



AUSTRALIAN  
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VALLEYS  
AGRIBUSINESS  
FORUM



# Alpine Valleys

agribusiness forum

Issue 2# April 2008

*'Australian Alpine Valleys - Where the Best Grows to Perfection'*



Jim Moll is an agricultural scientist/economist, based in Benalla. Originally from a family wool property in Western Victoria, Jim has worked in Griffith NSW, Toowoomba and Mount Isa in various aspects of agricultural research, extension and consultancy. He has recently been involved with the Farm business & biodiversity research projects funded through Land Water & Wool, which devised ways wool growers could improve native biodiversity and farm profitability at the same time.

He has experience in agricultural economics and whole farm planning, with a recent emphasis on grazing and pasture management.

**Jim Moll**

NE EverGraze Supporting Sites Agronomist

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## EverGraze

More livestock from perennials

### SITE INSPECTION FIELD DAYS

The supporting site landholder group, local landholders in the region and Landcare members or group facilitators are invited to attend the EverGraze Support Site Field Days.

**The aims of the field days are:**

- For participants to become familiar with the EverGraze project
- To establish a network between landholders and other stakeholders in EverGraze project
- Gain some technical knowledge
- Convey project plans/extension for the next 3 years

**Each field day will include :**

- An introduction to the EverGraze project, a brief overview of its aims and the work currently being undertaken at the relevant Proof Sites
- The concept of a Support Site and a discussion on what is happening on each of the Support Sites in the North East
- A paddock inspection and an in-paddock talk
  - History of site and management
  - Pasture mix selection, ID of pasture species
  - Grazing management strategies
  - Monitoring of site
  - Soil test interpretation

### DATES AND LOCATION

**Monday 12 May**

**Tallangatta Valley - Stuart & Janet Morant**

9:30am – 10.30am – Introduction

11.00am – 12.00pm – Paddock inspection

12.20pm - Lunch

**Cudgewa - John Star**

2:30pm - 3.30pm – Introduction

4.00pm – 5.00pm – Paddock inspection

5.30pm – Dinner in Corryong

**Tuesday 13 May**

**Benambra - Ian & Di Nicholas**

9:30am -10.30 am – Introduction

11.00am – 12.00pm – Paddock Inspection

**Benambra - Rusty Connelly**

12.30 – Lunch

1.30 – 2.30pm - Paddock Inspection

**Saturday 17 May**

**Taminick - Graham Colson**

9:00am -10.00 am – Introduction

10.20am – 11.15am – Paddock Inspection

**Killawarra - Bill Johnson**

11.30am – 12.15pm - Paddock inspection

12.30pm - Lunch

**Sunday 18 May**

**Indigo Valley - Bill Dickson**

9:30am -10.30 am – Introduction

11.00am – 12.00pm – Paddock Inspection

12.30pm - Lunch

**Wednesday 21 May**

**Murunggee Basin - Chris & Judy Griffiths**

9:00am -10.00 am – Introduction

11.00am – 12.15pm – Paddock Inspection

12.30pm - Lunch

**For further information on the field days**

**contact Jim Moll 0437 432 015**



# FOCUS ON North East Victorian *Support Sites*



## **SITE : BENAMBRA** Rusty Connelly

Rotational grazing and fertiliser management of a newly established introduced perennial pasture will be integrated with management of surrounding native pastures.

### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

Following an oat crop, the paddock was disced and prepared for establishment of a perennial based pasture mix. The mix will comprise summer and winter active fescue, cocksfoot and various clovers suited to the high plains and cold soil temperatures over winter.

### **Comparisons - the new treatment**

The paddock will be monitored according to EverGraze Support Site principles, which includes comparative monitoring of a Control paddock, next to the Trial paddock.

**Stock type** - Cattle

### **Trial size**

The paddock comprising this supporting site is approx 3 ha.

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 10-12 DSE/ha after the introduced perennial pasture is established.

## **SITE : BENAMBRA** Ian & Di Nicholas

Pattersons Rd, Benambra

A simple rotational grazing strategy of a native based perennial pasture, including correcting soil nutrient deficiencies with super and lime application, will be implemented on this site. The existing paddock will be split in half to better facilitate the rotational grazing.

### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

This site is native based pasture, including some introduced annual pasture species. The native perennial pasture species include wallaby grass, spear grass and

microlaena. The annual species include sub-clover, soft brome, silver grass and barley grass.

