

Final report

Strategic Leadership Team – Profitable Grazing Systems project

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Abstract

The overarching objective of the PGS program is to encourage and support red meat producers to improve their management skills, to increase profit. The key role of the leadership team is to provide support to the national and state coordinators in delivering their roles and mentor deliverers to build their capacity. My priority in this reporting year has been on investing time to assist finalising the P curriculum and sourcing funding to customise PayDirt curriculum to the NT in order to have something concrete to promote the PGS concept with. The substantial achievement has been in supporting the work invested in producing high quality coaching material in subject area's identified as being of priority importance to increase the profitability of NT producers. These materials will enable more emphasis to be placed on trainer capacity building and producer recruitment into coaching programs in the next 12 months.

Executive summary

Background

The purpose of my role with the Strategic Leadership Team was to assist in ensuring materials are of high quality and a good fit for NT producers and to promote the program to potential deliverers and participants.

Objectives

The aim of this position on the leadership team was to;

- Provide technical expertise to ensure the materials being produced were relevant to NT producers.
- Utilise my networks to gather stakeholder feedback as to the relevance of PGS for NT producers, gauge interest of potential deliverers and participants

Table 1. Workplan Activities

	Year 1 2017/18		Year 2 2018/19		Year 3 2019/20		Year 4 2020/21		Year 5 2021/22	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
Number of SLP activities	4	N/A	-	N/A	5	0	3	4	4	N/A
Number of SLP producers	42	N/A	-	N/A	54	0	30	33	-	N/A
Number of feeder activities	5	N/A	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	N/A
Number of feeder activity producers	79	N/A	15	16	45	238*	45	92	-	N/A

Methodology

Delivery of this project has largely been conducted through communicating the benefits to potential deliverers and participants through phone calls, industry events and in targeted meetings. Advice and assistance have been provided to the State Co-ordinator and project manager through phone calls, email and in person meetings.

Results/key findings

Technical input was provided to develop the P and Paydirt coaching materials. A PGS deliverer was recruited to start delivering Building Better Leaders Curriculum. Stakeholders were engaged and

feedback received as to how best to deliver PGS in the NT. There is a limited pool of qualified deliverers available and the business model for delivery in remote area's is yet to be established.

Benefits to industry

- High quality coaching curriculum has been produced.
- Potential deliverers have been engaged with the program and are interested to deliver PGS programs.
- Participants have shown interest in being involved in PGS programs and have indicated support for a coaching approach to achieve adoption.

Future research and recommendations

- Continue to build on the engagement that has been initiated to deliver a coaching program to a pilot group of participants.
- Work with deliverers to establish a profitable business model for delivery in the NT.

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1. Background

PGS Vision

A financially sustainable adoption program aligned to the MLA 2020 targets that extends MLA R&D outputs and achieves increased producer skills and capability, practice change and whole farm business improvement through increasing producer understanding of:

Business profit = management capability + evidence + value chain approach

Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) is MLA's new flagship adoption program which will drive measurable, improved business performance outcomes for participating red meat producers. The program will use a supported learning methodology to develop the skills of red meat producers and support implementation of these new skills into businesses, improving profitability and productivity. Profitable Grazing Systems builds on previous red meat industry extension and adoption programs including Making More from Sheep and More Beef from Pastures and will have a focus on achieving adoption through high quality delivery underpinned by robust monitoring evaluation and a commercial approach.

PGS state coordinators will work closely with the PGS national coordinator to ensure the successful delivery of PGS within their state. The key responsibilities of state coordinators are:

- Be the key PGS contact for deliverers within each state. This includes reviewing supported learning projects submitted by deliverers for the eligibility for PGS; developing and delivering strategic feeder activities in collaboration with PGS deliverers; and supporting PGS deliverers in the preparation of their M&E materials for both feeder and SLP activities;
- Recruitment of deliverers and producers for the program. Producers will be engaged in collaboration with PGS deliverers. Effective local networks and local knowledge will be critical in successful recruitment;
- Influence feeder activity design to ensure they are high impact and meet producer needs locally;
- Manage PGS program quality assurance:
 - ensure consistency in messaging and standards of delivery
 - collate monitoring and evaluation data from deliverers & submit to M&E coordinator
 - provide feedback to deliverers once M&E data is analysed by M&E coordinator

2. Objectives

1. Overarching Project Objectives

The overarching objective of the PGS program is to encourage and support red meat producers to improve their management skills, to increase profit. The program objectives to be completed by 2022 are:

