

April 2008

Keeping you up-to-date with progress and developments in the EverGraze project

Dear Sir/Madam

Welcome to the April edition of EverGraze Update a newsletter issues regularly to people interested in the results from the EverGraze Project.

EverGraze Update is sent out electronically to people who have registered their e-mail address. Electronic distribution ensures that you will get the newsletter promptly and you can get details of coming events. If you have access to the internet, we encourage you to register your details at www.evergraze.com.au

EverGraze is developing new grazing systems to increase profits and improve catchment health.

With more perennials and better livestock, EverGraze aims to increase profitability of livestock enterprises by up to 50% while simultaneously improving natural resource outcomes of improved water management, perenniality, biodiversity and soil health.

There are experimental sites in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, with a network of more than 50 Supporting Sites evaluating new ideas on farms.

EverGraze is a Future Farm Industries CRC, MLA and AWI research and delivery partnership.

In this issue

Supporting Sites	Latest Results	Calendar and News	
<p>KI producers keen on kikuyu</p> <p>Pasture management on steep hills</p>	<p>Split joining works well at Wagga</p> <p>Hamilton lamb turn-off sets new benchmarks</p>	<p>Growing interest in EverGraze</p> <p>Supporting Sites open for inspection - dates and details</p>	

Supporting Sites

Kangaroo Island producers keen on kikuyu

Kangaroo Island farmers certainly showed their interest and enthusiasm to try new pasture options with a great turn out at the recent KI Kikuyu farm walks and evening information session. Almost 50 landholders participated (that's about 1 in 7 farmers on KI!).



Paul Sanford (WA Dept Ag EverGraze team leader) and Morgan Sounness (fine wool producer and Kike grower) gave producers a great insight into Kike establishment and management techniques and provided valuable information on the many production and environmental benefits of Kike pastures. Kike is ideally suited to the lower rainfall, sandier soils of the eastern part of KI and ideally suits the Islands grazing management systems.

Trevor Bolto (Kike grower and host of the KI EverGraze trial site) is rapt with the potential of Kike. "The paddock I seeded to Kike was prone to drifting and is now stabilised. I have green feed in summer and value its ability to use water as salinity is an issue on this property", Trevor said.

A fact sheet on how to grow and use Kikuyu is currently being finalised and will shortly be available on the EverGraze website.

For further details on using kikuyu contact Paul Sanford, E: psanford@agric.wa.gov.au T: (08) 9892-8475 or for details of the SA visit contact Lyn Dohle, E: dohle.lyn@saugov.sa.gov.au T: (08) 8553-4999

Pasture management on steep hills

The only EverGraze Supporting Site in the Wimmera catchment is at Warrak, 18km east of Ararat in western Victoria. This site in the high rainfall area of the upper Wimmera has been set up to investigate the effects of altered grazing management on native pasture composition in hill country. The property is owned by Mark and Andrea McKew where they graze sheep for fine wool and prime lamb production and cattle. The 650 ha property includes a small area of creek flat used for lucerne but mostly rising and steep hill country.

The McKew's aim is to lift productivity by better utilising feed in the paddock and decreasing non productive annual grasses eg. Vulpia. Maintaining ground cover over summer is also important due to the high erosion risk. For the Supporting Site, a 100 ha hill paddock has been subdivided into 6 smaller paddocks (ranging in size from 30 ha to 11 ha). Mark said 'The biggest challenge with introducing rotational grazing into these hill paddocks is the stock water supply'.

To overcome this problem, a solar pump was set up to elevate dam water to a tank 50m up the hill to supply troughs in other paddocks. So far the system is working well as the sheep work their way through paddocks around the hill. The Microleana and Themeda has responded to the few summer rainstorms and provides much needed green feed at this time of year.

A field day at the site on April 15th will allow people to see the new grazing systems being implemented. Further details Julie Andrew, T: julie.andrew@dpi.vic.gov.au T: (03) 5358 8902

Proof Site News

Split joining works well at Wagga Wagga

The Wagga Wagga Proof Site is looking at a range of sheep systems to increase profits on perennial pastures in southern NSW. One of the systems being investigated is "Split Joining" where 50% of the merino ewe flock is joined to terminal sires in February for a June lambing with the remaining ewes joined in April for a spring lambing.

The split joining allows the cross bred lambs to have sufficient time to reach saleable weights from pasture but the later merino lambing means less pressure on pastures in mid winter. This system is being compared to a conventional merino system used in the region where all of the flock is mated to merino rams in February.

All ewe systems are stocked so that the winter grazing pressure is the same at 10.2 DSE/ha.

