



Project overview



Grain & Graze is a new national research program funded by Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, GRDC and Land & Water Australia. The program is aimed at improving the financial and environmental performance of mixed farming systems across Australia.

The Murrumbidgee Grain & Graze project, one of 8 regional projects, involves 5 organisations:

- FarmLink (host agency)
- Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- CSIRO
- Charles Sturt University (CSU)

The project will receive \$1 million over 5 years from the funding bodies, as well as significant in-kind contributions from the agencies involved.

The focus of the Murrumbidgee project is on managing the enterprise mix to optimise whole farm productivity while protecting the natural resource base, particularly water use, ground cover and species diversity. The project is made up of 4 modules:

- **R&D trials** - aimed at filling the feed gaps with grazing wheats & short term pastures
- **Focus farms** - local grower groups investigate and monitor specific natural resource issues on farm
- **Workshops & training** - applicable to growers in mixed farming areas
- **Communications** - including fact sheets, case studies, field days

For more information on the Grain & Graze program go to www.grainandgraze.com.au

1) R&D trials

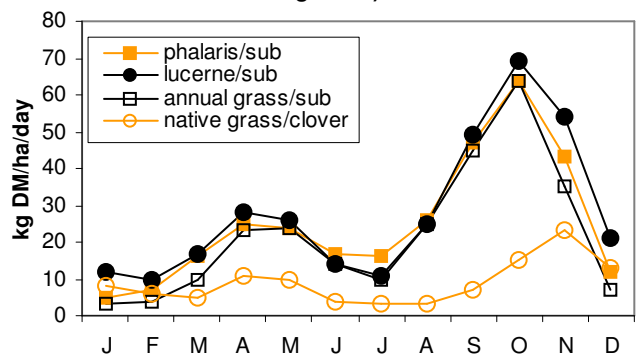
- collaborators:
 - ⇒ NSW DPI (Guy McMullen - primary researcher)
 - ⇒ FarmLink (Kirrily Condon - research co-ordination)
 - ⇒ CSIRO (Hugh Dove - livestock, Warren Bond - water use)
 - ⇒ CSU (Jim Virgona - grazing management, Felicity Gummer - phenology)
- objectives: investigate profitable options such as grazing wheats and short term pastures to fill the feed gaps in mixed farming enterprises

2004:

- *grazing wheat agronomy trials at Yerong Creek, Marrar & Grenfell*
 - ⇒ measuring dry matter production, feed value, water use, yield & grain quality of 6 varieties
- *grazing wheat preference trial at Marrar*
 - ⇒ measuring animal preference for particular varieties
- *grazing wheat animal performance trial at Marrar*
 - ⇒ measuring lamb liveweight gain and intake on selected varieties

Fig 1: R&D trials are looking at management options to fill the autumn/winter feed gap in mixed farming enterprises

Feed curve for south west slopes (source: Prograze™)



Murrumbidgee G&G

Murrumbidgee G&G partners:



2) Focus Farms

- collaborators:
 - ⇒ Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (in conjunction with NLP project 'Profitable farmers, sustainable systems, healthy landscapes' - Lucy Breen project officer)
 - ⇒ Grain & Graze working group (Alison Bowman - DPI, Rob Scriven - MCMA, Kirrily Condon - FarmLink)
- objectives: involve local grower groups in investigating and monitoring natural resource issues on farm, with an emphasis on water use efficiency
- focus farm group activities:
 - ⇒ natural resource assessments of focus farms (including property management plans, vegetation plans) and interpretation in conjunction with local group
 - ⇒ prioritisation of major natural resource issues in focus group's area
 - ⇒ establishment of demonstration sites to address management of local natural resource issues

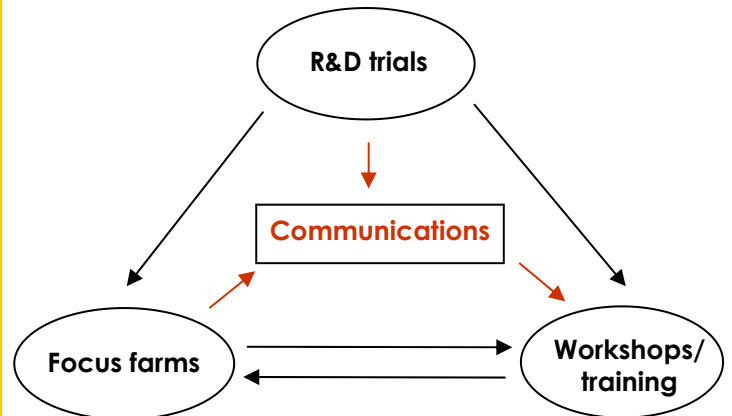
3) Workshops & training

- collaborators:
 - ⇒ Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (project officer to be appointed)
 - ⇒ Grain & Graze working group (Alison Bowman - DPI, Rob Scriven - MCMA, Kirrily Condon - FarmLink)
- objectives: identify training needs of producers in mixed farming areas and tailor material accordingly
- training activities:
 - ⇒ training needs analysis of focus farm groups (including survey of current knowledge)
 - ⇒ co-ordination of training workshops
 - ⇒ development of 'sustainability indices' to help producers monitor natural resource changes on farm

4) Communications

- collaborators:
 - ⇒ FarmLink (Kirrily Condon)
 - ⇒ Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (Lucy Breen and project officer to be appointed)
 - ⇒ DPI (Alison Bowman)
- objectives: engage through communication, participation and extension activities at least 1500 producers
- activities:
 - ⇒ fact sheets
 - ⇒ case studies
 - ⇒ field days/seminars

Fig. 2 - modules of the Murrumbidgee G&G project



Project co-ordination

- project co-ordinator:
 - ⇒ Kirrily Condon, FarmLink
- working group:
 - ⇒ Alison Bowman (DPI)
 - ⇒ Rob Scriven (MCMA)
 - ⇒ Kirrily Condon (FarmLink)
- steering committee:
 - ⇒ Richie White - farmer (FarmLink)
 - ⇒ Bernard Hart - farmer (FarmLink)
 - ⇒ John Pattison - farmer (FarmLink)
 - ⇒ Kirrily Condon (FarmLink)
 - ⇒ John Seanson (MCMA)
 - ⇒ Rob Scriven (MCMA)
 - ⇒ Alison Bowman (DPI)
 - ⇒ Guy McMullen (DPI)
 - ⇒ Hugh Dove (CSIRO)
 - ⇒ Jim Virgona (CSU)
 - ⇒ Greg Condon (consultant)

Further information

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