

December 2008

## Keeping you up to date with *EverGraze* developments

Welcome to the *EverGraze - More Livestock from Perennials* December e-newsletter issued to subscribers from our website. We welcome your feedback, contributions and comments.

EverGraze is using perennials in grazing systems with sheep and cattle to **increase profits by 50%** while simultaneously improving farm environments through improved water management, ground cover, biodiversity and soil health.

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

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

Read on for the latest news and visit [www.evergraze.com.au](http://www.evergraze.com.au) for the latest results

## EverGraze Road Show ~ Lucerne in south west Victoria

The EverGraze Road Show was a series of events around Victoria highlighting the importance of putting the right perennial in the right place in the landscape.

On Francis and Sally Henty-Andersons property, "Merino Downs", lucerne has been part of the pasture system for almost 80 years. "It is the versatile species that allows us to finish lambs and make hay. After grazing, it responds well to rain and freshens up quickly," Mr Henty-Anderson said.

EverGraze Hamilton Proof Site Leader, Ralph Beherent, presented the results from the Hamilton and Wagga EverGraze Proof sites. Ralph highlighted the flexibility that summer-active perennial pastures add to a production system and the reduced supplementary feeding over the summer period.

At the Hamilton Proof site a \$200/ha saving was made from systems that integrated summer-active species compared to those based on perennial ryegrass.

PGG Wrightsons Reg Hill presented information on variety trials, dormancy ratings and prospects for lucerne in the future.

Allan Millard, local lamb producer said the field day gave him greater confidence in the grazing tolerance and persistence characteristics of new varieties and would like to sow more lucerne to fit with his farming enterprise.

To end the day EverGraze Extension Coordinator, Anita Morant, worked through a cost/benefit analysis of summer feed options for finishing lambs. The take home message was – **"if you can grow lucerne on parts of your farm then you probably should"**.



## Field Days

### Western Australia ~ Perennials to suit different landscapes

In southwest WA, about 50 farmers and consultants hit the road for two jam-packed days of perennial pasture field walks in the Manjimup and Kojonup districts. The days were part of the EverGraze Supporting Site that focus on Warren River catchment.

Visiting ten sites over two days and covering more than 500km, a large range of perennial pasture systems were examined.

At the Manjimup field day, where cattle are the main grazing systems, the sites included tall wheat-grass, kikuyu, summer-active tall fescue and oats (fodder) over-sown into lucerne, all of which were providing good year round production.



At Kojonup, where sheep are mainly used, the tour visited sites with kikuyu, a chicory and lucerne mix, pasture cropping over lucerne, tall wheat grass and old man and river saltbush planted strategically on severely saline affected, waterlogged soil.

The overall impression was that there is a perennial to suit a wide range of soils and landscapes in southern WA.

For further information contact Paul Omodei, [paul@agvivo.com.au](mailto:paul@agvivo.com.au)

### Lucerne & Chicory to background lambs

Erin and Thys Gorter, at Mobrup, provided a detailed break-down of the costs of establishing their stand of lucerne and chicory to background prime lambs prior to feedlot entry versus the cost of feeding pellets.

By the end of the first season with the chicory and lucerne mix, lambs gained weight faster and were in the feedlot for 2-3 weeks less time than those on pellets. They had consumed 11,000 kg of dry matter from the 35 ha site which had an annual establishment cost of \$2,940 (\$84/ha per year for 5 years). With pellets costing \$360/t, the dry matter equivalent in pellets would have cost \$4,400 if no other green feed was available. A very good outcome given the tight margins in feedlot production systems.



### NSW- Orange Proof Site ~Effect of grazing intensities on native perennials

A field day at Panuara in the Central tablelands of NSW allowed people to see the early stages of research into the effects of different grazing intensities on native perennial pastures.



Approximately 65 people attended the day which began with a pasture identification exercise "Paddock Plants" that allows people to learn how to recognize desirable and undesirable native perennial species. Next, people walked across the different treatments on the Proof Site -- high, medium and low intensity grazing systems.

Despite only commencing in January, and limited results to date, producers were keen to see and discuss the likely impacts of different grazing systems on native pastures. Finally, the research team demonstrated simulated rainfall impact on the pasture surface, to show one way in which natural resource impacts will also be measured on the site.

For further information contact Luke Beange, [luke.beange@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:luke.beange@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## Victoria– Grazing management of native perennials at Ararat

A field day near Ararat in western Victoria, highlighted ways of increasing production while maintaining ground cover from steep hills native pastures.

The DPI/EverGraze project investigates new methodologies to utilise native grasses in harsh environments, such as steep hills, for improved profitability, sustainability and biodiversity.

