

Regional Landcare Facilitator Newsletter, July - August 2013



HOSTED BY THE WESTERN MURRAY LAND IMPROVEMENT GROUP

A message from the Regional Landcare Facilitator

Hello Everyone,

It has been nearly two months since the last newsletter and there has been a lot happening.

Dean Harrington provided some great information on livestock and pasture selection and management at the "Pasture Walk and Talk" on his property.

Another very successful event was the Central Murray BestWool BestLamb "Bred Well Fed Well" event at "Operina" on the 22nd July where 62 people attended. The day took participants through ram selection, condition scoring and provided very compelling reasons to scan your ewes to manage the expected additional nutritional requirements of ewes

with multiple lambs to optimise growth and survival rates. The proven returns to the bottom line are significant.

An irrigation training program is on offer and will be of great value to improving the efficiency of water use on farm and associated productivity benefits. The Lateral Move Irrigator Field Day at "Studleigh" on the 5th June highlighted the need for continued knowledge upgrading.

Webinars on offer include the Social Media webinar which may be of interest for some of us non Gen "Y's" who are a bit slow on the uptake of this information space.

A webinar from Allan Sa-

voury should also be thought provoking.

These webinars are usually available to download at a later date if you can't make the specified time.

Included this month is also an interview from Joel Stalin "Time" Magazine award winner which has some interesting thoughts on the use of herbivores in the farm system.

Thanks must also go out to the wildlife photographers in the region that have taken some wonderful photo's of local fauna, proving that we have a very unique biodiverse environment in our backyard indeed.

[Roger Knight, Regional Landcare Facilitator, Western Murray](#)

Upcoming Events!

Managing and Implementing Efficient Irrigation Systems

Murray Dairy and the RRDN producer group is running an irrigation training program over 4 days Tuesday 30 July, Thursday 1 August, Tuesday 6 August and Thursday 8 August from 10.00am to 3.00pm each day at the Finley TAFE.

The program will cover Management and Implementation of Efficient Irrigation Systems.

Management topics will include soils and their suitability for different types of irrigation systems, water quality and supply, drainage and irrigation scheduling.

Implementation topics will include installing or modifying your current irrigation system, evaluating the cost benefit of these systems and a field trip to inspect some modernised

irrigation systems.

Further information can be found on the attached flyer.

This is an accredited training program and will include presentations by industry experts.

The cost of \$100 is heavily subsidised by MCMA funding.

Bookings: Carol McFadzean, (03) 5822 45535 or email: cmcfadzean@ncdeagotafe.edu.au

Murrakool Land for Wildlife

Photo Competition Submissions



Above: A Grey Crowned Babbler photographed in the Kyalite Area (classified as vulnerable) Photo courtesy Michelle Morton. *More details on Pg. 13*

Special points of interest:

- LEARNINGS FROM PASTURE WALK AND TALK AND SUCCESSFUL BRED WELL FED WELL WORKSHOP
- STUBBLE MANAGEMENT GUIDE LAUNCHED
- LATERAL MOVE IRRIGATOR FARM WALK
- LINK TO THE "COUNTRY WEB" NEWSLETTER FOR RURAL WOMEN
- WILDLIFE PHOTO'S



Grow Your Social Media Skills

Are you interested in knowing more about the benefits of using Facebook and Twitter?

If so, we have the ideal webinar (internet based seminar) for you. Join us on Wednesday, **July 31st**, at 12 Midday (AEST) for a free hour long webinar which will show you how and why Landcarers are currently using Facebook and Twitter, and help guide you along the way to building successful and engaging social media profiles.

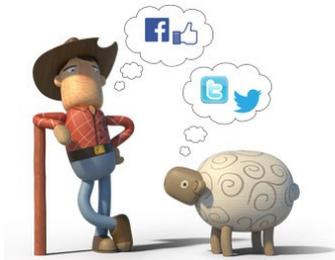
You will hear from a number of presenters who work within

the Landcare movement and have experience managing relevant social media profiles. They will talk through some of the reasons why you may want to get involved in social media, what the benefits and opportunities are, and discuss examples of existing Landcare profiles. You will also have the ability to submit questions and interact with the presenters along the way.

Whether you currently have a social media presence or are simply thinking about

dipping your toes in the water, this will be an hour well spent. You might also be interested in downloading our social media manual which focuses on helping groups get the most out of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

To register for this free webinar, please click [here](#). If you register and cannot make it on the day, a link with access to a recording of the webinar will be sent to you after the event.



National Landcare Webinar - with Allan Savory.



Allan Savory is often cited as one of the fathers of holistic management and is the Founder of the Savory Institute. Whether you think his approach is compelling or controversial, most people agree that he is thought provoking and a great presenter that

engenders discussion. Please join me at 12.00 noon EST on Friday 16th August for a free webinar discussion with Allan Savory. This target audience for this webinar is farmers/land managers and others with an interest in Landcare.

Topic: Webinar discussion with Allan Savory
Presenter: Allan Savory & Brett de Hayr
Date: Friday, 16th of August 2013
Time: 12pm - 1pm AEST

[Click Here to register for this webinar!](#)

New Group Formed – The Edward Wakool Angling Association (EWAA)

The Edward-Wakool Angling Association (EWAA) was formed to represent the collective interests of Angling Clubs in the Western Murray Catchment of NSW associated with the Edward and Wakool Rivers and related floodplain and creek complex.

