

Project overview



Profitable Grazing Systems – State Coordinator – Northern Territory & Northern Western Australia

Project code L.PGS.1804

Prepared by Rebecca Mohr-Bell
ArGyll Consulting

Date published July 2020

Published by Meat & Livestock Australia Limited
Locked Bag 991
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

In partnership with Name of partner organization (and insert partner logo if applicable)



Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

This publication is published by Meat & Livestock Australia Limited ABN 39 081 678 364 (MLA). Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However, MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Reproduction in whole or in part of this publication is prohibited without prior written consent of MLA.



Brief summary

MLA had identified that adoption of improved management practices and technology amongst red meat producers was often hampered by producers' lack of relevant skills and confidence. PGS was designed to overcome these barriers through the use of 'supported learning' methodology where small groups of producers work with a dedicated 'coach' to learn, practice and implement new skills relevant to their business.

A pilot project was conducted with groups established in all states and territories (except the ACT). In the Northern Territory the group was established based on participants from a Nutrition Edge workshop.

The results of the pilot identified that high levels of coach support and repetition of knowledge were required to embed change in producers' skills and confidence. The potential barriers of distance, small numbers of producers, varied needs of producers (corporate v smaller private operations), the high level of staff turnover and lack of qualified, locally experienced deliverers was identified at this point.

Despite these challenges, the broad concept of supported learning was considered to be an effective way to achieve adoption in northern regions and thus a coordinator was appointed for the Northern Territory/Northern Western Australia in September 2017.

Objectives

The objectives of the role as outlined in the initial consultancy agreement were:

To effectively coordinate the implementation of Profitable Grazing Systems in NT/Northern WA to ensure the program achieves its objectives.

The minimum state key performance indicators (KPIs) were:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Number of SLP Deliverers	2	2	2
Number of SLP Activities	3	3	4
Number of SLP Producers	24	31	40
Number of Feeder Activities	3	4	5
Number of Feeder Activity Producers	46	57	69

Project outcomes

Profitable Grazing Systems in the Northern region has failed to meet any of its KPIs in the first phase of the project. Whilst the concept of supported learning is still regarded as most likely to achieve real, lasting change in management practices, adoption of technology and ultimately profitability, the implementation of the program needs continued improvements. The primary reasons for the failure of Profitable Grazing Systems – Northern Territory and Northern Western Australia to date are the small number of producers and the even smaller number of deliverers.

Benefits to industry

At this point the only benefit to producers that has been achieved is a clear documentation of the market failures in the adoption sector for the north and identification of some potential solutions which still need to be implemented.

Future research and recommendations

Based on the learnings of the last three years the following key recommendations are made for the next phase of Profitable Grazing Systems in Northern Territory and Northern Western Australia:

- Restructure funding of PGS packages so that deliverers are provided with upfront funding to (partially) cover development/adaptation costs with final payment based on actual delivery.
- New northern adoption manager to liaise closely with NT DPIR and WA DPIRD to ensure collaboration and enhancement of extension and adoption activities
- Additional support to be provided for deliverers for marketing, development of online resources and administration
- Ensure travel subsidy is implemented and approved wherever necessary.