### **Comparison - the new treatment**

The paddock will be monitored according to EverGraze Supporting Site principles, which includes comparative monitoring of a "control" paddock, directly adjacent to the Trial paddock.

**Stock type** - Sheep

### **Trial Size**

The paddock comprising the Support Site is approx 10 ha, which will be split into 2 paddocks in order to facilitate the rotational grazing.

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 8 DSE/ha on the trial after subdivisinal fencing, correcting nutrient deficiencies and the implementation of rotational grazing.

## **SITE : CUDGEWA**

John Star

Briggs Gap Rd, Cudgewa

Land class fencing, rotational grazing and the establishment of a new perennial based pasture using a mix of introduced species, will be demonstrated on this site. The strategies being tested are in line with better managing perennial pastures on hill country under a fertiliser management program.

### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

The whole paddock will be sown to a mix of introduced perennial grasses (see section on justification of pasture mix), to improve the all year round productivity. The main perennial species will be origin winter active fescue and Australian phalaris.

### **Comparison - the new treatment**

The new treatment will be compared to adjacent paddocks managed "normally" i.e. current practise—set stocked.

The property owner will monitor stock movements into the trial paddock and

control paddock throughout the year, recording stock type, numbers and class.

**Stock type** - Cattle

### **Trial Size**

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 15 DSE/ha on the 15ha trial site after subdivisinal fencing and the implementation of rotational grazing.

## **SITE : INDIGO VALLEY**

Bill Dickson

Indigo Creek Rd, Indigo via Yackandandah

This site's productivity increase will aim to be achieved on a native, microlaena-based pasture through fertiliser applications and rotational grazing. The land class and soil types are similar to those found at the EverGraze Chiltern experimental site.

### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

A native dominated pasture comprising of large areas of microlaena, together with other native species include wallaby and spear grasses. Introduced annuals such as sweet vernal grass and some barley grass are also present. Capeweed is present on the upper slopes under sheep camps.

### **Comparing the new treatment**

The paddock will be monitored according to EverGraze Support Site principles, which includes comparative monitoring of a "control" paddock, adjacent to the trial paddock.

**Stock type** - Sheep

### **Trial size**

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 8-10 DSE/ha on the 8.3ha trial site after addressing soil nutrient deficiencies and rotational grazing is implemented.

## **SITE : KILLAWARRA**

Bill Johnson

Francis Rd, Killawarra via Wangaratta

Land class fencing and rotational grazing will be used to improve the production and

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persistence of a phalaris based pasture on undulating river country.

#### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

The site currently supports some annual broadleaf weeds, including capeweed as well as annual pasture species such as ryegrass, clover and barley grass. The predominant perennial species is Australian phalaris.

#### **Comparison - the new treatment**

The paddock will be monitored according to the EverGraze Support Site principles.

#### **Stock type - Sheep**

##### **Trial Size**

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 10-12 DSE/ha on the 5ha trial site after subdivisional fencing and implementation of rotational grazing.

#### **SITE : MURMUNGEE BASIN**

##### **Chris & Judy Griffiths**

Witherow Lane, Bowmans Forest

Land class fencing will be used to implement a combination of rotational and deferred grazing techniques in order to increase the population of native perennial species, particularly microlaena.

#### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

This site is a productive annual dominated pasture comprising areas of microlaena with upper slopes including native pastures including wallaby and spear grasses. Microlaena can be found in areas such as gullies with better water holding capacity. Introduced annuals such as ryegrass, sub-clover and barley grasses are also present, as well as annual weeds including erodium, onion grass and capeweed.

#### **Comparison - the new treatment**

An increase in population and growth of native pastures (including microlaena) will be compared on a limed strip through the paddock against the un-limed parts of the paddock.

#### **Stock type - Cattle**

##### **Size of the trial**

The paddock comprising this Support Site is approximately 30 ha. It will be split into 2 x 15ha paddocks, both of the same land class, one of which will be the Control paddock.

We envisage carrying capacity will be regularly over 15 DSE/ha on the trial paddock after subdivisional fencing and the implementation of a new grazing regime is introduced.

#### **SITE : TALLANGATTA VALLEY**

##### **Stuart & Janet Morant**

Tallangatta Valley Rd. Tallangatta

This site will demonstrate the management of a native perennial pasture with deferred grazing on steeper hill country which has been land class fenced, with management of an improved perennial pasture with rotational grazing on the flatter, more productive soil type.

#### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

Upper slopes include many native pastures including spear and wallaby grasses, as well as introduced annuals such as ryegrass and barley grasses. Lower slopes also contain native perennials including microlaena (in the wetter gullies and south facing slopes), red grass, tall wheat grass and wallaby grasses. Introduced species include erodium, capeweed, barley grass, ryegrass and sub-clover.

#### **Comparison - the new treatment**

New treatments on the trial paddock will be compared to adjacent paddocks of the same land class and similar pasture species.

The property owner will note stock movements into the trial paddock and control paddock throughout the year.

#### **Stock type - Sheep**

#### **Size of the trial**

The paddock of this Support Site is approx 20 ha, which will be land class fenced and split into an upper slopes paddock (approx 8 ha), and lower slopes (approx 12 ha).

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 8 DSE/ha on the trial after subdivisional fencing and implementation of rotational grazing.

#### **SITE: TAMINICK GAP**

##### **Graham & Sally Colson**

Taminick Gap Rd, Wangaratta South

Land class fencing and a mix of rotational and deferred grazing management of native and introduced perennial pastures will be combined with the establishment of an introduced perennial pasture mix suited to the site and climate.

#### **Pasture type & main perennial species**

This site currently supports annual broadleaf weeds, including capeweed, onion grass and a large erodium (storks bill) population. Native perennial species such as microlaena, spear and wallaby grasses can be found on parts of the steeper, often south-facing slopes that have less intense grazing, however their persistence and cover could be improved. Annual ryegrass, bromes, silver grass, wire grass and barley grass also dominate the lower slopes.

#### **Comparison - the new treatment**

The property owner will note stock movements into the upper and lower paddocks and control paddock throughout the year.

#### **Stock type - Sheep**

##### **Trial Size**

The paddock comprising this Support Site is approx 10 ha in total.

We envisage stocking rates to increase to about 8-10 DSE/ha on the 6ha of flatter, more fertile parts of the trial (after land class fencing), and 3-4 DSE/ha on the steeper, less fertile slopes.



# Chiltern PROOF SITE

EverGraze, the national project aiming for more livestock from perennial pastures established research sites at Chiltern in Northern Victoria and Holbrook in Southern New South Wales last year. Research at the Chiltern will investigate management strategies that can be adopted on-farm that will improve the contribution of native perennial grasses to pastures. The research will develop sheep production systems based on native pastures that are more profitable and overcome current environmental challenges.

In September 2007 the first lambs born at the Chiltern experiment of the Albury Wodonga Proof Site. The ewes were shorn in August 2007 with an average fleece weight of 5.1kg and average fibre diameter of 18 micron. In December 2007, 113 lambs were sold at Corowa. The average lamb weaning weight was 21.4kg.

On Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007 a very successful introductory field day was held at the Chiltern site. The field day was attended by approximately 50 people, these included representatives of the local agribusiness, catchment management staff, departmental staff and local landholders.

Angela Avery, EverGraze National Science Leader, opened the day giving a national overview of the project. Meredith Mitchell and Jim Virgona (Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga) gave overviews of the background and design of the two EverGraze experiments.

Participants at the field day also gained hands on experience in the identification

of native grasses on the field site. The key features of these grasses were described and their grazing values discussed.

For more information about EverGraze and upcoming events visit [www.evergraze.com.au](http://www.evergraze.com.au)

*"Following best management practices, this research is using a breeding flock to measure or capture the economic benefits of the systems imposed. The majority of native pasture experiments to date have used wethers, but the potential productivity of a system is best gauged through a breeding system."*

*Although these results can not be assigned to treatments as ewes were only allocated to plots just prior to lambing it does show the value of elite genetics and native pastures."*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CHILTERN PROOF SITE CALL MEREDITH MITCHELL ON**

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BECOME A MEMBER- visit:

[www.alpvalleys.com.au](http://www.alpvalleys.com.au)

## VISION

The North East of Victoria is widely recognised for its attractiveness to agribusiness, and there is growth in the economic value and sustainability of agribusinesses.

The contributing role of the Agribusiness Forum to making this vision a reality is widely recognised.

## MISSION

*The role of the Forum is to:*

- foster and stimulate the development of viable and sustainable agribusiness in the North East
- create the right climate in which agribusiness can successfully operate.



[www.alpvalleys.com.au](http://www.alpvalleys.com.au)