Results for 2007 are shown below:

<i>Ewe System</i>	<i>Breeding ewes/ha</i>	<i>Lambs weaned/ha</i>	<i>Lamb sold kg/ha</i>	<i>Final weights (kg)</i>	<i>Supplement cost (\$/ha)</i>
Split Joining 50% Terminal February 50% Merino April	5.6	5.1	208	27 kg Merino 56 kg crossbred	\$102
Conventional Self replacing merino 100% Merino February	4.4	3.9	163	42 Merino	\$83

While final gross margins will not be available until after shearing in May, the Split Joining system will have a higher gross margin than the other systems. Split joining provides a flexible grazing system that is able to cope with variable seasons. Different portions of the ewe flock can be given priority for pasture in winter and if the spring fails, lambs can be weaned early and sold as stores at weights suitable for finishing. For further information on split joining contact Michael Friend, E: mfriend@csu.edu.au T: (02) 6933-2285.

Hamilton lamb turn-off sets new benchmarks

Results in 2007 highlighted the significant productivity advantage of twin lamb systems and the penalty in individual liveweight of twin lambs.

Lamb production from singles systems exceeded 500 kg lamb liveweight per hectare, while the twin bearing systems topped 700 kg/ha. The downside for the twin systems was that the lambs were 7 kg lighter than the single lambs and so have a larger feed requirement to reach marketable weights.

The lambs were grazed on 3 different pasture types. For the Ryegrass system, the grazing area is split into well drained, intermediate and clay flats where early, mid season and long growing season perennial ryegrass cultivars are sown.

The Triple system uses lucerne, ryegrass and summer active tall fescue on the 3 soil types. For the Novel system, chicory, Italian ryegrass and kikuyu is used. There were relatively small differences between the pastures indicating similar carrying capacity of these pastures during late winter and spring.

The pasture systems were stocked at between 17 and 20 ewes/ha between August 2007 and February 2008. Lamb production for the different pasture systems running either single or twin lambing Merino ewes mated to a terminal sire.

Pasture System	Birth Type	Lambs Scanned (%)	Lamb Marking (%)	Lamb Weight (kg) Jan 2008	Lamb Weight(kg/ha) Jan 2008
Ryegrass – early, mid, late	Single	100	84%	33.3	470
Triple – lucerne, ryegrass, fescue	Single	100	84%	35.1	509
Novel – chicory, ryegrass, kikuyu	Single	100	81%	34.9	568
Ryegrass – early, mid, late	Twin	200	148%	27.7	774
Triple – lucerne, ryegrass, fescue	Twin	200	153%	26.0	717

Further information contact Ralph Behrendt, E: ralph.behrendt@dpi.vic.gov.au T: (03) 5573 0979

Calendar and Events

Growing interest in EverGraze

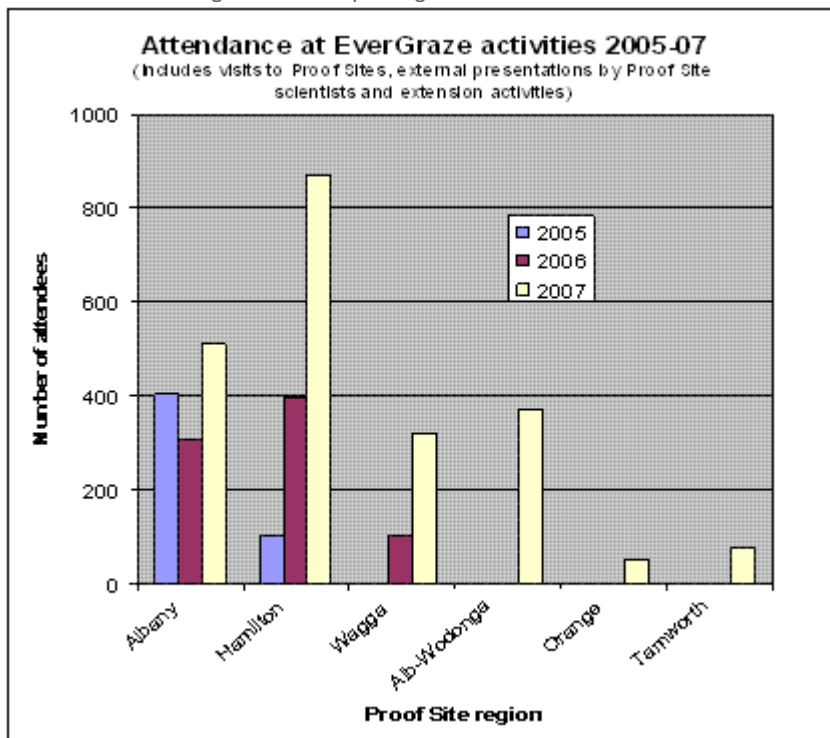
Despite operating during severe drought, the EverGraze project continues to attract producers, agronomists and agribusiness people to visit the Proof and Supporting Sites. EverGraze National Coordinator Geoffrey Saul said that over 3500 people have visited sites or attended presentations about EverGraze.

“The number of visitors to the Proof Sites has almost doubled each year at the 3 initial sites’ Geoff said.

"With the new Proof Sites now underway in NSW and extension activities now getting underway, we expect the interest in EverGraze to continue to grow".