The presentations covered a wide range of topics including local farmers perspectives in managing steep hill country, recent research on native pasture management by Dr. Zhongnan Nie, beneficial invertebrates in native grasslands by Dr. Amanda Kobelt and grassland ecology by Janet Leversha.

The field tour focused on a hands on native grass identification session and grazing management in variable landscapes.

The day has made the participants think more broadly about the important roles that native grasses can play, e.g. improving animal health, control of agricultural pests using beneficial invertebrates and preserving genetic resources for the future.

Key messages to improve native pastures were;

- ◆ rotationally graze native pastures to avoid overgrazing desirable species and hilltops,
- ◆ allow native perennials to set seed by deferring grazing in late spring.

For further information contact Reto Zollinger, [reto.zollinger@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:reto.zollinger@dpi.vic.gov.au)



## National Advisory Committee ~ Tamworth tour highlights pasture diversity

The EverGraze National Advisory Committees (NAC) visit to northern NSW highlighted the importance of *right plant, right place, right management*.

At John and Laurie Chaffey's property at Somerton, separate paddocks of native perennials, sub-tropical perennials and lucerne provide year round forage. The Chaffey property is one of 18 being monitored by the Tamworth Proof Site team to look at the best mix of pastures to suit this variable environment and landscape.

The NAC also visited the Namoi Supporting Site "Myall Springs" owned by Matt and Mel Carter where Matt outlined the new management he is using to improve the condition and productivity of his native pastures.

The Carters have fenced large paddocks into smaller units based on soil type and topography allowing rotational grazing and better allocation of cattle to the pasture..

"We are seeing huge improvements in the quantity and quality of our native pastures because we can graze, for example, the better flat country differently to the harder western facing hill country," Matt said.

"The bare stock camps on top of the hills are disappearing, there are a lot less weeds, like saffron thistle, present and there are much better native grasses coming back into the paddocks," he added.

Simon Turpin, EverGraze Coordinator for Namoi CMA, gave an update on Supporting Sites and EverGraze activities in the Namoi. The afternoon finished with Lochie Rowling (NSW DPI and EverGraze Extension Officer) running an interactive native perennial grass identification session to highlight the wide diversity of species in the native pastures.

For further information contact Simon Turpin, [simon.turpin@cma.nsw.gov.au](mailto:simon.turpin@cma.nsw.gov.au)



### New EverGraze Action fact sheet

We have just developed a new **EverGraze Action - Grazing Phalaris for production and persistence.** This new fact sheet details how to establish phalaris and best grazing management throughout the year.



There are now nine EverGraze Action fact sheets on the EverGraze website;

- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Chicory on the East Coast
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Chicory in WA
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Lucerne
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Productive, persistent Perennial Ryegrass
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using summer active Tall Fescue
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing Kikuyu for summer feed and soil cover
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Kikuyu in WA
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Perennial grass hedges provide shelter at lambing
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Grazing Phalaris for production and persistence.

To download these EverGraze Actions, go to the EverGraze web site [www.evergraze.com.au](http://www.evergraze.com.au) Click on Information, Fact Sheets and the link to the required information.

Further Action sheets are currently being developed and will be loaded on to the website when available.

### Survey provides guidance to EverGraze

Finding out producers views on pasture and animal production systems is important to make sure that EverGraze is dealing with the right issues.

Earlier this year, Kate Sargeant, (DPI Victoria) worked with catchment groups and producers to undertake a survey of attitudes to different sown and native pastures, grazing management systems, use of fertiliser and animal management.

All producers who participated in the survey went into a draw for several accommodation prizes.

Lucky winners were David Ince, Longwood Vic; Les Devine, Tamba Springs NSW and Lachie Stewart, Kingston SA.

Information will be presented in the next newsletter and will be used to plan extension activities over the next two years and measure changes in attitudes over time.

Thanks to all producers who participated in the survey.

### What do you think?

We are trialling a new method of distributing our newsletter. The newsletter you have received today has been delivered as a pdf attachment to your email rather than distributed through our website. We would like your feedback regarding how you would like to receive your newsletter.

- ◆ As a pdf attachment
- ◆ Through the website as per previous newsletters

We would also like to know what you would like to see in future editions of the newsletter. Would you prefer

- ◆ More farmer case studies
- ◆ Latest research results
- ◆ Upcoming events
- ◆ How to manage certain perennials
- ◆ New Action fact sheets
- ◆ New Exchange discussion sheets
- ◆ Latest media
- ◆ Other suggestions?

Please send your suggestions to [info@evergraze.com.au](mailto:info@evergraze.com.au)

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