

Grazing distribution

Distribute grazing pressure evenly across land types to avoid selective grazing by:

- fencing to land type,
- wet season spelling ([video link](#)),
- supplementing feed sites and water points,
- using fire.

Please note that photo monitoring ([video link](#)) is recommended for all practices.

Farm systems

We recommended you assess your specific farming circumstances before changing any management practices. You can find a list of extension providers at the end of this information.

[FutureBeef](#) is an excellent resource for beef growers, providing information on all aspects of the cattle enterprise. It is a collaborative program for northern Australian beef growers with partners DAFF, Northern Territory Department of Resources - Primary Industry, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia.

Water quality

Evidence from a study conducted in the Burdekin found hillslopes with relatively high overall cover, but with some bare patches (which are often the result of selective grazing) have six- nine times the amount of runoff and 60% more sediment loss than slopes without bare patches. Distributing grazing pressure evenly, to prevent patches that are bare of vegetation is necessary to prevent erosion and maintain land condition, even when overall ground cover is high (25G).

Costs and benefits

Fencing & wet season spelling

There are no specific examples of the economic effect of fencing to land types.

An example of using fencing to recover poor condition land is at Fitzroy, with case studies of Brigalow blackbutt and narrow-leaved ironbark woodlands. Two case studies, of Brigalow blackbutt and narrow-leaved ironbark woodlands in the Fitzroy, analysed the economics of land regeneration for:

- D condition to B condition land
- C condition to B condition land

Land regeneration practices included adjusting stocking rates and fencing.

For Brigalow blackbutt, a highly productive land type, land regeneration from both C and D conditions (9G) is a feasible option for investment, offering substantial economic returns over a relatively short period of time.

Both management options (destocking a degraded portion with fencing; or destocking the entire paddock) gave a positive return for all the analysed land areas to be regenerated. The positive net present value indicated that the accumulated economic benefit over 20 years was sufficient to cover the capital costs. Therefore it was in a landholder's best interest to restore Brigalow blackbutt.

For narrow-leaved ironbark woodlands (a less productive land type) the grazier had considerably more challenges for profitable land regeneration. Economic challenges result from:

- high investment cost
- longer regeneration time periods
- relatively lower gross margins
- low productivity gains

However, land regeneration is a positive investment, if a large percentage of a property is in poor land condition (20G & 18G).

Off-stream watering points

A typical Mackay-Whitsunday grazing business assessment:

In the Mackay-Whitsunday area, an assessment was made of the costs and benefits associated with adoption of improved management practices to determine the effect on profitability and economic sustainability of grazing enterprises, and the economic viability of capital investment to achieve improved management. The improved practice changes included but were not limited to:

- annually adjusted stocking rates
- pasture monitoring
- fencing
- off-stream watering points
- pasture spelling

Changes to the management practices led to four main benefits:

- higher conception rates and higher weaning percentages
- better quality animals when turned off; providing a higher price

- greater volume of pasture available per head reducing the frequency of emergency feeding and allowing lower input costs
- greater environmental outcomes in maintaining land condition and reducing sediment runoff

In the Mackay-Whitsunday region, the grazing operations are predominantly small intensive systems that heavily utilise soil, nutrient and chemical management practices. For these enterprises, the economic costs of improved management practices are high and it is recommended landholders assess their specific farm circumstances before undertaking capital investment. This is to ensure it is an economically worthwhile and viable option to implement any of the above-mentioned improved practices. For larger grazing businesses of more than 1000ha, there are additional economic benefits of improving management practices. A positive return is predicted, but the overall benefit is low because the capital costs are high (6G).

Use of fire

Permits, as required by law, should always be sought and the conditions followed for prescribed burning.

Managing grazing distribution through the use of fire in the Katherine region, NT
Munabullo Station, south-west of Katherine in the Northern Territory, uses fire to manage both plants (pasture composition and woody weeds) and animals (manage grazing pressure). The farm manager cites some of the benefits as being:

- Remove rank growth, which is not utilised effectively or efficiently by cattle
- Promote healthy regrowth of 3P grasses
- After rain grasses will resprout faster than grasses which have not been burnt

Other results indicated improvements in phosphorus and nitrogen content and improved digestibility in areas burnt late in the wet season (26G).