To keep in touch with EverGraze activities, people are encouraged to subscribe on the website www.evergraze.com.au and receive regular updates on results, coming farm walks and field days and gain easy access to fact sheets and information.

Further information geoff.saul@dpi.vic.gov.au P 0419 328 590



EverGraze Supporting Sites open for inspection

During April – May, many EverGraze Supporting Sites will conduct farm walks and field days to allow interested people to see what is happening in their area. EverGraze national coordinator Geoffrey Saul said that the Supporting Sites are designed to allow groups of producers to trial innovative grazing and pasture production systems in their local environment at a paddocks scale.

"Over 50 EverGraze Supporting Sites are underway across WA, SA, Vic and NSW testing new grazing systems, alternative perennial species and innovative uses of perennials to boost ovulation rates in ewes" Geoff said.

"The farm walks over the next month will allow producers to see the treatments being imposed and have input to the way the results are monitored and reported to the farming community" he added.

A list of activities is provided below and further details will be posted on the EverGraze website www.evergraze.com.au or contact Geoffrey Saul, E: geoff.saul@bigpond.com T: 0419 328 590 for details of activities in your region.

Tuesday 15 April	Wimmera CMA region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Walk Warrak Supporting Site • Native pasture management and utilisation • Native grass species identification 	Warrak near Ararat, starting at Warrak Hall 9.00 – 12.30 pm	Julie Andrew 03 5358 8902, E: julie.andrew@dpi.vic.gov.au
Wednesday 16 April 10.00 am – 3.00 pm	Murrumbidgee CMA region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought recovery and perennial pasture 	Bookham, NSW "Westbourne" Shearing Shed, 4 km along	Jim Meckiff 02 6942 4957 Jim.meckiff@dpi.nsw.gov.au Janelle Jenkins (02) 6940 2940, E: janelle.jenkins@cma.nsw.gov.au

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment field day In association with Bookham Ag Bureau Supporting Sites 	Berremangra Rd from Hume Hwy	
April 23 and 24	Namoi CMA region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currabubla; gazing management to encourage recruitment of native perennials Tambar Springs; Using fertiliser, grazing management and legumes to improve production and pasture quality Native grass species identification 	Tambar Springs (Mac Howarth) on the 23rd April. Currabubula (David Alderdice) 24th April. Both in the morning with a BBQ to finish.	Simon Turpin (02) 6742 9212 simon.turpin@cma.nsw.gov.au Lachie Rowling (02) 6763-1100 lachlan.rowling@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Friday 2nd May 2008 9.30am – 4.30pm	South West NRM region, WA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm walks in the Warren catchment featuring commentary by Evergreen farming agronomists and host farmers, John Mottram, Jim Dorrell, Daniel Simpson, and Thys and Erin Gorter. Demonstrations of EverGraze Supporting Site methods 	Morning session at sites in the lower catchment Afternoon at sites in the upper catchment	Greg O'Reilly greg.oreilly@water.wa.gov.au T: (08) 9771 1878, M: 0429 202 624
May 12th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 21st	North East Victoria CMA region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Site half day farm walks Allow community members to see what is happening at Supporting Sites, learn what EverGraze is about and how they can get involved. Identifying native pasture species Rotational grazing systems Speakers Kate Sargeant, Allison Desmond and Jim Moll 	Monday 12th 9.00am -12.00 Tallangatta 2.00pm – 5.00 Cudgewa Tuesday 13th 9.30 – 2.00 pm Benambra Saturday 17th 9.00 – 12.00 Taminick & Killawarra Sunday 18th 9.30 am – 12.00 Indigo Valley Wednesday 21st 9.00am – 12.00 Everton	Jim Moll, jmoll@skm.com.au T: (03) 5721-5291 Kate Sargeant Kate.sargeant@dpi.vic.gov.au M: 0428 325 318
Friday May 16th 10.00 am – 3.30 pm	South west Victoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof Site field day. Pasture production animal performance and impacts on environmental issues Speakers include Ralph Behrendt, Andrew Kennedy, Steve Clark and Malcolm McCaskill 	DPI Research Farm Hamilton, Vic	Sandra Greenaway, 03 5573 0900 sandra.greenaway@dpi.vic.gov.au
May Dates to be	Border Rivers Gwydir CMA region	Supporting Sites near Armidale	Luc Farago P (02) 6721-9812 Luc.farago@cma.nsw.gov.au

confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm walks at 2 Supporting sites, impacts of different animal species on pasture composition, managing pastures to control Love Grass. • Native grass species identification 	NSW	
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If you wish to change your contact details or have your name removed from the EverGraze mailing list, please fill in the sheet below and send to:

National EverGraze Coordinator, 98 Leura Lane, Hamilton, Vic 3300

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

For producers, please circle the main enterprises on your farm: Wool, Lamb, Cattle, Cropping
 I wish to have my contact details removed from the EverGraze mailing list?