

# final report

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Prepared by: Désirée Jackson  
Livestock Management Pty Ltd  
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## **Nutrition EDGE material finalisation**

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## **Abstract**

This project developed the Nutrition EDGE workshop material into seven modules. There is an expectation the demand for Nutrition EDGE material will increase as MLA approved deliverers will have the flexibility to better meet producers needs by either presenting the full Nutrition EDGE three-day workshop or individual modules.

The workshop material will be available to MLA approved presenters to deliver in feeder events and EDGE workshops for MLA's new adoption program PGS (Profitable Grazing Systems).

The Nutrition EDGE workshop is designed to assist producers to develop and implement economically sound management strategies, as part of an overall plan, to improve herd nutrition. It will assist in achieving MLA 2020 objective: Engage at least 2000 producers in programs that will build knowledge and skills to improve business performance by 5% or more.

## Executive summary

This project reorganized the Nutrition EDGE workshop material into seven modules, incorporated material from the technical module and updated the workshop notes and slides with new research outcomes. The following updated material was submitted for proof reading and graphic design work:

- Workshop notes, workshop slides and a participant workbook
- List of resources and materials required for the workshop
- Timing of and preparation requirements
- Detailed start and finish times of each module

Assistance was given to the proof reader and graphic designer to ensure the workshop modules, slides and workbook were to MLA's satisfaction.

The consultant attended a material finalisation meeting in Brisbane to ensure EDGENetwork packages are linked more closely together within a business context, have consistent language terminology and key messages.

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## 1 Background

The EDGENetwork (EDGE) offers practical learning opportunities to help beef cattle and sheep producers (primarily in northern Australia) gain knowledge and develop skills necessary to improve their livestock enterprises. These training courses are primary vehicles for delivering key research and development messages, technologies and tools to industry. There are currently five EDGE training packages delivered by Meat and Livestock (MLA) – Breeding EDGE, Business EDGE, Grazing Land Management (GLM) EDGE, Nutrition EDGE and Grazing Fundamentals. These packages have been delivered successfully for over ten years. In 2015/16 99% of attendees said they plan to make changes to their business as a direct result of attending the EDGE workshops and when asked “Overall, how satisfied are you with this workshop?” they scored an average of 9.2 out of 10. E.IFL.1302 Review and Update of FutureBeef Extension training packages was approved to update the technical content in the Breeding EDGE, GLM EDGE and Nutrition EDGE packages and identify gaps. E.IFL. 1302 delivered technical content updates, a new Grazing Fundamentals one day workshop and made 64 recommendations in relation to further R&D requirements. This included development of business and operational plans and enhancements to workshop materials, delivery and management processes to incorporate producer follow up support after workshops. The project did not include piloting of the new material with producers, making adjustments from feedback at workshops, or professional proof reading and graphic design work.

## 2 Project objectives

This project will develop the Nutrition EDGE workshop material into seven modules and will submit the following by 31-01-2017 for proof reading and graphic design work:

- Workshop notes, workshop slides and a participant workbook
- List of resources and materials required for the workshop
- Timing of and preparation requirements
- Detailed start and finish times of each module

Assistance will be given if necessary to proof reader and graphic designer to ensure the workshop modules, slides and workbook are to MLA’s satisfaction

The consultant will attend a material finalisation meeting in Brisbane to ensure EDGENetwork packages are linked more closely together within a business context, have consistent language terminology and key messages.

## 3 Methodology

This project:

- Organised the producer workshop notes into modules that can be delivered individually if necessary and include detailed presenter guide on preparation and delivery notes.
- Modified the Nutrition EDGE workshop material, including power point presentations and workbooks after pilot workshop/s have been run.

- Attendance at a workshop for consultants finalising the EDGE materials to ensure the EDGE packages are linked more closely within a business context, ensure consistent language terminology and key messages across the suite of packages.

## **4 Results**

### **4.1 Modules**

The modules include the following topics:

- Digestive system of ruminants and use of nutrients, intake and production
- Pasture growth, pasture quality, and diet quality, and indicators and factors that affect them
- Grazing management and animal performance
- How to manage supply of nutrients from pasture to grazing animals
- Identifying mineral and vitamin deficiencies and how to manage for them
- Managing nutritional deficiencies
- Supplementation principles
- Identifying lick groups and understanding lick labels
- Calculating cost comparisons between supplements

During the three-day workshop producers will:

- Better understand the nutritional requirements of their cattle
- Be able to estimate the feed value of pasture and estimate animal production
- Know what supplements to feed
- Understand a feed label
- Save money on supplementary and drought feeding
- Make better management decisions for a range of seasonal conditions

An MER plan has been developed by QUAL Data and evaluations from EDGE workshops are and will continue to be collated and analysed to ensure continual improvement and assist in achieving MLA 2020 objective: Engage at least 2000 producers in programs that will build knowledge and skills to improve business performance by 5% or more.

## **5 Discussion**

The initial Nutrition EDGE package updates were completed but with the addition of a significant amount of material. With the addition of a significant amount of new material, the workshop notes were transitioned from five modules to seven modules.

The new material had to be incorporated into the slides, which had to be aligned with the workshop notes.

The changes in the number of modules and the slides were developed based on seven workshops that were held following on from the revision and updating of the Nutrition EDGE workshop notes.

A participant workbook, containing worksheets and activities, and frequently used reference tables, was developed to complement the workshop notes to make it easier for producers to navigate themselves through the various workshop activities.

A list of resources and materials required for the workshop and timing and preparation requirements, and detailed start and finish times of each module for accredited presenters, was devised.

An evaluation was developed in alignment with the new modules, to provide valuable feedback to MLA and presenters.

## **6 Conclusions/recommendations**

Future R & D would include:

- Development of relationships between dry matter intake and digestibility for cattle and sheep
- Validation of the newly developed nutrient requirement tables
- The new arrangement of the modules in the Nutrition EDGE, Breeding EDGE and Grazing Land Management EDGE packages allows for deliverers to deliver tailored workshops to groups, designing the workshop to include select modules from the packages.

Following on from the workshops, producers have the opportunity to be involved in a coaching program, to gain further understanding of the technologies learned in the context of their own properties, and to be assisted with the implementation of the technologies over a period of months.

## **7 Key messages**

EDGE is delivered as a commercial product by approved deliverers. By having a suite of 1,2 and 3-day EDGE packages available, approved service providers will have a greater opportunity to design delivery which suits producer needs. Demand for EDGE materials will increase due to its availability in modules as well as workshops. For example, EDGE material has the potential to be delivered at MLA BeefUp days, Grazing BMP (extension program delivered under the Fitzroy Basin Association, DAF and AgForce Partnership) and as a specific feeder workshop for PGS.

EDGENetwork will play a key role as a feeder activity into PGS, especially in the north, either as two- or three-day workshops or as modules. Module delivery will ensure producers have greater access to MLA R&D outcomes which will assist them to measure, monitor and analyse data critical to business decision-making which will increase productivity and profitability.