

99/Q08



## Producer Research Support

### Cattle Water Requirements Under Intensive Management

Nth Qld KIT Group



The North Queensland KIT group investigated how cell grazing in Northern and Central Queensland impacted the ability of large mobs of cattle to get enough water.

### Producer Research Support

MLA Producer Research Support offers support funding of up to \$15,000 over three years for groups of producers keen to be active in on-farm research and demonstration trials.

These activities include:

- Producer Initiated Research and Development
- More Beef from Pastures demonstration trials
- Prime Time Wean More Lambs demonstration trials
- Sustainable and productive grazing grants.

Contact Stephen Feighan - MLA Project Manager, Producer Delivery and Adoption.

Tel (02) 9463 9245 or  
sfeighan@mla.com.au

### Contact details

Tony Mott  
Somerville MAXWELTON QLD 4816  
Tel (07) 4741 8657  
Fax (07) 4741 8683

### The Project

The North Queensland KIT group investigated how cell grazing impacted the ability of large mobs of cattle (1,500 – 4,000 head) to get enough water. The group wanted to identify the conditions that affected the amount of water required by cattle, and measure necessary water intake under each of these conditions. This data would inform the development of comprehensive cell grazing management protocols.

### Objectives

1. Measure the amount of water required per head of cattle, under different condition sets, in Northern and Central Queensland;
2. Use this data to develop a prediction model for the amount of water required under each condition; and;
3. Identify optimal cell centre designs to ensure adequate water intake for large mobs of cattle.

### What was done

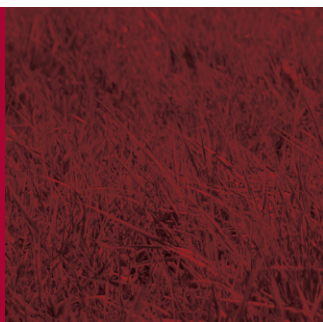
The condition sets identified for measurement of the amount of water required per head of cattle included:

- Stock mental state;
- Size of the mob;
- Temperature;
- Wind;
- Humidity;
- Green in feed;
- Water medication levels;
- Trough space;
- Frequency of cleaning of trough; and
- Type and size of animal.

### What happened?

A weather station, flow meters, data loggers and software were purchased, but the research didn't progress as planned because of problems encountered using the equipment in such a harsh environment. The research group experienced significant delays with technical support for their equipment, which they found frustrating and de-motivating.

Once the equipment was working properly, surface water left after the rain meant that cattle did not need to come to troughs to drink, and intake volumes could not be accurately measured.



### **MLA also recommends BeefPlan**

BeefPlan is a non-traditional approach to learning. Groups of like-minded beef producers, work together as a management team to focus on property management. Importantly the learning agenda is set and controlled by the group.

Contact Steve Banney - Project Coordinator  
Tel (07) 4093 9284 or [sdb@austarnet.com.au](mailto:sdb@austarnet.com.au)

### **EDGEnetwork**

EDGEnetwork offers practical field-based workshops to improve productivity and profitability for the long-term.

Workshops cover breeding, nutrition, grazing management, marketing and selling.

Call MLA on 1800 993 343 or  
[www.edgenetwork.com.au](http://www.edgenetwork.com.au)

### **Meat and Livestock Australia**

Level 1, 165 Walker Street  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
Tel (02) 9463 9333  
Fax (02) 9463 9393  
Free Phone 1800 023 100 (Australia only)  
[www.mla.com.au](http://www.mla.com.au)

### **Cattle Water Requirements Under Intensive Management**

July 2005 / PIRD OUTCOMES

## **What happened?**

A weather station, flow meters, data loggers and software were purchased, but the research didn't progress as planned because of problems encountered using the equipment in such a harsh environment. The research group experienced significant delays with technical support for their equipment, which they found frustrating and de-motivating.

Once the equipment was working properly, surface water left after the rain meant that cattle did not need to come to troughs to drink, and intake volumes could not be accurately measured.

## **Next Steps**

While achievement of the original research objectives had the potential to significantly impact cattle management practices in Northern and Central Queensland, this project did not yield meaningful results.

The electronic data measurement and logging systems weren't robust enough for this harsh environment, and on-site technical support was problematic.

The group has continued to manually measure what they can, and incorporate its findings into the management of group members' enterprises.

A further project with rigorous data collection and analysis protocols is likely to yield results that could benefit other producers.