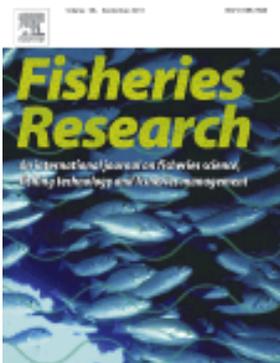
The EWAA has an objective to exchange information between community groups and government agencies and to

provide strategic input into;

- Fish research,
- Water management (e.g. environmental water delivery and water quality), Fish barriers (eg. weirs, regulators)
- Fish restocking programs,
- Angling regulations

The EWAA is made up of representatives from the Deniliquin RSL Club, Wakool

Restocking Group, Moulamein Angling Club, Kyalite Restocking Group, Murray Downs Angling Club, Murrabit Football Club Restocking Group, Barham and District Services Memorial Angling Club.



Pasture Walk and Talk

Dean Harrington held a "Pasture Walk and Talk" for the Central Murray BestWool BestLamb Group at Boort on the 18th June 2013.

Dean has recently divided a 36ha paddock into 6 x 6ha smaller sizes to control grazing pressure more easily. Dean is seeking to match the mob of ewes to paddock size and is looking at a six week rotation at this time of year.

A variety of known performing pasture species have been sown as well as some new cultivars and novel varieties.

The field walk also looked at cereal cropping and lamb management.

Field notes taken on the day include the following;

Pasture selection and management

- Graze grasses when they are at the third leaf stage.
- When grazing clovers a rule of thumb is when the clover height is a match box up, start grazing. Stop grazing when match box down.
- Spray pasture with ProGib (gibberellic acid is a natural occurring substance) to increase production.
- To control annual weeds use a clover selective herbicide. Best time to spray out barley grass is July when there is no feed value left and it goes to head and sets seed earlier than most.
- If there are large amounts of dry weeds such as barley and rye grass consider mulching with a mulcher. Cattle can eat ryegrass for roughage, however dry barley grass won't be eaten. Need to think about pugging issues grazing cattle if too wet. Too much residual dry matter will inhibit growth of preferable fodder species.
- Don't graze clover too low into September as want the clover to set seed for next year.
- It takes three years of active management to get the seed bank down from brome grass infestations
- Instead of sowing 20kg ryegrass and 5kg clover, sow 25kg/ha ryegrass and 5kg clover. There is a big increase in production from the additional seed sown and better competition against weeds. This is better than using chemicals.
- Winterstar is a good ryegrass. It is a tetraploid ryegrass variety. It has 4 chromosomes instead of two found in diploid varieties. There will be sterile offspring if a tetraploid and diploid ryegrass breed.
- As soon as you see pasture growth @ dung heaps / urine, you know the pasture is screaming for N.
- Forage crop of brassica was planted in the dry on sprayed out, moisture conserved ground.
- Fescues planted at 10kg/ha.
- Fescue KFA 482 is a summer active, winter dormant variety. It is very palatable. Don't want to let it grow too high. Nearly as good for protein as ryegrass. Don't want more than 15% protein anyway because sheep can't handle high Protein.
- Irrigating Quantum (another fescue variety) over summer. Don't want Fescue over 15cm high or no feed value and will have to slash.
- Fescue slow to establish but are a perennial that lasts a long time. Dean intends to have 25% of the pasture land in fescue.
- Stamina 5 Lucerne is a good Lucerne for persistence. Amazingly it survived prolonged flooding and heavy grazing.
- Lucerne, chicory, fescue, and barley have been sown in the same bays. Fescues active growth in spring to November, then Lucerne comes in.
- About to sow rape at 2kg/ha (half rate). Won't sow until June 21, after the winter solstice, otherwise the plant will run out by October (go to seed). If plant after the winter solstice the plant will last until next October.
- Brassicas good for weed control and to mellow the ground for cropping after two years. The brassica has deep tap roots.

"As soon as you see pasture growth @ dung heaps / urine, you know the pasture is screaming for N."

Dean Harrington



Dean Providing an overview of paddock divisions and fodder varieties to participants

Tetraploid VS Diploid ryegrass

- the difference and benefits of each are explained on Pg 9.

Continued Pg. 4.

Boort Pasture Walk and Talk *continued*...

Continued from page 3...

Livestock management

- Sheep from Murgha Station near Moulamein carry the Booroola Merino gene. The Booroola strain is a good fertility / multiple birth strain which is passed on from the ewe only, not the ram.
- Ova-Stim. Around \$3 per shot. Wouldn't put Ova-Stim in a Merino as already fertile enough.
- Maybe don't have to self replace. Maybe source ewe lambs each year, depends on economics at the time.
- \$50 lambs from Tassie being brought by Dean's father to fatten.
- A third of twinners will twin every year on average.
- Dean had a mix of Poll Dorset / Suffolk / Ile de France sheep.
- The more breeds of sheep introduced, the more throwback from breeds occur. The next lot for Dean will be terminal. The terminal sire in mind is a Charolaise Export lamb is the target.
- Weigh every lamb at least twice, when weaned and then when sell. If slow to check, then weigh. If lambs not 35kg in 9 months, then cull (growth too slow).
- Autumn joining, spring lambs cycle better at this

time of year and better for first lambing ewes.