1. To increase the average profitability of participating red meat producers by 2.5% ROAM by improving their skills and capability.
2. A commercial model which involves user pays for the private good component of the activity (generally the delivery), with MLA contributing a maximum of 30% of the delivery cost of supported learning projects.
3. 5,000 producers attend feeder activities with 10 -15% of them going on to participate in a supported learning program.
4. 2,900 producers participate in supported learning programs to increase their skills and knowledge:
 - a. 2150 producers increase their skills and knowledge above a skills audit score of 75% (competent);
 - b. 50 deliverers have increased capability to a point where they can deliver effective high quality supported learning programs;
 - c. Increase the average confidence rating of participating producers to use key skill sets or do key tasks to greater than 8/10;
 - d. At least 70% of participating producers have made practice changes underpinned by a change in skills.

2. Leadership Team Objectives

The key role of the leadership team is to provide support to the national and state coordinators in delivering their roles and mentor deliverers to build their capacity. Core principles of the role:

1. Deliver feeder and recruitment activities on behalf of delivery network deliverers (these will be arranged by the state & national coordinators)
2. Support state or national coordinators in reviewing supported learning projects developed by MLA or deliverers, as required
3. Deliver supported learning projects under the proposed adoption program banner (minimum of one per year)
4. Provide support to the PGS national coordinator by providing feedback and recommendations for overarching program improvement and individual supported learning project progress
5. Act as a champion for PGS
6. Support good governance of PGS

3. Methodology

Delivery of this project has largely been conducted through communicating the benefits to potential deliverers and participants through phone calls, industry events and in targeted meetings. Advice and assistance have been provided to the State Co-ordinator and project manager through phone calls, email and in person meetings.

4. Results

4.1 Work Plan

Table 2. Work Plan

State:	NT	Workplan timeframe – start:	November 21
State Coordinator:		Workplan timeframe – end:	April 22

Task	Timeframe	Due date	Progress	Details
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed ● On-track ● Not due ● Overdue 	
Project Feedback				
Project feedback will be provided through direct contact with the PGS project manager and through attendance at regular SLT meetings.	Ongoing	April 2022		
Milestone 7 report due	6 months	1 May 2022		
PGS LT team communication activities (<i>phone hook-ups, face to face meetings, etc.</i>)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As required 	6 months	End April 2022		
SLP deliverer promotion, recruitment & mentoring (<i>tasks associated with recruiting potential SLP deliverers</i>)				
Deliverer promotion	Ongoing	End April 2022		PayDirt online training was promoted to potential deliverers within NTDIT, who expressed interest after participating to be a deliverer if the materials could be customised for NT clients.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Paydirt and Building Better Breeders materials to potential deliverers Assist Desiree in recruitment of potential NT deliverers of the P Coaching program. 	Ongoing	End April 2022		<p>Building Better Breeders online training was promoted with Whitney Dollemore who attended and has interest in deliverer a PGS in this area. She is presenting a Breeding EDGE as a feeder activity in Katherine in July and will assess interest with participants in following up with a Breeding focused PGS.</p> <p>A Nutrition EDGE is scheduled for Katherine in November 22, this will be the next opportunity for a Feeder activity to promote the P coaching program and recruit a group.</p>
<p>Deliverer recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit one Paydirt deliverer in the NT Recruit one P program deliverer suitable to deliver in the NT. 	<p>6 months</p> <p>6 months</p>	<p>End April 2022</p> <p>End April 2022</p>		<p>Two DPI staff (Arthur Cameron and the new extension agronomist) flagged interest in being involved in the customisation and delivery of PayDirt and provided substantial in-kind support to the Smart Farm Grant process. Due to not being successful with this grant, this is on hold until a funding source is found to allow an NT customisation.</p> <p>Two company rangeland officer who potentially have the experience to deliver (Daniel Chapman and Suzie Shearer were approached to attend the P webinar. This is discussed further below. Whitney Dollemore has also identified as a potential P deliverer, and has expressed interest in viewing the Train the Trainer webinar and being mentored by Desiree in a pilot program.</p>
<p>Deliverer mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the interest by company rangeland/livestock support officers in being mentored in the delivery of available 	6 months	End April 2022		<p>Two rangeland/livestock support officers (AACo and CPC) expressed interest in attending the P coaching train the trainer webinar with a view to determine if they would potentially be able to;</p>