Use of fire on wiregrass and black speargrass in the Burnett-Mary:

Use of fire and resting was trialled at Brians Pastures to improve the composition of native black speargrass pastures as the less-productive wiregrass was becoming more prevalent. Results showed that spring burning and resting heavily-grazed pastures were both successful strategies for improving pasture condition, when the composition was poor. Burning late in summer was not successful. Use of fire is preferred as a method for improving black speargrass pastures in poor condition as it is simpler and less costly than the use of cultivation or herbicides (27G).

Silver-leaved ironbark case study of land regeneration using fire:

Silver-leaved ironbark land type near Springvale in the Fitzroy was economically assessed to undertake grazing land regeneration. Regeneration practices included:

- the use of fire in the 5th and 10th years
- wet season spelling for 8 weeks per year
- construction of off-stream watering points

- fencing to control stock (19G)

Grazing economic tools

Breedcow and Dynama software

The Breedcow and Dynama package has been the industry standard tool for evaluating beef cattle businesses and management options since 1988. Its uses include herd growth projection, cash flow budgeting (including projections on property purchase), financial counselling, research evaluation, analysis and improvement of herd productivity, and a demonstration of the impact of changed husbandry practices on herd structure, turnoff and financial outcome. It has also been used to 'test' drought destocking and restocking strategies, and work through the consequences of disease eradication campaigns for individual producers.

Website: http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/16_6886.htm

Phone: 13 25 23 (DAFF for a cost of a local call with Queensland) or 07 34046999

Better decisions in the business of beef

This two-day workshop is based on using Breedcow and Dynama software to evaluate beef businesses and identify opportunities for improved performance. Key components are:

- comparing profitability of different turnoff options, husbandry and grazing practices
- estimating future profit, cash flow, indebtedness and net worth based on herd projections under various scenarios
- comparing cattle purchase options for fattening or backgrounding
- comparing sales options for drought or cash relief
- evaluating investment opportunities using discounted cash flow analysis

Phone: 13 25 23 (cost of a local call within Queensland) or 07 34046999

Business EDGE

This two-day workshop, delivered by MLA EDGENetwork provides finance and business management training to beef producers.

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200

Email: businessedge@jkconnections.com.au

Rural profit system

This is a four-step program for graziers or mixed farmers, delivered by RCS. The first step of the program is focussed on holistic integrated management with goals of increased sustainability and profits. Participants control the extent of their learning by determining how many of the programs steps they complete.

Website: www.rcs.au.com

Phone: 1800 356 004

Email: info@rcs.au.com

Extension services

BreedingEDGE

This workshop, delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for MLA EDGENetwork. Its focus is on helping landholders to develop or improve a breeding program and looks at six key areas:

- examining a properties current situation
- reproduction
- genetics
- setting breeding objectives
- livestock selection
- managing the herd to capture benefits

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200 (MLA) 13 23 25 (DAFF)

Email: beef@daff.qld.gov.au

Commercial operators accreditation

Under Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, operators may require a license in before the ground-application of herbicides. This legislation is enforced by Biosecurity Queensland. Phone: 13 25 23 (DAFF for a cost of a local call within Queensland) or 07 34046999

Grazing BMP

The Grazing BMP was developed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Fitzroy Basin Association and AgForce Queensland. The program is a voluntary, industry led process which assists graziers to identify improved practices which can improve the profitability of their business.

Website: www.bmpgrazing.com.au

Phone: 4999 3800 (Fitzroy Basin Association) 3236 3100 (Agforce).

Grazing land management EDGE

This is a three-day workshop, delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for MLA EDGENetwork. The workshops are regionally targeted, providing landholders with a

practical and planned approach for improving the productivity and sustainability of their land. It looks in particular at:

- long-term stocking rate calculations
- forage budgeting
- land condition assessment
- sown pastures
- fire
- weeds

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200 (MLA) 13 23 25 (DAFF)

Grazing land management (land condition assessment)

This 3 day workshop, delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, for MLA teaches:

- how to assess paddock condition
- understanding grazing ecosystems
- how to meet target markets and sustainably

The workshops have been customised to 13 Queensland regions, providing location specific information.