- When no feed is available, determine the value to purchase feed for the ewe or lamb – get an expected price on what the lamb will sell for. It maybe better to just keep the ewe in good condition for lambing the next year.
- Feeding beans is expensive at weaning, but you may be able to get the lamb to market a month earlier for better prices. Get the lamb used to the beans early on so the rumen can adapt to the feed (the rumen modification process). This will ensure grain conversion efficiency is twice as fast.
- If the rumen development is done right at weaning it will set the ewe up for the next 5-6 years. If buying sheep out of a drought area, they might not have a developed rumen. The rumen may be full of dirt and won't be in a good condition to convert feed efficiently.
- Revenue wheat is a bread wheat, not dual purpose.
- Fungicide used on the wheat was Amastar, herbicide Treflam (trifluralin).
- Fertilizer was 100kg MAP and 120 kg urea pre sowing and 80kg urea top-dressed.
- Can graze anything, but all have different effects. Some have winter habit due to vernalisation (uses the seasonal cue of winter to initiate the flowering process).
- Wedgetail wheat has to have cold weather to trigger maturity.
- When oats are grazed it delays maturity by two weeks. The end of July, first week of August is the rule of thumb to finish grazing.
- Moby barley is a spring type, so don't want to sow too early. Match varieties with what you want to fill the expected feed gap timing.
- A good rotation is vetch, canola, then cereal. Clover is also a good addition to the rotation to clean up weeds and add nitrogen to the soil.
- Pre emergent herbicides for wheat. Atlantis has a residual effect and restricts next year's crop and is expensive to purchase. Crusader is less expensive and nearly as good.



Ewes and lambs getting supplementary feed.

"If the rumen development is done right at weaning it will set the ewe up for the next 5-6 years."

Dean Harrington



Rams in pen at Dean's

Cropping Information

- Mansfield wheat is a new forage variety that performs over a longer season and can provide feed to the end of August, instead of the start of August for other forage wheat varieties. It is only a feed wheat as it becomes a sticky dough.

Bred Well Fed Well Workshop gets a great turnout at “Operina”,

Excellent team work from the Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Central Murray BestWool/BestLamb group (CMBWBL) produced a highly successful BredWell FedWell workshop last Monday at Tim and Tam Mulholland’s “Operina” property near Barham, New South Wales on the 22nd July. Sixty two sheep producers attended. This is a great response resulting from the efforts of BestWool/BestLamb co-ordinator, Rick Ellis.

In the opening address Rick Ellis (CMBWBL Co-ordinator) acknowledged the importance of the Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) devolved funding through the Murray Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) for educational workshops in the local area.

The BredWell/FedWell speakers, Geoff Duddy, Tim Leeming and Stuart Warner, presented a clear and compelling case for commercial sheep breeders to use breeding values (ASBVs) as selection aids to improve their ram buying decisions.

Stubble Management Guide Launched

Mallee Sustainable Farming, in partnership with Murray CMA, has produced a guide to stubble management.

Stubble retention is a key part of sustainable farming systems and can be used by Mallee farmers to improve the profitability and sustainability of their farms.

Reduced erosion and improved soil structure are just a couple of the many benefits of stubble retention.

Among the important traits discussed, it was clear from the research results presented that sheep selected for high breeding values for early body growth, muscle and fat were better doers, had more lambs, produced more lambs and they bounced back quickly after tough times. A display of young rams with recently measured breeding values was provided by Angus Crawford, “Blue Gate” Merino Stud, Moulamein.

The BFWF speakers explained in detail how good nutritional management of the ewes ensures that the genetic outcomes of more lambs, fewer lamb losses and better returns for sheep, meat and wool can be realised.

Body condition scoring and pregnancy scanning for multiple foetuses were shown to be key practices that sheep producers can adopt in order to balance the ewe’s nutritional requirements throughout the year. The speakers showed attendees how to assess accurately body condition scores on sheep. The “Operina” ewe

Other benefits such as moisture conservation, provision of nutrients, improved biological activity and providing a useful feed source for livestock have also been identified through both research and farmer observations on-farm.

The guide has been designed to assist farmers to accurately assess stubble cover levels over the critical December to June period.

It provides information on

lambs, which were joined at 7 months of age and now had 80% lambs in utero, were used.

Workshop hosts, Tim and Tam Mulholland operate a Poll Merino Stud at “Operina”. They are enthusiastic supporters of the use of breeding values in ram and ewe selection. Their confidence stems from their involvement with the Leachmann Cattle Company, an international and highly successful seedstock business that operates internationally.

The workshop funding was shared between the WMLIG with devolved funding from the MCMA, and the MLA and AWI through their Making More from Sheep initiative as part of a national program to increase sheep industry productivity and profitability.

In his closing address Rick thanked everyone and reiterated the importance of condition scoring whenever sheep are yarded. This was summed up well by Rick when he said that “while you have your hands on their backs doing the condition score you are also greasing your palm”.

stubble management practices to ensure adequate levels of stubble are maintained to minimise erosion and harness the many benefits of stubble retention.

This project is funded by the Murray Catchment Management Authority and the Australian Government Caring for our Country.

If you would like a hard copy sent to you please contact MSF on (03) 5021 9100



A packed tent with workshop participants listening to presenters

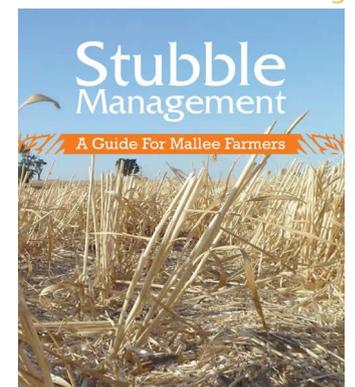


Presenters on the day: Angus Crawford, Tim Leeming, Stuart Warner, Geoff Duddy



Participants condition scoring ewes

mallee
sustainable
farming



Lateral Move Irrigator Farm Walk

Murray Irrigation and NSW DPI held an information day on Centre Pivot Irrigators on the Fasham property "Studleigh" near Wakool on the 5th June with 23 people in attendance.

