to go from flood to drought without follow-up rain.

“If we lose our soil carbon and the mulch, the country dries out so much faster,” Mr Andrews said.

Mr Lavel said one of the essential parts of natural sequence farming was taking the focus off guaranteeing weight gains and putting it back on the health of the land.

Once the land was healthy, the weight gains would come.

“Hopefully, in the

next couple of years, we might get to do some trials and, if those are successful, then we can be more recognised that we have seen an increase in our product by taking care of the land,” he said.

Mr Lavel said a creek bed on his property had been lifted by about 1500mm and water was being fed from it into surrounding land, feeding native blue-grasses which form the majority of his stock-feed.

The day at “Kelvin Downs”, near Springsure, was sponsored by CHRRUP under a Farm Ready project with Central Queensland Best Practice Group and Grazing BestPrac. A field day will be held in July on pasture cropping options in CQ.

Call Grazing BestPrac on 4938 3919.

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SAME DAY APPROVAL

“ We need to get back to how nature does things and try to mimic that balancing act ”