



# Winter Pasture NRM Update

MARCH/ APRIL 2013

## Angaston Ag Bureau Action Planning

The Angaston Ag Bureau has kicked off the second year of the Winter Pasture NRM Project with an action planning session. Although the season has not yet begun, the group provided many positive comments and showed enthusiasm for planning their pasture programs including trialling new varieties, improving soil health and trialling different or alternative fertilisers.

Due to the poor 2012 season many producers were unable to complete their plans so have 'fine tuned' them ready for this year when we will receive spring rainfall. Some producers found that their projects were a success, even though the year was tough. Ian and Fiona Koch, who trialled a project to increase pasture biomass using a variety of species to compete against resistant ryegrass and provide sheep feed, are excited to trial how much feed they can produce with an average rainfall considering they grew a large amount with half of the average.

These projects in 2013 will again be shared through pasture walks, newsletters and other communication avenues to facilitate learning between the groups. Other producer groups in the region will be engaged soon, so producers are encouraged to get their thinking caps on for their own individual project. Remember that there is lots of help available from local merchandisers such as Farmer Johns and Landmark, and contractors to provide specialist advice. There is also the opportunity to link into the other Winter Pasture Projects such as the Rappa and the AMLR NRM Boards on-ground incentives program via the Gawler Office 8523 7700.

## Upcoming Events

- Barossa- Fleurieu Bus Trip  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April  
Leaving Keyneton Park 8am  
Contact Georgie (details pg 2)
- AMLR NRM Board's Carbon Farming Initiative and Trading  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May- Hahndorf  
[Further Info](#)



The Angaston Ag Bureau in deep discussion for their 2013 action plans!

## Upcoming Fleurieu Bus Trip: Fleurieu Partner Farm Visit

In 2009 Fleurieu Dairy Discussion Group Farmers ran a three year trial to replicate a Victorian study to lower the on farm feeding and production costs by changing the emphasis of the system to home-grown grass.

The Fleurieu Partner Farm Project was set up at Bill Frasers' property in Waitpinga. The successes of the project included intensive block grazing, properly timed N application, pre-topping to utilise poorly grazed and barley grass infested pastures, correct pasture species selection, spring-sown pastures, and an overall reduction in the cost of production.

There were also areas which did not work including getting more cows in calf, spray topping phalaris with glyphosate and achieving the host farm's original profit targets. The Fleurieu Group has now begun an Alternative Fodder Project looking at spring sown pastures.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> April, the Barossa- Fleurieu Bus Trip will visit Bill Fraser's farm to learn all about these projects. Let Georgie know ASAP if you are interested in attending.



## Case Study: North Rhine Sheep Group



The North Rhine Sheep Group, through the Lifetime Ewe Management Program, are also helping to mentor and build capacity of senior vet students who attend each session.

The North Rhine Sheep Group has been in operation for at least 15 years. It began as the North Rhine Landcare Group and over time has evolved to become a loose knit group with a focus on sheep production whilst keeping a strong NRM outcomes. Members range from Eden Valley to Keyneton, Moculta and Koonunga. The group were originally involved in Prograze workshops providing members a basis for good pasture and grazing management. They have also participated in property management planning workshops.

The group also managed a local MLA Wean More Lambs demonstration site which showed that ewe condition must increase between weaning and mating as it is difficult to add weight over pregnancy.

The group are now involved in the second year of the Lifetime Ewe Management Program. In the first year the group learnt skills in condition scoring animals and pasture measurement and marrying this data to complete a feed budget relating to the ewe's requirements. These sessions were run over the year allowing an analysis of the pasture and feeding requirements over time. It also allowed a great comparison of these systems across the district.

This will be completed again this year with an emphasis on fine tuning the energy requirement of the ewe and weaner management.

The group will also be involved with a Sheep Connect project looking at using satellite imagery to measure pastures.

## Step Up Soils: Fertiliser Cost/Benefit Analysis

The Step Up Soil Condition Project helped 15 local producers to look at the health of their soil. The group identified, through soil testing, that they had relatively good soil organic carbon so were interested in the cost/benefit of soil amelioration.

Simon Ellis of Ellis Farm Consultancy, Verdun, ran the session. Some of the key take home messages were:

- To achieve maximum gain, improve your best country first.
- If you receive unusual soil test results don't be afraid to re-test as you could waste money based on mis-sampling, in the lab or paddock.
- Often you will receive a better return on investment from fencing due to increased pasture utilisation than with liming.
- Check the neutralising value of lime to

determine its cost effectiveness.

- If you are unsure whether to use a product apply a test strip and monitor the difference between this strip and the rest of the paddock.

- Use MLA's Phosphorus Tool ([www.mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au)) to help determine phosphorus fertiliser application rates
- To make phosphorus application cost effective, have stock ready to eat the pasture. The majority of phosphorus fertiliser response will be 6-8 weeks after the opening rains.

This was the final session of the Step Up Soils Workshop. Five producers believed the program helped them to make a moderate change to their production system whilst two believed it would make a major change.



Soil testing will help you determine the type of soil amelioration required

## From the INBOX

### Sheep CRC: The simple guide to making more money from less work

This booklet includes the following topics:

The why, what & how of sheep  
Manage for ease & success  
Less droving, more driving  
Headache-free husbandry  
Healthy sheep save time  
Well-fed sheep  
Money grows in paddocks  
Breeding labour-friendly sheep  
It can be done!

[Further Information](#)

### AMLR NRM Board Events Calendar

AMLR NRM Board run a series of events throughout the year including weed control, grazing management, native plant identification, pest animal control. For further information or to subscribe check out the [website](#).

### Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project on FACEBOOK

Don't forget to 'like' the Winter Pasture Project to keep updated with latest news and events. Simply search 'Barossa Winter Pasture NRM Project'.

## Further Information

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