



final report

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Central Australia Grazing Land Management Workshop

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Abstract

Customising the *EDGEnetwork* Grazing Land Management workshop for the central Australian pastoral environment involved collaborative work with state government agencies, non government organisations and local land managers.

The tailored workshop gives participants an appreciation of environmental and ecological issues in the arid rangelands, and enables the pastoral community to develop sustainable grazing land management plans for their stations. The course runs for three days and covers the following topics:

- Maintaining healthy native pasture systems
- Understanding the relationships between water, soil and native vegetation
- Understanding impacts of fire, weeds, feral animals on biodiversity and productivity
- Managing the environment for climate variability
- Meeting market targets whilst ensuring long term sustainability
- Determining the financial implications of grazing management options.

Executive Summary

Central Australian pastoralists now have access to a customised grazing land management workshop for the central Australian region. Centralian Land Management Association (the landcare group of the central Australian pastoral industry) had the full support of its members to customise the workshop. They, and others involved in the local pastoral industry felt existing local research projects and information databases, particularly those with an ecological approach to grazing land management, should be collated into a grazing land management 'package' for delivery in an accessible, workshop style format. The *EDGEnetwork* Grazing Land Management workshop provided the perfect vehicle for this to occur.

Customising the workshop was a collaborative effort, involving a nine strong steering committee, representing CSIRO, NT Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development, NT Department of Information, Planning & Environment, Desert Knowledge CRC and CLMA member and association representatives. Substantial assistance was also received from Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries. Substantial funding support for the package came from Meat and Livestock Australia and the National Landcare Program.

The workshop has benefited from a pilot workshop which drew agency and producer participants from the Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland. The complete package includes:

- Workshop notes covering the following modules:
 1. Welcome to Grazing Land Management
 2. Understanding the Grazing Ecosystem
 3. Managing the Grazing Ecosystem
 4. Managing Fire
 5. Managing Tree/Grass Balance
 6. Pasture Improvement and Restoration
 7. Managing Weeds
 8. Planning Grazing Land Management
- PowerPoint presentation for each module
- Facilitator Notes for each module

The workshop is essentially designed for central Australian pastoralists, however it provides a valuable insight into the intricacies of arid zone grazing land management to all people working in and servicing the pastoral industry in central Australia (eg. Landcare groups and personnel, research and extension staff in government, regulatory and monitoring agencies).

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1 Background

Grazing Land Management training is an initiative of Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) Northern Beef Program. In May 2004, (project commencement) the workshop had been developed for four regions of northern Australia but had not yet been customised to central Australian conditions.

The Centralian Land Management Association was successful in obtaining funding from the National Landcare Program to collate existing research and knowledge into the GLM 'package,' over-coming the common problem that Government agencies face in delivering valuable research information to land managers. A steering committee was established with representation from DBIRD, DIPE, CSIRO, Desert Knowledge CRC, CLMA and local land managers. Cross-border networking was also encouraged with Government and industry in SA, NT and QLD.

2 Project Objectives

There were two key objectives for this project:

1. Customise the GLM education workshop package to the central Australia region
2. Produce the revised workbook, PowerPoint slides and Facilitation manual and deliver them to MLA as desk-topped published documents ready for use in workshops

3 Methodology

The project used existing GLM course materials and revised these for applicability to central Australia. This revision involved extensive consultation with industry and agencies both within and external to the Northern Territory.

4 Results and Discussion

The project utilised the expertise, research data and 'in house' networks of the following organisations:

Category	Name of Group	Type of Involvement	Number of participants
Producer/business group	Meat & Livestock Australia	Technical, financial	4
Producer group	NT Cattlemen's Association	Technical	1
State govt	NT DBIRD	Technical, practical	10
State govt	NT DIPE	Technical, practical	6
Research organisation	CSIRO	Technical, practical	2
Research organisation	Desert Knowledge CRC	Technical, practical	2
Community group	Barkly Landcare & Conservation Association	Technical	1
Community group	Greening Australia	Technical	2
State govt/community group	Bush Fires Council NT	Technical	1
Community group	Alice Springs Pastoral Industry Advisory Council	Technical	8
Indigenous group	Central Land Council	Practical	1
State govt	SA DWLBC	Technical	1
State govt	Qld DPI&F	Technical	5
State govt	WA Dept of Ag	Technical	1
Sate govt	NSW DPI	Technical	1

5 Success in Achieving Objectives

As at the 15th of May, 2005 the GLM workshop has been customised for central Australia. The revised Workbook, PowerPoint slides and Facilitation Manual are with the GLM editor, Melissa Driscoll who will be forwarding them as desk-top published documents.

6 Impact on Meat and Livestock Industry – now & in five years time

Grazing land management has long been recognised as the most significant issue affecting management of natural resource assets for sustainable pastoralism. The immediate impact of the customisation of the GLM workshop for central Australia has been a strengthening in cross border networks for both government and non government agencies involved in the project. This provides a tangible benefit for the meat and livestock industry as important arid zone research and development has found a credible, producer friendly extension vehicle in the GLM workshop.

In five years time, this project will have enhanced the reputation of the meat and livestock industry in the Territory, contributing to meeting a 'Northern Territory Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan' Management Action Target: By 2010, 30% of pastoral lands and 40% of agricultural and horticultural enterprises are implementing Best Management Practice (BMP) or current recommended practices for NRM through integrated Property Management Plans (PMP) or other recognised tools.

The CLMA has a target of 60% of stations in the central Australian region completing the workshop and implementing the principles by 2010. For a region already known for its 'clean, green beef' the widespread practice of the GLM's sustainable pastoralism principles will enhance the reputation of the meat and livestock industry. It will also ensure a quality meat product being produced sustainably in an area renowned as a 'must see' tourist destination for its diverse and healthy landscapes.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The customisation of the Grazing Land Management workshop has been a success for all parties involved. Customising the workshop has created an eclectic and successful mix of commercial product, producer group leadership, National Landcare program funding, government and research organisation R&D, and on going interstate collaboration with government and non government agencies, producer groups and individual pastoralists.

I would recommend that Meat and Livestock Australia look for further opportunities to collaborate with groups like the Centralian Land Management Association. An integral factor in the success of this project has been the credibility of a producer group customising the workshop for members and other central Australian pastoralists at their request. A 'grass roots' producer group which employs technical and scientific staff to ensure credibility and scientifically sound services to its members engenders support from the wider NRM community. This credibility should be utilised as much as possible by Meat and Livestock Australia.

8 Bibliography

Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan for the Northern Territory: sustaining our resources – people, country and enterprises, March 2005.