

meatup FORUM

For the latest in red meat R&D

Turning Gra\$\$ into Dollars

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You can't direct the wind, but you can adjust the sails

Pasture and livestock management is about adjusting the sails.

Adjusting the sails means concentrating on the most important factors under your control.

To **turn Gra\$\$ into Dollars** these important factors are

- Grow more grass
- Utilise more grass - turn as much as possible into meat or wool

Grow more grass

- Pasture density
- Soil fertility

Pasture density

Bare ground produces no pasture regardless of rainfall

Importance of seed density

1000 plants/m²

6 weeks after germination



150 plants/m²

6 weeks after germination



Dense perennial grass cover in April = more winter feed

There will be 10X more feed in June in either of the two paddocks on the left compared to the paddock on right



Pasture paramedic tool

<https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/tools-calculators/pasture-paramedic/>

Hit this link and it will take you to the MLA Pasture Paramedic video

Pasture paramedic is an objective way of assessing your pasture density and composition in either spring or autumn before deciding whether or not to renovate, oversow or manipulate with grazing and/or fertiliser

Soil fertility

Soil test to ensure available phosphorous, sulphur and potassium levels are adequate, as well as soil pH

If you have soil test results, the MLA P tool can be used to calculate **kg/ha P** required each year to maintain soil P levels or to build up soil P

<https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/tools-calculators/phosphorus-tool/>

Effect of P fertiliser application rate on soil fertility and pasture production

from Hamilton P x SR trial 1977 to 2016

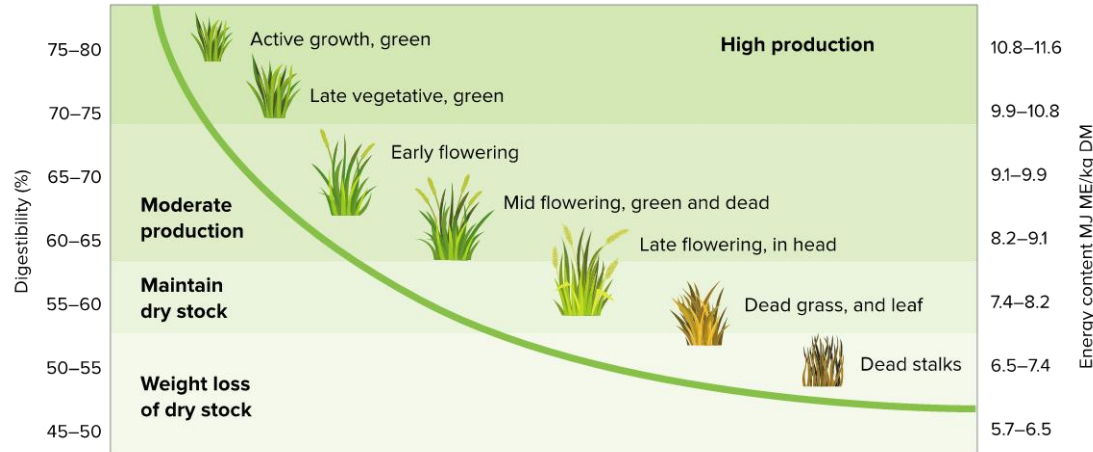
Kg P/ha/year	1	4	8	15	23	33
Colwell P (mg/kg)	12	16	18	35	41	90
Winter pasture production (t/ha)	1.6 = 18 kg/ha /day	1.5	2.1	2.8 = 31 kg/ha/day	3.0	3.1
Annual pasture production (t/ha)	6.0	6.7	9.2	12.4	12.7	12.6

Effect of P fertiliser application rate on soil fertility and pasture production from Hamilton P x SR trial 1977 to 2016

	1 kg P/ha/year	15 kg P/ha/year	23 kg P/ha/year
Sub clover	63%	72%	72%
Perennial ryegrass	76%	80%	80%
Barley grass	70%	74%	75%

Use more grass



Use as much pasture as you can whilst still green



Use more grass

- Manage grazing so leaves are green for as long as possible
- Green leaves produce more leaves, whilst dead leaves produce none!
- Manage grazing in early winter to get pasture to 800-1000 kg/ha (2-3 cm) as quickly as possible
- Manage grazing in spring to keep pasture below 2500 kg/ha (8-10 cm)
- More grazing pressure = better quality pastures (provided they are not grazed below 800 kg/ha green dm)

Use it or lose it!