Michael Pissasale (MIL) gave an overview of a new system installed with Steve Fasham. The system irrigated 93 ha.

Robert Hoogers from NSW DPI issued a handout that provided information on;

- Infiltration considerations
- Application rate
- Readily available water
- Costing and design
- Scheduling
- Maintenance

Some key messages were;

- Soil type is very important. These systems are best suited to soils with good infiltration rates. They should not be sited on sodic, heavy clays.
- You need to match the irrigation rate with the infiltration rate of the soil.
- Don't use groundwater. Centre Pivot and Linear Move (CPLM) systems apply small, precise amounts of irrigation water frequently

(as opposed to applying large, imprecise amounts infrequently with surface systems) and saves water because deep drainage is minimised. The downside for CPML systems is that, when groundwater is used, not enough water is applied to wash/leach the salt in the irrigation water out of the soil profile.

- Retain stubbles to protect the soil surface. Droplet impact can cause soils to slake, and then set hard, particularly in red soils.

- The system needs to be able to:

1. deliver the crop's total seasonal irrigation water requirement - consider access to irrigation water when channel supply is unavailable (e.g. storage, river).

2. deliver water at a high enough rate to match peak crop demand in most years. If peak evapotranspiration (ET_o) in summer is **10mm** per day, then you need a system with enough capacity to deliver this amount of water plus allow for down-time.

- Convert ET_o to crop water use. Multiply ET_o by the crop co-efficient (KC). For maize Jan KC is 1.2, So crop water (ET_c) = 10 x 1.2 = **12 mm/day**.

- Determine the **System Capacity**:

- Pump utilization ratio (PUR) is the proportion of time through the season that the machine can / will operate (e.g. time for maintenance, shifting towable machine, drying hay). Say 80% (or 0.8).

- Application Efficiency (AE) is the proportion of water pumped that enters the soil - say 85% (or 0.85).

- **System Capacity** = ET_c / (PUR x AE) = 12 / (0.8 x 0.85) = 17mm/day.

- Pressure = operating cost. Look at reducing pressure to save energy costs. It might be a higher capital cost initially going from 6" pipe from 8" pipe, but energy savings more than outweigh the initial capital cost through the life of the machine and you will increase the life span of equipment.

Sam North presented information compiled by DPI and RMCG on the feasibility and performance of CPLM irrigators in the MIL area of operations.

Some general guidelines for use are;

- CPML irrigation will be financially viable if the capital cost plus the operating costs associated with irrigation are less than 25% of the annual projected / budgeted income.
- Achievable target yields and benchmark water use for crops on suitable soils under CPLM were assessed. For winter crops, using wheat as a benchmark, a 6-7tn/ha crop requires 450mm of in crop water (rain + irrigation). If you only get 260mm of rain during the growing season (May-Oct), then you need to apply 190mm of irrigation (or 1.9ML/ha) to achieve the target crop yield.
- For lucerne, a target yield of 18-20 tn/ha yield will require 1100 to 1200mm of water over a 12 month period. If annual rainfall is 450mm, then 700mm of irrigation water will be required (i.e. 7ML/ha) over the summer period.

- Dispersive, heavy clay soils will limit the ability to maximise income from the CPLM system - these soils are predisposed to waterlogging and this reduces the likelihood of achieving maximum/target yields in all years, reducing the earning potential of crops to pay for the machine.

- The system needs to be able to supply peak crop water demand to maximise income. In the southern riverina, towable pivots irrigating two or three circles of winter crop should have a design capacity of 15mm/day and a pivot irrigating one circle of summer crop should have a design capacity of 17mm/day. *Don't forget that, with Lucerne extra capacity is needed because the crop can not be irrigated between cutting and bailing and catch up is needed.*

- A commissioning test on a new machine will pay dividends at @1% of the cost of the machine.
- Buy G dots, Hansen loggers to measure moisture if you don't have the experience with water scheduling.

For more information on pumping costs at different pressures, case studies, water requirements for different crops etc., contact Rob Hoogers at Yanco on 02 6951 2628 or 0427 208 613.

"The system needs to be able to supply peak crop water demand to maximise income."

Sam North



New lateral irrigator at "Studleigh"

The Long Paddock App.

New App - The Long Paddock

The Long Paddock is excited to announce the release of the Long Paddock touring App. Available on both Apple and Android, the App contains five tours covering the Murray, Deniliquin, Conargo, Hay and Central Darling regions.

The Long Paddock – Cobb Highway Touring Route follows The Cobb Highway (named for the famous coach company) from Echuca Moama on the Victorian border, through to Wilcannia leading to the iconic outback towns of Bourke, Broken Hill & White Cliffs.

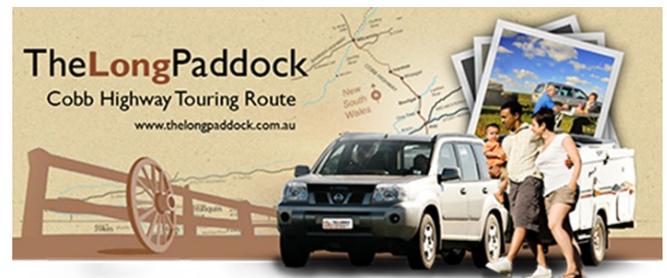
All you need to know about the touring route is in the link to the web site by clicking [The LongPaddock: Cobb Highway Touring Route](http://www.thelongpaddock.com.au/) or <http://www.thelongpaddock.com.au/>

There is ELEVEN major public artworks making the touring route the largest art gallery in the world. There is 47 information panels all the way along the route that tell our stories.

