



Pasture cropping and rotational grazing

The variable seasons and extreme weather events are making pasture cropping a real option on, Mountain View, Springsure. Mountain View is owned by Fred and Fay Wheeler and run in partnership with daughter and son in-law, Adele and David O'Connor and daughter Emily.

The O'Connors are the driving force in trialling new methods of improving the soil health and using pasture cropping and rotational grazing.

Last March, was their first attempt to establish an oats crop directly into existing pasture.

David and Adele attended a "Climate Change and Soil Health" workshop run by the CQ BestPrac Group and CHRRUP in Rockhampton in March and immediately trialled the pasture management concept the following week.

The knowledge we gained about soil health from Bart Davidson (Bio-nutrient Solutions, Moree) and Mick Alexander (Grazing BestPrac) really opened our eyes David said.

We have made some big changes and it is very exciting to be able to get this kind of support, he added.

The 40 acre (16 ha) pasture cropped paddock had Coolibah oats direct drilled into a Queensland Bluegrass, Flinders and Butterfly Pea pasture on the 13th March and has had a further 71mm of in-crop rain.

David O'Connor agreed, this was a good first attempt even though we were not set up for zero till planting.

The oats were planted with a conventional scarifier and BlueLine seed boxes, which will be on display next Wednesday after the Pasture Cropping workshop in Springsure.

Mountain View aggregation is a total of 16,000 acres (6,400 ha) of mixed forest and self mulching black soil downs to the south of Springsure.

The main enterprises include breeding and finishing. The breeder herd includes 300 Poll Hereford and Santa cross

cows with an infusion of Braford.

The main turnover includes MSA 2 year old milk tooth steers at around 600kg liveweight.

The family has just established a rotational grazing program with paddocks receiving 90 days rest during the dry season and reducing in the summer growing season.

The pasture cropped paddock is also in the rotation and will be rested.



Adele O'Connor said, we are trialling a number of ideas including rotational grazing to improve pasture production and soil health.

She continued, We see it as a way of having our steers going forward and having our grass pastures being supported by the oats crop.

In a way, we are improving our soils at the same time as profits.

Our goal is to turnover steers faster and be able to finish them in winter, she said.

David O'Connor said, we see the pasture cropping as a means of getting more

legumes and other species into the grass paddocks as well as supplying nutrients and microbes if necessary to balance our soils.

He added, We are in the process of soil sampling and analysing to establish soil health.

In the next planting program will be injecting a liquid with the seed to improve soil health, so we are looking forward to next weeks workshop with Colin Seis to learn more about setting up a liquid injection system, he said

"we see the pasture cropping as a means of getting more legumes and other species into the grass paddocks as well as supplying nutrients and microbes if necessary to balance our soils.."



If you would like to attend the Pasture Cropping workshop at Rockhampton on the 16th August or Springsure on the 18th August contact Noela on 0749 383919 or Sally on 49822996.



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What – WORKSHOPS

Where – Rockhampton.

When – 16th August (9 am – 4 pm)

Where – Springsure.

When – 18th August (9 am – 4 pm)

Cost - \$20.00/ person

RSVP – 12th August.

Bookings – Noela/ Cathe on 49 383919

"This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under its Farm Ready Industry program".