<p>northern curriculum and provide feedback to LT meeting and recommendations to bring this to fruition in the Final Report. This will include consulting with MLA adoption team to provide clarity in regards to the user pay model when multiple participants are from the same business.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver or • be involved in delivery with mentor support • to assess if the program was something they would support the roll out of within their company. <p>Unfortunately, neither were unable to attend on the day and require follow up to ensure they can get access to the webinar.</p> <p>Rallen has expressed interest in attending a GLM and Nutrition and then undertaking a coaching program. Tentative dates for Nutritional and GLM are flagged for November and EOI's are being circulated.</p> <p>Companies to be consulted with include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rallen • Heytesbury • AACo • CPC
SLP assessment <i>(SLPs under development / being assessed)</i>				
<p>Feedback on potential SLP's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc initial review for northern applicability of national curriculums being developed as required. 	Ongoing	End April 2022		<p>Review and assistance of P coaching curriculum final draft and edits.</p> <p>No other requests to review SLP's in time frame.</p>
SLP recruitment <i>(to be completed for each SLP being recruited for – includes recruitment plan, feeder activities, other communications etc.)</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion to Sturt Plateau group at annual meeting to recruit a pilot group to participate in PayDirt 	6 months	End March 2022		<p>Meeting has been postponed again. The Secretary and President of the SPBPG were very active in assisting with the funding application to customise PayDirt in the Smart Farming Grant application process out of session, however a group meeting has still not been able to be held.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of P, Better Breeders and PayDirt to the Katherine/Top End Advisory Group to seek feedback on materials, further direction and interest in recruitment. This will include undertaking Cam's survey. 	6 months	December 2021		<p>KPIAC- A presentation and update on PGS was made at the December KPIAC. There was low awareness of the project amongst producer members. Members endorsed the coaching concept; they were interested to see examples of what coaching material looked like (P and Paydirt) when the local versions are available and for further updates to be given at future meetings which will occur at the July 22 KPIAC meeting. (MLA staff at Beef UP forum to give update on PGS and can present snapshot of P materials)</p> <p>A presentation and feedback session was held at the Katherine branch NTCA meeting in May. As with the KPIAC meeting there was very little awareness of the term "Profitable Grazing Systems". There was support for continuing to support EDGE courses that are followed by PGS programs to embed learning as there was general agreement were guilty of leaving workshop materials sitting on the shelf without follow up. The NTCA CEO flagged he wished to take the EDGE GLM & Nutrition workshops following by a PGS program concept to Drought hub strategic planning meeting to be held in late May. The NTCA executive officer has flagged the opportunity to pilot the P coaching with the Young NTCA alumni.</p>
M&E activities (approvals for M&E materials, data due from deliverers, producer interviews, submission of data sets to National Coordinator, providing feedback to deliverers, etc.)				
<p>Feedback as to efficacy, efficiency and perceived value of M&E.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required by the PGS project co-ordinator and the Leadership team members. 	Ongoing	End April 2022		Feedback provided as required during LT meetings.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Key findings

- There is a lack of understanding what being involved in a coaching project entails amongst producers.
- There is low awareness of the Profitable Grazing Systems project in the Northern Territory.
- There is a lack of suitable coaches
- Difficulty exists in finding a business model that is profitable to deliver with the small market and large distances.
- Timeframes for promoting the PGS project has been hampered by the delay in the development of curriculum, the learning is it takes a substantial amount of time to develop high quality materials that go through a rigorous review process with key stakeholders.
- There is interest in participating in coaching programs.

5.2 Benefits to industry

There has been significant delay in getting participants and groups on the ground but we have achieved some success in engaging NT producers in the Building Better Leaders PGS, showing some success towards meeting against participant KPIs in the overarching project objectives. In addition to finding ways to bring in interstate expertise in cost effective ways through building skills in using virtual technology and raising participant acceptance of remote delivery, it is critical to not lose focus on supporting and investing in delivery capacity in the NT and north generally in order to maintain local momentum.

The substantial achievement has been in the work invested in producing high quality coaching material in subject area's identified as being of priority importance to increase the profitability of NT producers.

"Coaching" continues to build momentum as an accepted and sought out technology for achieving change in all other areas of human endeavour. My hope through this program is we collectively persist to ensure the beef industry has the resources ready to capitalise on this as the market grows to accept it as a learning and adoption model. A successful PGS model will also concurrently make small steps towards building on the acceptance of user pays in the grazing industry.

Progress feels slow, but without the PGS program quality curriculum such as the P and PayDirt would not have been initiated, both of which are going to be a hugely valuable resource to industry in the future and along with skilled deliverers will underpin the success of PGS.