The App has five audio tours that will take you on a journey through the history of the area up to present day. It has all the information you need to enjoy your trip. Each tour has images and audio that tell the

story of the past and present. "The App is perfect for a touring route like The Long Paddock - it gives the visitor a real connection to the region" said Project Manager Alison McLean. "

The App is free and The Long Paddock welcomes anyone wishing to add the app to their websites to further promote the region.



Stocktake Plus App

Stocktake Plus App Now Live (Graziers Decision Support Tool):

Three Stocktake Plus products (Stocktake Plus app for Apple, Stocktake Plus for Android, and Stocktake Plus webpage and client 'Dashboard') are all now available! Check out the new webpage, <http://www.stocktakeplus.com.au/> and if you have a 'smart' device, download and play with the Stocktake Plus app! Search **Stocktake Plus**.

Monitor:

- Record stock number across paddocks
- Record grazing land condition of sites within paddocks
- Record rainfall measurements
- Checkpoint system and inbuilt support tools guide observations in line with industry best practice.

Calculate - Manage your resources:

- Calculate short-term stocking rates to balance pasture supply with stock demand
- Calculate average paddock pasture yield
- Science developed with local expertise and experience.

Report - Understand your property over time:

- Detailed reports give you the big picture view on stock, land condition and grazing management, drawing different monitoring records together
- Export reports as PDF documents, send via email
- Export reports as PDF or CSV documents via the



FutureBeef

STOCKTAKE PLUS

Grain poisoning – prevention better than cure



Many producers are considering supplementary feeding with grain or pellets.

Such feeding will bring many benefits but producers are being warned to be careful to avoid the risk of grain poisoning.

Grain poisoning occurs when large amounts of starch is eaten and rapidly fermented in the rumen or first stomach.

This leads to the excessive production of lactic acid, which is absorbed into the animal's body. (Hence the

condition's other name, lactic acidosis.)

For more information, click here: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farming-management/drought-information/drought-feeding-for-cattle/chapter-7>

Twins provide an up and a downside



Twinning in cattle can occur in up to four per cent of cows, depending on breed. Twinning provides a production 'upside' through a greater live-weight production per breeder, with flow-on of potential sales to market.

The 'downside' is that when twin bull-heifer foetuses occur, hormones from the bull foetus suppress the sexual development of the heifer twin.

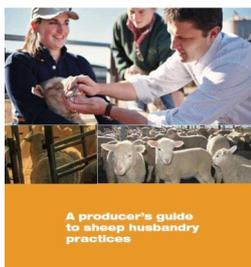
With bull and heifer twins, more than 90 per cent of resulting heifers can be infertile; and are known as freemartins. While a freemartin appears like a normal heifer with udder of teats; you need to get a veterinarian to diagnose her as a freemartin through the absence of properly developed ovaries and uterus.

For buyers of heifers and in a

self-replacing herd with a high twinning rate, producer's should keep in mind the impact of bull/heifer twins on the productivity of the heifer.

For further advice please contact your local veterinarian, DEPI Veterinary or Animal Health Officer or your Livestock Health and Pest Authority veterinarian in NSW.

New guide on sheep husbandry practices



Developed by the Sheepmeat Council of Australia and MLA, A Producers Guide to Sheep Husbandry Practices is now available online and features best practice techniques for a number of husbandry practices.

Drawing together information from a range of research projects and on-farm experiences, the guide aims to help producers provide good health, welfare and management outcomes for their livestock.

For more information, click here:

[MLA Industry News](#)

Assessing Fertilizer and Soil Additive Alternatives

Faced with low returns after eight consecutive years of poor seasons and keen to look at different approaches, Holbrook Landcare Network members found there was little information avail-

able on using alternative fertilisers or soil additives.

The group sought MLA funding through the PDS program to answer the question: Carp, kelp or

Christmas Island – where to next for fertilisers?

Further detailed information on the results of the project will follow.

Changes made to National Vendor Declaration

From July 1 sheep producers will be required to pay for National Vendor Declaration (NVD) books they must use

for livestock transactions. For more information, click here: <http://www.sheepmeatcouncil.co>

m.au/changes-made-to-nvd-subsidy-to-support-investment-in-market-access/

Joel Stalin Interview

The following text is from an interview done by Joel Spry from the North Central Catchment Management Authority with Joel Salatin, who Time Magazine called 'the world's most innovative farmer', while he was in Australia.

The discussion hit on many topics surrounding where agriculture (and society) has found itself, the future of farming, traditions and health. The Polyface 'the farm of many faces' website is well worth a look. You can find it at www.polyfacefarms.com A full interview transcript is available on request by contacting joel.spry@nccma.vic.gov.au

"At a recent event you were asked about the vegetarianism/animal welfare movement and your farms stance on animals. You said "I love animals; we should eat more of them". Have you got any comments about vegetarianism and also about the impact on the environment as in removing the herbivores and

the natural processes of ecology?

In my book, 'Folks, this ain't normal', I spend a lot of time articulating the historical place of the herbivore.

We know (through historical observations and recordings by early explorers) that Australia used to have mega-fauna - huge herbivorous and marsupial critters - along with 18% organic matter and a hydration with streams, springs and water. Deep soils, rich and verdant, it was spectacular. The land degradation is really hard to imagine. The other thing that we have to deal with of course, is that there has been a lot of damage from overgrazing and from improper use of herbivores.