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200 (MLA) 13 25 23 (DAFF)

Healthy grass, cattle and soils program

The program is a series of workshops offered by Grazing BestPrac. Grazing Bestprac also offer private consultancy for producers who wish to have one-on-one support on their property/farm. This includes:

- whole of property planning
- mapping and computerized mapping
- GPS training and vegetation mapping
- business facilitation
- business planning (Centrelink)
- grass budgeting and pasture programs

Website: <http://www.grazingbestprac.com.au>

Phone: 4938 3919

MLA livestock production assurance

This is a simple on-farm food safety program which focuses on 5 key elements:

- property risk assessment
- safe and responsible animal treatments
- stock foods, fodder crops, grain and pasture treatments
- preparation for dispatch of livestock
- livestock transactions and movements

This program is accredited by Ausmeat.

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200

Email: lpa@mla.com.au

NutritionEDGE

This 3 day workshop, delivered for MLA by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, teaches:

- minerals and managing deficiencies
- pasture growth and quality
- grazing management

Website: www.mla.com.au

Phone: 3620 5200 (MLA) 13 25 23 (DAFF)

Email: beef@daff.qld.gov.au

Property computer mapping

These workshops, delivered by AgForce Projects provide landholders with the latest satellite imagery of their property and train them to use these images and mapping software, to build effective property maps. This gives landholders greater ability to plan infrastructure, monitor land condition and improve productivity.

Website: www.agforceprojects.org.au

Phone: 3238 6048

SMARTtrain

This national program is provided through a combination of correspondence education and workshops and aims to train users of agricultural and veterinary chemicals.

Website: www.smartrain-publications.com

Phone: 1800 138 351

Stocktake

This is a one-day workshop developed and delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Focuses on land condition and monitoring and also demonstrates field assessment techniques using a database.

Website: www.daff.qld.gov.au

Phone: 13 23 25 (DAFF)

Email: beef@daff.qld.gov.au

Supplementary resources

FutureBeef

Is a collaborative program, aimed at north Australian graziers, with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Qld), Northern Territory Department of Resources – Primary Industry, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia and Meat and Livestock Australia. The website covers topics related to all aspects of beef production, with regional information where appropriate. It also links to external papers and resources.

Website: www.futurebeef.com.au

Phone: 13 25 23 (DAFF) 1800 023 100 (MLA)

Email: info@futurebeef.com.au

Managing grazing lands in Queensland

Developed by the Department of Environment and Resource Management, this guide looks at pasture management, soil conservation, biodiversity, pests, salinity, riparian vegetation and water resources.

Website: http://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/110476/managing-grazing-lands-qld.pdf

Phone: 13 74 68 (Queensland Government).

Reef and rainforest research centre

This facility is undertaking development, trial and validation of land management practices that improve water quality outcomes in the sugar and grazing sectors. Reports regarding the scientific outcomes of these management practices are available on the website.

Website: <http://www.rrrc.org.au>

Phone: 4781 5513

Wetlands management handbook

Farm Management Systems (FMS) guidelines for managing wetlands in intensive agriculture. Developed by the Australian and Queensland governments, as part of the Queensland Wetlands Program. The guide provides information to landholders and extension officers on:

- identifying wetlands
- wetland management
- artificial wetland creation

The guide was designed to complement other industry FMS programs, for holistic farm management.

Website <http://wetlandinfo.ehp.qld.gov.au/wetlands/resources/publications/reports.html>

Phone: 13 74 68 (Queensland Government)

Regional supplementary resources

ABCD management practices framework for dry rangelands

Developed for Terrain NRM by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, this framework is used as part of the Reef Rescue Program to priorities practices for dry land been properties.

Website: www.terrain.org.au

Phone: 4043 8000

Email: info@terrain.org.au

Reef protection legislative requirements - ERMP guide to the Great Barrier Reef protection legislation

Developed by the Department of Environment and Resource Management to help landholders determine whether their property is affected by the legislation as well as explain the legislation and what is required of property owners. It also provides sources of information, support and advice.

Website: <http://www.reefwise farming.qld.gov.au/pdf/guide-gbrpl.pdf>

Phone: 1300 130 372 and press option 8 (DERM)

More information

If you would like to contact DAFF about the information presented in this factsheet, contact us on: 13 25 23, for the cost of a local call within Queensland, or 07 3404 6999, or email us at;

ReefPlan@daff.qld.gov.au



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