To ensure the investment made to date it is imperative to build on having one trusted northern point of contact and champion for the PGS program to building a network of people to pave the way for uptake of PGS programs in the north through promotion and deliverer recruitment. Progress feels slow, but without the PGS program quality curriculum such as the P and PayDirt would not have been initiated, both of which are going to be a hugely valuable resource to industry in the future and along with skilled deliverers will underpin the success of PGS. Focusing our limited

resources on the low hanging fruit and existing networks to leverage some solid outcomes in priority topics will ensure we have substance to what we promote.

6. Future research and recommendations

- Create ownership of the PayDirt curriculum with a group of producers who can provide the practical background for the considerations when making significant change to their beef enterprise, along with the more specific technical recommendations which have been formulated by experts in more established farming areas.
- Use the development of “NT Paydirt” to build the capacity and confidence of the few technical experts in this region to be potential deliverers of coaching material rather than just technical advisors, whilst simultaneously building the technical skill of existing potential deliverers who may have the networks and clients but lack the technical base to deliver. Once a way forward has been mapped in regard to producer input it will be important to formalize in a project any cash support from other stakeholders such as Territory NRM, and also the in-kind DIT contribution to updating the materials to capitalise on the senior NTDIT agronomists experience before it walks out the door to retirement. This also provides the opportunity to raise the profile of the PGS approach and link with other relevant NTDIT projects such as the Leucaena PDS.

Incorporate the key recommendations from this knowledge into the Katherine GLM sown pastures section which becomes a feeder activity for PayDirt and also strengthens the technical information in GLM.

- Allow the coach webinars to be available to deliverer’s wishing to become accredited or wanting to know more about the materials, specifically the Rangeland Officers from AACo, CPC and Whitney Dollemore to view the P coaching webinar.
- Using the EDGENetwork workshops as feeder activities are an important strategy to recruit participants and to ensure group members have a common understanding of the technical detail. It will be important for the National Co-ordinator and streamlined leadership team to maintain communication with EDGE deliverers in Northern Australia.
- The new northern leadership team member and national co-ordinator to follow up with the NTCA to initiate a P coaching pilot with the Young NTCA alumni.
- More focus from the leadership team could be used to provide into the business model of how to make a PGS an attractive commercial proposition eg. ensuring virtual meeting skills, group coaching sessions, spreadsheets to assist with calculating setting delivery price, keeping the curriculum very focused on a small number of key skills etc. The outcomes of this focus could be captured as resources for potential PGS.
- MLA and leadership team direct some thought to pricing structures for when coaches may sit in-house within a company, delivering to a group of managers who are all the one business.
- Keep the PGS concept in front of those who are developing the Drought Innovation Centre’s in the north to value add to their projects.

- Continue to focus on a small number of packages of high quality and use the leadership team to assist in ensuring a successful roll out of these rather than focusing on producing more packages, until demand is built.
- Ensure there is a review process internally through MLA and the leadership group combined with sufficient resources to provide support (feedback AND skill building) to those formulating new curriculum to ensure that coaching principles are adhered to get the requisite adoption and skill building through repetition of a small number of key concepts. As a PGS deliverer this was my greatest learning as to how critical to coaching success this principle was, and requires specialised knowledge to ensure content heavy deliverers (as most expert consultants tend to be) are guided and challenged to take a pared down approach and resist the temptation to include everything they think a client may need to know. That is not to say the enormous effort that has gone into capturing knowledge and presenting it in skill building activities in packages such as PayDirt or Building Better Breeders is in any way wasted, but it will be important to ensure that the information can be encapsulated into “smaller bites” of the key skills and that other mechanisms (such as incorporating into an information type workshop such as GLM or creating producer technical manuals) are used to house the technical knowledge that has been created.
- Continue to engage with the NTDIT team who are delivering Phosphorus research and extension to continue to promote PGS as an important adoption activity to complement their current work and seek linkages with their extension projects and actively involve them in the coaching activities.
- Provide follow up support for Whitney Dollemore after she has conducted the July Breeding EDGE, to see if a Katherine Breeding PGS can be initiated.
- Find a pilot participant company to work through with MLA the considerations around user pay’s model when all participants are from the same business and where the deliverer may be an in-house provider.
- More frequent updates and (brief) check ins with the LT would help to increase synergy between team members and make keeping up to date with project developments more efficient. A communique from these meetings that could be made available to the wider PGS team of deliverers and curriculum developers would be a useful tool to keep everyone updated.
- Provide a PGS update, and promote and provide a review of the P coaching materials at the Kidman Springs Beef Up Forum.