The whole thing is to try to recreate in a person's mind the historical role of the herbivore, which was as a biomass pruner, to prune the biomass back, to restart the fast accumulation cycle between infancy and senescence. If the plant is overgrazed, in infancy and under

grazed to senescence, both of those extremities shut off the chlorophyllic / photosynthetic engine. And that's why there aren't any places in the world, except maybe Antarctica, that don't have a herbivore, because it's the herbivore that's necessary to sustain life. It's the pruner to restart this fast biomass accumulation cycle.

Most people, certainly if they have read the UN's Long Shadow report and things by the radical environmentalist community, are completely jaundiced, not realising that all those reports are based on an anti-natural role of the herbivore.

Feeding it grain, feeding it dead cows, chicken manure, chicken feathers, overgrazing, are all completely unnatural. A type of non-movement oriented type of thing where animals just continuously graze.

It's ok to have fences, but if you have fences, you

break down the migratory patterns. You have got to re-introduce that type of migratory movement within your fences. It is trying to again, differentiate the historically normal role of the herbivore and predation, with the abnormal role that humans have assumed for that herbivore.

Now we can take the technology we have (such as electric fencing) and re-mimic that historical role. Guess what? We can re-hydrate the landscape, sequester carbon, we can do some amazing, wonderful things.

In fact it's the most efficacious tool to do so, but you are not going to do it the way the studies and the data, that support the anti-herbivore agenda, assume".



Tetraploid vs Diploid Ryegrasses

Diploids

Diploid ryegrasses have more leaves per plant than tetraploids. As a result, they produce more dry matter. Sowing rates (kg/ha) for diploids are also generally 20% lower as they have a smaller seed size.

Benefits include;

- Increased pasture utilisation

- Higher dry matter production
- 20% lower sowing rates
- Flexibility for livestock needs

Tetraploids

Tetraploid ryegrasses are more palatable to livestock. The cells within a tetraploid ryegrass are bigger resulting in a higher ratio of water soluble carbohydrate (sugar) to fibre.

This is because a tetraploid plant has four sets of chromosomes per cell, compared with a normal diploid that has only two sets.

Benefits include;

- Greater palatability has the potential to increase both milk production and body condition.
- More efficient rumen production in livestock.

- Higher palatability helps maximise pasture utilisation. In many cases, less seed head development reduces the need for time consuming topping.

- Allowing up to 30% more clover in the pasture increases nitrogen fixation and pasture quality.

The Country Web - A newsletter for rural women and their families



The Country Web newsletter is produced by the NSW Department of Primary Industries Rural Women's Network. The newsletter is a source of information and support for women dealing with the many aspects of rural life. Through the newsletter women are able to share ideas, issues, inspiration, information, experiences and opportunities.

Each edition of The Country Web focuses on a particular issue, with past editions highlighting: women in non traditional roles, farming, droughts and floods, getting

back to basics, celebrating creativity, perception versus reality, my heart - my country, family, health, education, work and employment, finance, value adding, women in decision making, the law, isolation, the environment and much more.

As well as issues based articles, the newsletter also provides regular columns including women in leadership, men's matters, parenting, health, grants and funding, information technology, resources and what's on and what's new.

Now in its 19th year of publication, The Country Web is well established and recognised by the wider community. It has become a valuable resource for government and non-government agencies to exchange information with the rural sector.

The Country Web is published two-three times a year. 13000 copies are printed and distributed free to our readers, two-three times a year.



Search for Hidden Treasures in NSW

SEARCH FOR 'HIDDEN TREASURES' IN RURAL NSW called on rural communities to nominate women volunteers for the 2013 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

All women nominated will be included in the 2013 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, which will be launched at the annual NSW Rural Women's Gathering at Scone, on October 25 – 27. "Volunteers carry out a range of invaluable jobs in our communities, including fundraising, deliv-

ering meals to the elderly, fighting fires, driving patients, mentoring the young, creating community artworks or coordinating events.

"The annual Hidden Treasures Honour Roll creates a lasting archive and helps to discover inspirational quiet achievers in community organisations across the State." The theme for 2013 National Volunteers Week is 'Thanks A Million.'

To nominate a rural woman, complete your nomination online at:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rwn or you can request a nomination form by emailing rural.women@dpi.nsw.gov.au or contacting the Centre for Volunteering on 02 9261 3600.

Nominations close Friday 16 August 2013.

Entries Open for 2013 NSW Farmer of the Year Award

Applications are now open for the 2013 NSW Farmer of the Year Award, with farmers of all ages across NSW urged to submit entries. The successful 'Farmer of the Year' will be awarded \$10,000 and the other finalists will receive \$2,000.

The NSW Farmer of the Year award recognises outstanding achievement, focusing on management skills, use of innovation, profitability, environmental sustainability and community involvement.

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson said "Our States 42,000 farmers are feeding and clothing millions of people in Australia and the world - while at the same time managing our natural resource base and driving the regional economy.

NSW Farmers' Association President Fiona Simson said the finalists played an important part in promoting the sector and educating urban audiences about farmers contributions on many levels.

The Award is an initiative of NSW Farmers and NSW Department of Primary Industries, with support from The Land and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.

Download an application form (PDF 74.8 KB) http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/471065/farmer_of_the_year_application_form_2013.pdf

Entries close Friday 11 October 2013



Blow Up Rabbit Warrens - but with a softly softly approach

Looking for an alternative to poisoning rabbits or ripping warrens to control rabbit numbers?

