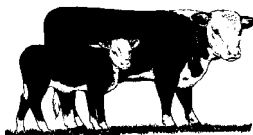
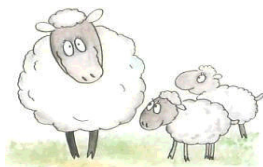




Euroa Grazing Group



Next session **Thursday 19th November** – Soil Health and the Results of the Worm-Juice Trial with Julian Hill

Location: Frank Dawson's property, "Brooklands", Ruffy. From Euroa, take Creightons Creek Road until you reach the cross-roads with the Yarck road. Take a right and look out for "Brooklands" on the left hand side.

Plan:

- 9:30am Think Tank – bring your issues to discuss
- 10:30am Morning tea
- 10:45am Soil health – Julian Hill
- 12:30pm Lunch
- 1pm Paddock walk – assessing the results of the worm juice trial
- 2:30pm Plan for next year – **Please complete the questions at the end of the newsletter and bring them along on the day. You need to bring your ideas for this session otherwise others will be determining what we do next year!**
- 3:30pm close

Please let Jane or I know if you cannot attend

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Coming events

Thursday 12th November – 4:30pm – 8:30pm

EverGraze supporting site field day at Warrenbayne. See the result of native pasture management, native pasture and weed ID session with Peter Mitchell and cost/benefit of pasture establishment with Alison Desmond.

Thursday 3rd December – EGG Christmas Party, Creightons Creek Hall

Review of cost of production session with Jono at Longwood hall, Simon Edwards' property and the trial site at Andrew Walta's.

Think Tank (Thanks to Claire Swann who took notes!)

The day kicked off with our new version of the whiparound – the “think tank”. The issues raised and discussion points were as follows:

- Too much feed, not enough mouths – strategies to use it while we've got it but keep a good level of ground cover during summer
 - There are options to take on agistment particularly from those that will run out of water.
 - The group used the spreadsheets to do a conservative summer feed budget for Mick's property with various scenarios.
- Not enough water – the flats are looking like running out before Christmas
 - Making it last longer – requires a budget and strategy for which stock to remove
 - Running out – stock removal either agist or sell
 - Buying water – not an option, too labour intensive and expensive.
 - Require more tank volume
 - Putting down a bore
- Cut silage or hay or strip oats and what is the timing for these decisions
 - Hay and silage will be better quality the earlier you cut them. Silage will be considerably better quality with cereals compared to the difference between pasture hay and silage. The spreadsheet we used last year is useful to predict the cost/benefit of each option. Call me if you don't have this.
- Low prices for hay/grain
- Issues with large amounts of capeweed. Jane also raised the issue that she had killed clover with agtryne and erodium has survived and kicked on
 - Likely to have killed the clover due to the temperature being above what is required.
 - The bank of clover seed in paddock – expected (and hoped) to germinate next year
 - When using broadleaf sprays, the clover needs to be at the 3-leaf stage. Kill weeds when they are at the small rosette stage. If done in late autumn/early winter, the grasses will have time to fill the gaps.

Session with Jono on Cost of Production

We had a very poor response with just 3 businesses completing their cost of production worksheets. Jono ran a very interactive session with us to work out why this was the case, and also gathered an insight from John and Lu Craven and Keith and Lyndal Dean on the advantages they see in doing it. Among their comments were that it has helped them with capital investment decisions such as pasture renovation and hay purchases, and they can see from the calculations where they can cut costs and improve profits. Some of the problems mentioned included difficulties associated with separating out multiple enterprises and finding the relevant figures such as kill weights. Some suggested they didn't want to know what their cost of production was, and others already do a similar analysis using a different source. All in all, judging from this year's results, I am reluctant to run the program again next year, but we will need to discuss this at the session on the 19th.

Claire Swann of DPI Ballarat was along for the day to learn from Jono and presented some interesting figures on the pay-back period of perennial pastures. The group decided that the analysis (which showed a 7 year payback period) needed to account for increases in liveweight gain from improved pastures rather than just the stocking rate. However, the overall lesson was that it will take a long time to pay the pastures back, so we need to get the establishment and management right! We will be able to show real figures for this sort of analysis with our trials.

Visit to Simon Edwards' property

After a lovely lunch in Simon's beautiful garden, we wandered out to a nearby paddock where Simon established a brassica crop back in September. The group discussed the

value of using brassicas and recalled the talk we had from Rob Ryan on the bus trip. Rob mentioned that brassicas not only increase feed supply and quality if we get the rain at the right time, but also sterilize the soil of the diseases associated with pasture species, which makes next year's sowing more successful. It is worth noting that the brassica will not get rid of red legged earth mite as this pest readily attacks the brassica.

