



EverGraze® — right plant, right place, right purpose

Photo: EverGraze

This issue of *Future Farm* showcases success stories from producers involved in the national EverGraze® – *More livestock from perennials* project.

Advances in farm productivity and environmental enhancement usually proceed in small steps, but this project aims to use perennials to increase profits of livestock enterprises by 50 per cent, while simultaneously improving farm environments through better water management, groundcover, biodiversity and soil health.

To achieve these targets, *EverGraze* looks at the whole-farm system (soils, pastures, animals and management) and how it relates to the catchment. It brings the knowledge and experience of farmers and catchment managers together with Australia's foremost researchers in soil science, agronomy, environmental science, hydrology, animal production and ecology. The project then strategically plans landholder engagement activities to ensure on-farm adoption of more profitable and sustainable grazing systems.

"*EverGraze* looks at the science and the practical application of new grazing systems using more perennial pastures," National *EverGraze* Coordinator, Geoff Saul, said.

key points

- *EverGraze* is developing and testing new farming systems across southern Australia's high-rainfall zones
- On-farm Supporting Sites play a key role in allowing producers to try trial new grazing methods with perennial systems at a commercial scale
- *EverGraze – More livestock from perennials* is a FFI CRC, MLA and AWI research and delivery partnership.

"Catchment groups want to see change on the ground – they want to see these things at a commercial scale and in a real world situation in their catchments."

Proof Sites

EverGraze has established six research (Proof) sites where new farming systems that increase profits and improve the environment are being tested.

Sheep and cattle at Proof Sites across the country are run on a range of native and introduced pastures, such as lucerne, perennial ryegrass, phalaris, tall fescue, chicory and kikuyu.

These pastures are positioned to make best use of the soils and landscapes available. For example, lucerne on well-drained soils and tall fescue on lower-lying areas.

In turn the livestock systems make best use of the perennials through increasing ovulation, lamb survival and growth rates and running more livestock per hectare.

"Our aim is to better match feed availability to livestock requirements and improve the long-term viability of grazing enterprises," Proof Site Leader, Greg Lodge said.

"In our area, we're exploring the relationship between production and biodiversity, whole-farm economics and examining the role of summer-active perennials, such as lucerne, as a mixed pasture."

Supporting Sites

EverGraze also has more than 55 on-farm demonstration sites (Supporting Sites) where producer groups trial new grazing systems in their local environment.

Supporting Sites are managed in collaboration with Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), state agricultural agencies and consultancy groups.

"Supporting Sites allow groups of producers to trial new pasture systems in their own environment, with their livestock and management," Geoff said.

"This gives them the confidence that the new innovations are robust and viable in their backyard."

"The appeal of *EverGraze* is that it is landholder driven," Namoi CMA soil officer, Simon Turpin said.

"Graziers join producer groups because they share a common problem, with the aim of reducing the factors that restrain production on their farm."

National focus

With Proof and Supporting Sites in five states, *EverGraze* is developing and testing new farming systems across a range of environments, giving the project relevance across the high rainfall zone of Southern Australia. Where similarities occur between environments, major benefits will come from sharing results and experiences.

EverGraze is a Future Farm Industries CRC, Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation research and delivery partnership. ↘

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