A local fellow, Brad O'Brien has returned from the mining industry and has set up a busi-

ness to utilise his skills refined in mining using explosives to destroy rabbit warrens.

Brad takes pride in leaving little noticeable impact which is displayed in the business slogan "*the first step in rabbit*

control with minimal footprint and maximum results"

The business name is **Rabbit Punch**. Brad can be contacted on M: 0400 049 799.

Soils Forum Video Online

Did you miss out on attending the Soils Forum a few months ago? Well you can now catch up and watch the videos online! Talks cover a range of topics including soil health, precision agriculture and sustainable production.

It is well worth a look at the enclosed links to see how some people have turned degraded soils into extremely productive farmland with improving top-soil, carbon and soil biology levels. This has led to improved livestock health, carry capacities, crop yields and ultimately profitability.

Part 1 was "**Healthy Soils – why is this important, what is the science telling us & a**

view from on the ground"

Presenters included;

Michael Jeffery – former Governor General and Soils Advocate: **Why is the issue of soil health important?**

Mike Grundy – leading CSIRO scientist: **What are the components of healthy soils and the outcomes required?**

David Marsh – Grazier and Landcare Co-ordinator – **The view from 'on the ground'**

Q & A – [Click here to read consolidated Q&A.](#)

The Part 1 powerpoint presentation is available on

<http://www.landcareonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Soil-Health-Webinar-1-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

Part 2 was "**How do we practically regenerate our soil health?**" The presentation is available on <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Soil-Health-Webinar-2-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

Part 3 was "**How do we measure and extend effective practices?**". Click here for presentation <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Soil->



Bitterns Boom in Rice Short Film



The RGA and Murray Wildlife (Matt Herring) are very pleased to launch 'Bitterns Boom in Rice' - a short film about the endangered Australasian Bittern and its use of rice crops. Go to link; <http://www.rga.org.au/rice-environment/biodiversity.aspx>

A couple of weeks ago, students at the Wakool-

Burraboi, Blighty and Conargo Public Schools had a sneak peek and it was well received.

Feel free to embed on your respective websites using the direct link <https://vimeo.com/68458195>

Note: the audio is best through good speakers (i.e. most laptops and phones cannot play the deep, booming calls), so if you don't hear deep booms at the beginning then you're not

getting the full audio. Also, if your connection is slow and the video is stalling, pause to let it load or look in the bottom right of the video screen to switch off HD.

Murray Wildlife also has a new website with publications and educational material to download (old and new), project updates, short films, photographs free to use, links to media, and so on Go to; www.murraywildlife.com.au

Murrakool Land for Wildlife Photo



Diamond Firetail. Photo by Michelle Morton

Murrakool Land for Wildlife is continuing to hold their photo competition for native flora and fauna found in the local region.

Three prizes were awarded this month (as it was two months since last publication), one for the Painted Lady Butterfly photo by Jill Hooper, one for the Spotted Pardalope by Faye O'Brien and the prize for the local "rare species" was Anne McBain for the Squirrel Glider.

The prize for the best photo includes a fauna or flora book, and a major prize "the people's choice award" will be awarded after voting by participants at this year's Barham Show.

We have had a number of great photo's this month and our judges found it very difficult to choose "best Photo's", so congratulations to the winners.

Remember, if you do not know the species of animal you have photographed it does not matter as we will endeavour to find

out what it is.....well try! The unidentified wasp photo taken by Jill below is a challenge. Does anyone know?

Your species might also make it into the Tech note section, "Native animals of the Local Area, such as the Grey-crowned Babbler did on pg. 13!

Next editions theme is for fungi and insect photo's as well as general wildlife.

Send your photo's in to email: roger.knight@wmlig.org



Top Notch Pidgeon pair. Photo: Michelle Morton



Goana photo by Michelle Morton



Carpet Python. Photo: Jill Hooper



Woodswallow. Photo: Michelle Morton



Long necked turtle preparing to lay eggs. Photo: Jill Hooper



Unidentified Wasp. Photo: Jill Hooper



Echidna. Photo: Jill Hooper



Painted Lady Butterfly just hatched. Photo: Jill Hooper



Sugar Glider. Photo: Anne McBain



Velvet Ant (actually a wasp). Photo: Jill Hooper



Stick Insect: Jill Hooper



Garden Spider with her egg sacks. Photo: Jill Hooper

Tech Note: Native Animals of the Local Area - Grey-crowned Babbler

The Grey-crowned Babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) is a species of bird in the Pomatostomidae family. It is found in Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea.

Grey-crowned Babblers occupy open woodlands dominated by mature eucalypts, with regenerating trees, tall shrubs, and an intact ground cover of grass and forbs. The species builds conspicuous dome-shaped nests and breeds co-operatively in sedentary family groups of 2-13 birds. Grey-crowned Babblers are insectivorous and forage in leaf litter and on bark of trees.

Threats

The key process that has led to the decline of the eastern subspecies of the Grey-crowned Babbler has been the historic loss and fragmentation of its preferred woodland habitat. In addition, it is likely that increased abun-

dance of competitors, such as Noisy Miners, and nest predators, including the Pied Currawong and Australian Raven threaten Babbler foraging efficiency and breeding success.

Grey-crowned Babblers generally have a poor ability to immigrate across unsuitable habitats. As a consequence of fragmentation, breeding success and groups sizes decline.

Babbler groups are more susceptible to natural disaster events leading to local extinction from a fragment. Once a fragment has lost its population of Grey-crowned Babblers, natural re-colonisation rarely occurs because of its poor dispersal ability.

