

## Big interest in Namoi native pastures

### Simon Turpin

Around 90 landholders attended the two EverGraze field days at Tambar Springs and Kelvin held at the end of March. Solid attendance at these EverGraze field days showed the keenness of landholders in improving their skills in identifying and managing their native pastures.

Simon Turpin, EverGraze Project Officer at Namoi CMA, said the key message of the EverGraze field days was to manage native pastures to promote desirable species while increasing the profitability of livestock enterprises using these pastures.

“The days started with an interactive native grass identification session which is always popular. Then sessions on the forage value of native grasses, animal nutrition and the grazing animal, soil nutrient requirements, fertiliser options and soil biology followed”, said Simon.

The field days were also used to release a native grass identification booklet produced by Lachlan Rowling, Advisory Officer with the NSW DPI. This is a practical and useful colour booklet that includes colour photos, tips on identifying grasses, and notes on the forage value (quality) and management of 20 common native grass species.

Part of the day included a trip to the EverGraze Supporting Sites that have been set up on both Mac and Robyn Howarth’s property at Tambar Springs and Matt and Mel Carter’s property at Kelvin. Both these trials are investigating the management of native pastures to improve their quality, quantity and productivity. Both Mac and Matt spent time talking about the history of their places, their new management systems and what they are achieving from their pasture and livestock systems.

Mac Howarth spoke about testing the value of adding fertiliser, annual legumes and rotational grazing to his native pasture hill country. “We are now cutting more wool and producing more lambs from the same number of stock off the same area”, Mac said. “At the same time, the condition of the pastures is improving because we take the stock out of a paddock earlier and leave them out longer than we used to”, he added.

These two days were the second part of a series of native pasture management field days being run through the EverGraze program. The EverGraze program is developing and testing new farming systems in different environments across south eastern Australia. The target is to increase profits of sheep and cattle enterprises by up to 50% and at the same time improve water management, use of perennials, biodiversity and soil health.

Lachlan Rowling, Advisory Officer with the NSW DPI, said another round of field days are planned for the same time, same places next year with the intention of delivering information requested by landholders who have attended EverGraze field days over the last two years.

“These field days are about supplying practical and helpful information to enable landholders to improve the condition of their native pastures while making them more profitable,” said Lachlan.

*EverGraze* – More livestock from perennials is a Future Farm Industries CRC, MLA and AWI research and delivery partnership.

For more information on EverGraze, upcoming events in the Namoi Catchment or the native grasses identification booklet, call Simon Turpin: (Namoi CMA) on 67 429 212 or Lochie Rowling: (NSW DPI Advisory Officer) on 67 631 166. Alternatively, EverGraze information can be found at [www.evergraze.com.au](http://www.evergraze.com.au)

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