- If pasture quality  pasture utilisation also 
- Very high (90%) pasture utilisation is possible in a high-quality legume pasture (ME > 12 MJ ME/kg dm) but could be as low as 30% in a mature dry annual grass pasture (ME < 5 MJ ME/kg dm)
- There is no point in carrying more than 3 t/ha dry feed into summer
- 55 – 60% pasture utilisation over the whole year is a good target

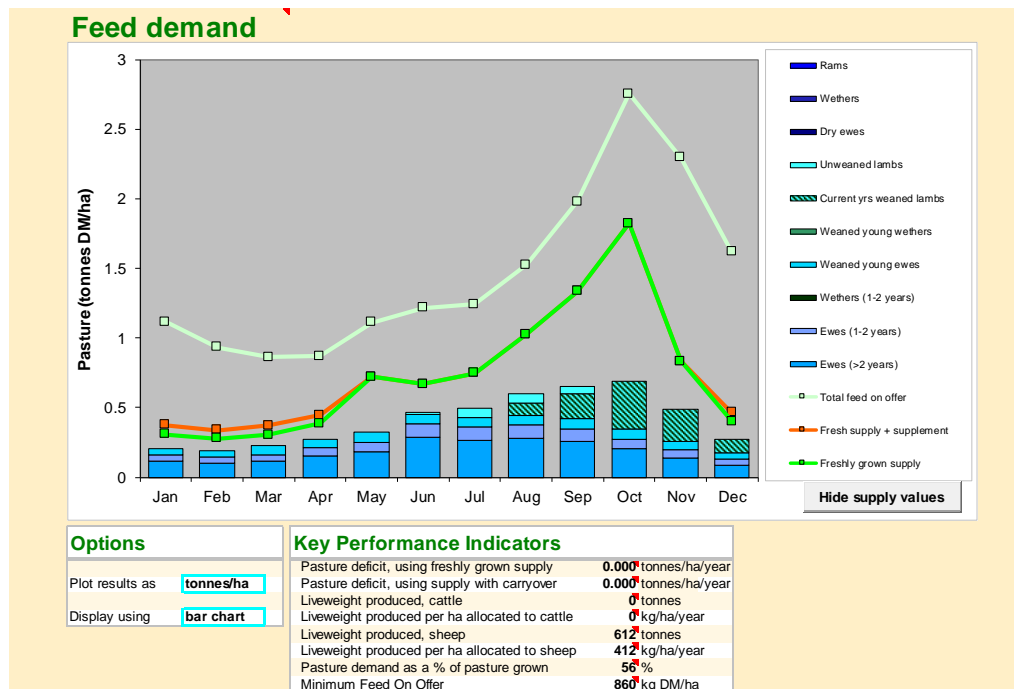
Tools and resources

Aim of good grazing management is to utilize as much of the pasture as possible whilst still green, by **matching livestock feed demand to pasture growth**, which will enable more livestock to be carried in winter with less supplementary feeding

The MLA Feed Demand Calculator <https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/tools-calculators/> calculates your pasture utilisation and clearly shows if there is mismatch between livestock feed demand and pasture production

Example feed demand calculation

Naracoorte area



Gra\$\$ to Dollars course

- MLA Profitable Grazing Systems course **Gra\$\$ to Dollars** goes through the steps in detail to **grow more grass** and to **use more grass**
- **Gra\$\$ to Dollars** is the updated Prograze course
- 8 x ½ day sessions each including a pasture walk + 1 x ½ day individual coaching using two presenters
- One course will be starting in the mid Limestone Coast and another in the lower Limestone Coast in July

Take home messages

- Focus on the things you control – pasture growth and pasture utilisation
- Measure your pasture utilisation objectively
- Learn how to improve your pasture utilisation, then apply these principles and measure your progress
- The MLA website is loaded with useful resources

<https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/feedbase-hub/>