Visit to the trial site at Andrew Walta's property

The day finished with a tour of the Longwood trial site where everything is growing like crazy. The site has had one grazing with 223hd of steers for half a day per 1ha plot, and since then has been allowed to run to seed. Unfortunately it has been a good year for silver grass, and it is quite dominant, particularly throughout the slower establishing plots. However, all the sown species are there, and will hopefully get bigger and better next year. The group agreed that we would consider controlling the silver grass if it is dominant again next year.

Keith measured the growth rates for October which are displayed in the table below. Phalaris was particularly impressive, although the cocksfoots were not far behind. The flecha fescue was the best performing in winter, but finished earlier than the other species and didn't perform as well in October.

We visited the ryecorn paddock which continues to amaze everyone with its productivity. Andrew is going to harvest the seed off it, but it still has an enormous amount of biomass.

Kelly Growth Calculations

	Exceltas	Yarck	Uplands	Phalaris	Flecha	Uplands 2	Exceltas 2	Phalaris 2	Flecha 2	Yarck 2
Available sep 29 kg/ha	1920	2100	1000	2260	3000	820	1680	2575	2550	1520
Available oct 18 kg/ha	1980	2250	1600	3750	2120	1750	1970	2200	1800	2060
days grazed	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	2	2	0
Kg Consumption + waste/hd/day	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.6
Number of animals	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
Days b/w measurements	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Growth kg/ha/day	56	60	58	78	33	75	68	33	13	28

Walta growth calculations

	Exceltas	Yarck	Uplands	Phalaris	Flecha	Uplands 2	Exceltas 2	Phalaris 2	Flecha 2	Yarck 2
Available 23 Sep kg/ha	2420	2820	1920	1680	3000	2500	2120	2280	3000	2000
Available 21 Oct kg/ha	2550	2420	2150	3000	2600	2650	1900	3100	1840	1940
Days grazed	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Number hd	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223
Cons + waste kg/hd	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3
Days	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Growth kg/ha/day	62	43	65	104	43	62	49	86	16	55

Deciding on your topics of choice for next year
Print this page, fill it out and bring it to the next session

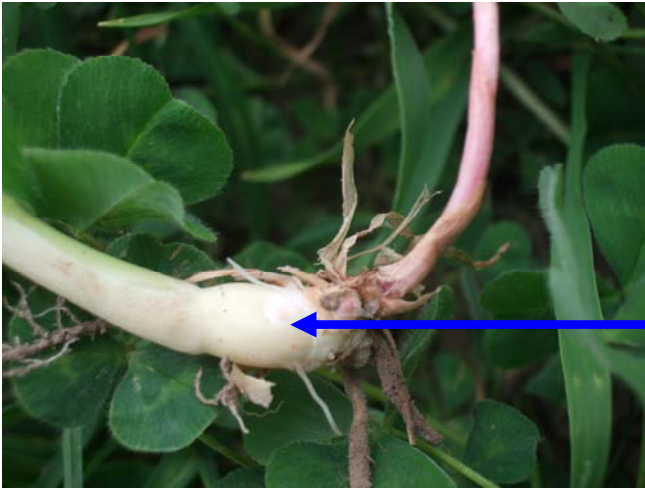
What are your farm goals?

What decisions will you have to make next year to take you closer to reaching your farm goals?

How can the trial sites we have set up help you? What do you want to get out of them?

Based on the information you have come up with above, write down three or more topics you would like to cover next year. These will be used in the planning session.

Do you have any ideas you would like to trial on your own property if you had the chance?



We are letting the phalaris run to seed for its first year on the trial plots because the stem elongation and seed production process triggers the formation and dormancy of the dormant bud (shown here). The dormant bud provides the plant with carbohydrates and moisture to keep it alive in summer. It will be the first tiller to form next autumn. After the first year, the plant should have a large enough root system to survive the summer without the dormant bud.



Group members observe the decaying leaves under the banquet ryegrass. Stan says that will hold the moisture in for summer and recycle the nitrogen. Decaying leaf matter also provides for healthy soils.



Above: Simon and Mick nearly got lost in the ryecorn!



Left: Silver grass has become a problem on the trial plots. The group will decide how best to tackle this when the new plants are young next year. The silver grass will be grazed off when the perennials have gone to seed and the clovers have set their seed.