

Project overview



PGS Package Development PayDirt Qld Southern Inland

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Brief summary

This Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) project was undertaken to customise the southern, temperate pasture focused PayDirt supported learning package for northern red meat producers managing dryland sown tropical pastures in the Brigalow Belt Region of Queensland. The customisation involved adapting the producer and trainer manual to include best practice grazing and pasture management for the region, relevant local technical data and key considerations that should be made before investing in a fertiliser program in the region.

Material produced during the customisation included a trainer manual, producer manual, four demonstration videos, PowerPoint slides, cost benefit calculator and a Knowledge and Skills Assessment as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements stipulated by MLA. A technical reference panel reviewed the content and provided input into the final publications.

A pilot program was delivered to a group of producers in the Western Downs region of Queensland. It was delivered using a 'flipped learning' approach where an e-learning and face-to-face delivery were combined to optimise uptake and application of the concepts presented. All participants embraced the methodology and feedback from the group was very positive. A webinar to overview the program was well attended by over twenty extension providers, with one expressing interest in delivering the program.

Objectives

1. Develop customized PayDirt training material, including 4 demonstration videos for red meat producers managing dryland tropical sown pastures in Queensland.
2. Deliver pilot program
3. Identify potential deliverers and advocates for the package.

Project outcomes

Training resources and piloting of the customised PayDirt North program was well received by graziers and achieved the goal of helping them to implement a fertilising program on their rundown pastures. Participating producers in the pilot program provided the following feedback on the program:

What I liked	What I would change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program delivered on-property • Videos & e-learning were good and easy to use. • Deliverer's skills and support • Individual property visits • Relates to own property • Delivered locally (don't have to travel) • Useful program for agronomists as well (pasture information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread over three sessions (instead of two due to COVID delays) • Could do 3 half days in a row if you had soil tests done already • Less equations • Get local agronomists involved • More local data

The program is best delivered over multiple, spread-out sessions to give participants time to reflect on learnings and gather information to make improve their decision-making capacity as the program progresses. Twenty professionals participated in an introductory webinar to the PayDirt North PGS package, with one expressing interest in future delivery.

The greatest barrier to delivery and uptake of this program in northern Australia is likely to be the delivery capacity of pasture agronomists soil testing and fertiliser application.

Benefits to industry

The routine use of soil testing and strategic fertiliser application on sown tropical pastures has the potential to significantly improve paddock carrying capacities and turnoff rates. Increasing the knowledge, skills and confidence of graziers in soil testing and strategic fertiliser application will be beneficial economically and environmentally.

Future research and recommendations

There is need to improve pasture production data to develop nutrient response models relating to fertiliser application on dryland tropical sown pastures. Without this information the reliability of fertiliser recommendations and economic modelling will be limited.