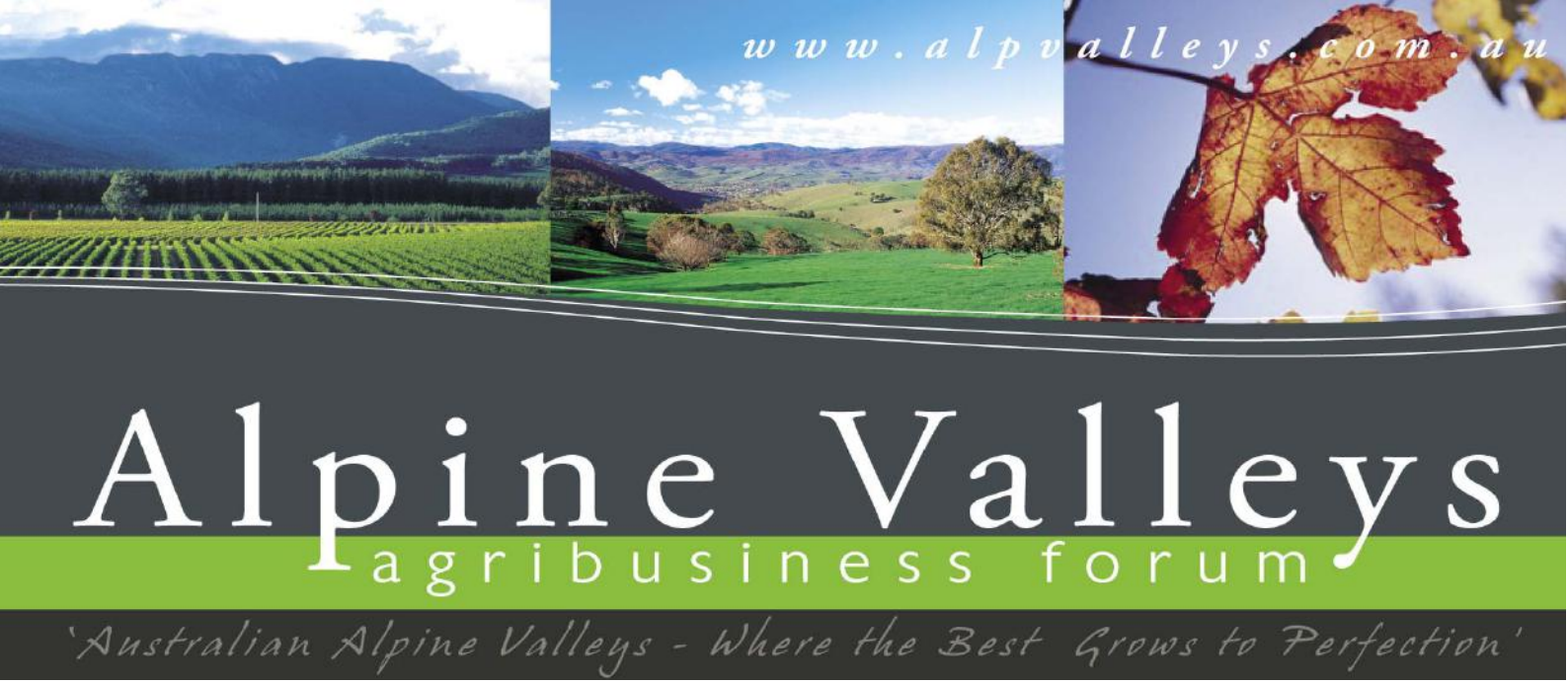

July 2010

Evergraze – The Final Report

Pasture measurements have now been completed after the autumn breaks of 2008, 2009 and 2010 and at the end of winter in 2008 and 2009 at the seven supporting sites in the NE CMA.

New pastures were sown at four sites in May 2008, and the establishment success of these sowings of tall fescue, cocksfoot and phalaris were strongly contingent on good soil fertility levels, a factor that can be influenced by land managers, unlike the effects of variable seasonable conditions.
Over 2009 and first four months of 2010, these new pastures ran 130% more stock on average (12,600 DSE grazing days/ha) than their mostly native control pastures (5,500 DSE grazing days/ha).

The change from set stocking to rotational grazing of existing perennial pastures saw only small changes in the proportions of perennials, provided their initial densities were high (>40%), but in one pasture with a low initial density (<10%), the perennial component declined significantly over the two years of monitoring.

The removal of all grazing pressure from native pastures when the perennial grasses were flowering increased their persistence. The rest periods were from three to six months long, starting in late-spring and finishing in late summer or autumn. A 20% increase in ground cover at the autumn break was a key benefit from this practice but at the cost of the control native pastures running on average 54% more stock because they were grazed all year round. Ground covers on the set-stocked native pastures did not change over the two years of monitoring.

The sites at Stuart and Janet Morant's property in the Tallangatta Valley, and Chris and Judy Griffiths at Bowman's Forest will continue for another two years with Caring for Our Country funding.

Jeff Hirth,
Agronomist and Project Manager