Conservation Status

The Grey-crowned Babbler is listed as **threatened** on the Victorian Flora and

Fauna Guarantee Act (1988). Under this Act, an Action Statement for the recovery and future management of this species has been prepared. On the 2007 advisory list of threatened vertebrate fauna in Victoria, the Grey-Crowned Babbler is listed as endangered.

The eastern subspecies of the Grey-crowned Babbler (*P. t. temporalis*) is listed as **vulnerable** on the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. This is the only subspecies occurring within NSW.

Management Plan

The NSW Murray Biodiversity Management Plan (Dec. 2012) has listed the Grey Crowned Babbler as a priority management area for terrestrial biodiversity investment in the Moulamein and Barham areas (see pg. 100-101 of the Plan).

Rare Species Photo.



Grey-crowned Babbler. Photo: Michelle Morton



Blue Wren. Photo: Faye O'Brien, Barham



Fan Tailed Cuckoo. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Barn Owl. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Ibis. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Paper Daisy. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Bronzed Winged Pidgeon. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Noisy Friarbird. Photo: Faye O'Brien



Red Rumped Parrot with juvenile. Photo: Faye O'Brien



Eastern Grey Kangaroo. Photo: Faye O'Brien



Willy Wagtail at dusk. Photo: Faye O'Brien Barham



Spotted Pardalope Photo: Faye O'Brien



Tawny Frogmouth. Photo: Faye O'Brien



Brush Tailed Possum. Photo: Bob Wheeler

BIODIVERSITY CEWH Watering options

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) last week released plans for environmental watering over the next 12 months. The 10 documents contain options for using Commonwealth environmental water in a range of rainfall scenarios.

The CEWH is forecasting having between 170 and 312 GL NSW Murray entitlements for use in the coming water year to contribute to base flows, ephemeral water courses and fish flows.

More information can be accessed at <http://www.environment.gov.au/ewater/news/mr20130606.html>.



Photo: Gwynnes Ck during a watering event

SUSTAINABILITY Sustainable and regenerative agriculture

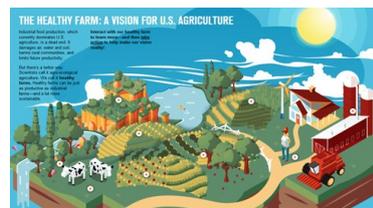
Bathurst farmer Michael Inwood has written a report on ways to make agriculture more sustainable and regenerative following his Nuffield Scholarship which enabled him to travel around the world looking at different farming systems.

http://www.nuffieldinternational.org/rep_pdf/1360018512MichaelInwoodfinalreport.pdf

Four key practices for healthy farms

The US-based Union of Concerned Scientists has identified four key practices to ensure healthy farms: taking a landscape approach with cultivated and uncultivated areas, growing a diversity of crops in long complex rotations, integrating crops and livestock, and planting cover crops.

<http://www.ucsusa.org/food-and-agriculture/solutions/advance-sustainable-agriculture/healthy-farm-vision.html>



Preparing our landscapes for global change presentations

A new report on preparing Australia's landscapes for global change concludes that Australia needs to look at its landscapes with new eyes if it is to meet the challenges of climate change and food, water and energy security. The new vision needs to move beyond a 'regreening' conservation ethic, and build on the synergies of environmental, economic and social approaches while acknowledging potential tensions between them.

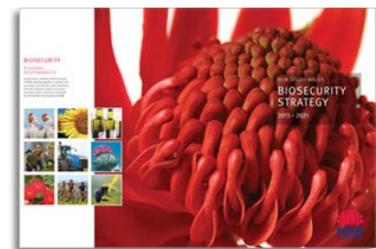
<http://www.australia21.org.au/publications/>



BIOSECURITY New Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021 Released

The NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021 establishes a clear vision for how NSW will manage biosecurity threats including plant and animal pests, diseases and weeds. The most important goal of the strategy is that biosecurity is recognised as a shared responsibility.

For more information go the link <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity>



LANDUSE Changes to NSW native vegetation regulations

The NSW Government has announced that there will be significant changes to the Native Vegetation Regulation to cut red tape and improve service delivery. The changes will allow farmers to clear isolated paddock trees in areas previously cleared for permanent or rotational cropping, manage invasive native species, and thin native vegetation using self-assessable codes. Certain grass species will be listed and managed as feral native species, and there will be exemptions for dwellings, telecommunication infrastructure on public and private land, and non-rural boundary fences and sheds.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/nativeveg/NVRegReviewUpdate9.pdf>

WMLIG Mission Statement:

"Promote sustainable farm and land management practices to enhance our unique natural environment through innovation, education and strong community networks".



**Western Murray
Land Improvement Group Inc.**



Photo of the Western Murray Land Improvement Group Office in the Barham Rest Centre. Call in if you or your group needs a hand with an application or NRM / sustainable agriculture related information.

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Dates to Remember;

- *Tuesday, 30th July, Thurs 1st August, Tues 6th August, Thurs 8th August, 10am - 3pm, Managing and Implementing Efficient Irrigation Systems.*
- *Wednesday, 31st July, Webinar: Grow your Social Media Skills, 12pm - 1pm.*
- *Monday, August 12th, Central Murray BestWool BestLamb Planning Day including feed budgeting and conditioning scoring exercise, 5pm start with BBQ dinner provided.*
- *Friday 16th August, Allan Savoury Webinar, 12pm - 1pm.*



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