

2000/W05



Producer Research Support

Rotational Grazing

Badgingarra Prograze Group



The project

Following participation in a PROGRAZE course, the Badgingarra Prograze Group were interested in learning about rotational grazing and understanding its benefits compared with more conventional set stocking practices.

Objectives

- Quantify the benefits of rotational grazing by comparing monthly pasture growth rates on the rotationally grazed paddocks to continuously grazed paddocks;
- Successfully implement rotational grazing on properties of four group members and thereby increase per hectare returns;
- Increase the group average gross margin per rotationally grazed hectare from \$50 to \$75;
- Have 80% of the group implementing rotational grazing in the second year.

What was done

Participants intended to compare pasture growth rates of rotationally grazed paddocks with continuously grazed paddocks. A consultant assisted participants to develop a rotational grazing plan on the properties of five group members.

Participants met regularly over the two years of the project to discuss progress and share experiences. The meetings were led by a facilitator in the first year. In the second and subsequent years, the meetings became part of other projects in which group members were involved.

After the first year, participants attempted to quantify the per hectare income from the rotational grazing paddocks.

What happened?

Project participants learned how to rotationally graze pastures. They learned to use supplements and start grazing early, to avoid an uncontrolled feed surplus before the end of the first rotation. Participants were able to observe and understand pasture growth rates and use these skills to optimise grazing management.

Both years of the project, the season started late and was exceptionally dry but warm, which made direct comparison with previous years difficult. Participating producers measured the DSE and dollar return per hectare on the rotationally grazed paddocks. The superiority of rotational grazing was evident and evaluation of the productivity of set stocking techniques was not completed. General discussions with district producers not rotationally grazing, demonstrated significant advantages. Supplementary feeding was reduced and winter feed on offer was higher for those pastures that were rotationally grazed. This was due to both increased pasture growth and a better understanding of how to optimise available feed.

Project participants learned how to rotationally graze pastures. They learned to use supplements and start grazing early, to avoid an uncontrolled feed surplus before the end of the first rotation.

Direct comparisons with set stocking were not made, but that didn't hamper adoption of rotational grazing among group members.

Key points

- Group members learned how to successfully rotational graze pastures.
- Producers learned to use supplements and start grazing early, to avoid an uncontrolled feed surplus before the end of the first rotation.
- Group members continued to meet in related grazing groups and expanded their interests from rational grazing.

Contact details

Grant Bain, PO Box 81
CARNAMAH 6157 WA

2000/W05

Producer Research Support

MLA Producer Research Support offers support funding of up to \$15,000 over three years for groups of producers keen to be active in on-farm research and demonstration trials.

These activities include:

- Producer Initiated Research and Development
- More Beef from Pastures demonstration trials
- Prime Time Wean More Lambs demonstration trials
- Sustainable and productive grazing grants.

Contact Stephen Feighan - MLA Project Manager, Producer Delivery and Adoption.

Tel (02) 9463 9245 or
sfeighan@mla.com.au

MLA also recommends EDGEnetwork

EDGEnetwork offers practical field-based workshops to improve productivity and profitability for the long-term.

Workshops cover breeding, nutrition, grazing management, marketing and selling.

Call MLA on 1800 993 343 or
www.edgenetwork.com.au

Meat and Livestock Australia

Level 1, 165 Walker Street
North Sydney NSW 2060
Tel (02) 9463 9333
Fax (02) 9463 9393
Free Phone 1800 023 100 (Australia only)
www.mla.com.au

Rotational Grazing

August 2005 / PIRD OUTCOMES

Discussion

Direct comparisons with set stocking were not made, but that didn't hamper adoption of rotational grazing among group members.

Group learning was greatest during the first year of the project when meetings were more formal and structured.

Group members continued to meet in related grazing groups and expanded their interests from rational grazing.