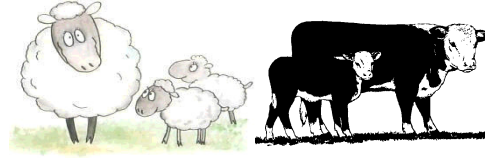




Euroa Grazing Group



Next session Friday the 1st of May with Reg Hill of Wrightson Research to discuss pasture establishment and varieties.

Location: Longwood Community Hall followed by visits to Jane Davey's property and Andrew Walta's new trial site.

Time: 9.00am for 9:30am start – 3:30pm finish

Plan:

9:30am – Update and announcements

9:45am - Whiparound and what we want to get out of this session

10:15am – Skills assessment (this is a task we need to complete for our new MLA pastures project)

10:30am – Morning tea

10:45 am – Reg Hill

12:45pm – Lunch

1:15pm – Paddock walk at Jane's and visit to new trial site at Andrew Walta's

3:30pm close

Please let Jane or I know if you cannot attend

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Don't forget we have our excursion on the 4th and 5th of June.

Please RSVP to Kate Sargeant by 1st of May

This is going to be a very informative event. We will be meeting at Jane Davey's farm in Longwood and travelling by bus first to the Wimmera region to see two Ararat mixed farms including native pasture management, use of lucerne pastures and perennial pasture management. Ararat has a similar season length to what most of us experience in the North East. We will be joined by Rob and Debbie Shea for some of the bus ride around Ararat. Rob has an extensive local knowledge of the area, and will be able to talk to us about the interesting farm practices as we travel around. We will be staying in Ararat for the evening and then travelling to Hamilton to see the Hamilton EverGraze Proof Site incorporating summer and winter active perennial pastures in a system to meet feed supply and demand requirements throughout the year. Our final stop will be

Jigsaw farms just north of Hamilton where Mark Wootton will speak about his carbon neutral farm. Mark will also discuss how they have reduced the cost of production and efficiency on his farm, and the persistence of perennial species. This should be a very interesting afternoon! We will travel back to Longwood from Hamilton. The finer details about the various farms we will be visiting will be sent out next week. It is expected that the cost for participants will be around \$80 inc meals and accommodation. You will need to bring your own lunch on the first day.

New Producer Demonstration Site for EGG

As some of you are already aware, we have been very fortunate to receive funding from MLA (\$60,000 over 3 years) in partnership with DPI (\$38,000 over 3 years) for a new pasture trial in association with our group. We will be planting out 2 10ha paddocks (one at John Kelly's in Moglonemby and the other at Andrew Walta's in Longwood) into 1ha strips of perennial pastures to determine persistence and production from perennials compared to unimproved pastures and cropping. The species to be used will be the very new Uplands cocksfoot and Exceltas coloured brome, which will be trialled against Landmaster phalaris, Fletcher tall fescue, and on John's place, Australian phalaris and on Andrew's place, Yarck cocksfoot. Tools from the More Beef from Pastures producer manual will be used in many of the measurements for pasture and animal production in the trial, and the group will be involved in assisting with these measurements and learning how they work. We will be visiting the new trial site at Andrew's property when we meet on the 1st of May. Stay tuned for further details.

Euroa Grazing Group Report by Gary Cocks for session held on 18 March 2009

The first session for the year was hosted by Lyndal and Keith Dean at Violet Town. It was well attended and joined by some new members who completed one of Kate Sargeant's Beefcheque groups last year.

The morning session was devoted to an excellent presentation by Dale Grey, Cobram based agronomist with DPI who discussed seasonal forecasting and the influence of macro factors such as El Nino, La Nina and the relevance of the Southern Oscillation index. Dale referred to the importance of the current research of the Bureau of Meteorology and the development of a coupled global circulation model, which is known as a POAMA that harness's astounding computing power to pull together data from a multitude of global observation sites in an attempt to predict future weather conditions. Fascinating information but very technical and those interested in further information will find it at www.bom.vic.gov.au/climate/enso

The forecasting appears to focus upon variance from the mean, that is above and below average and Dale produced a very interesting series of charts to show that the last 50 years or so had been significantly wetter than average.

To the practical; Dale provided the group with excellent current information relating to the expected performance of Forage Cereal varieties, information on various grazing and hay trials and his list of "top tips for getting the choice right."

Dale contributes to a regular DPI newsletter The Fast Break which provides climate forecasts for Victoria and can be accessed via the following link www.dpi.vic.gov.au/climaterisk

Dale's presentation was followed by the Annual General Meeting of the group, separate minutes will follow.

Then out to the paddock for some weed identification in the paddock that Keith told us was formally used as a feedlot and during that time had some 20cm of sawdust spread on it. The paddock had a fairly diverse selection of weeds and one of the group member's was a stand-out in recognizing, I think every variety. We then moved to a paddock next door, without the saw dust

layer and the contrast in soil moisture was striking, the paddock with the saw dust having bone dry soil.

Thanks to Lyndal and Keith for their generous hospitality, Dale for his excellent and informative presentation and Kate for the usual lively facilitation

Soil health and biodiversity discussion with Rob Hodges held on the 17th of April

We were very lucky to have our new president Stan Artridge put together an extra session for us last Friday at the Longwood Hall with Rob Hodges. Rob has been doing some interesting work with soils on his Longwood property, which he has recently converted from beef cattle to sheep. The day began with a whiparound, led by Stan, where we heard about the effects of the recent dust storm throughout the district. Rob then engaged us in a very interesting discussion relating the soil physical, chemical and biological properties, and in particular the benefits of topping pastures, use of alternative fertilisers and his new "Rehabilitator" plough to speed up the process of reducing soil compaction. We then travelled out to the property and had a demonstration of the plough on a paddock where Rob intends to sow a crop this year, and eventually a lucerne pasture. Thanks to Stan for organising the day, his lovely daughter Judith for making a wonderful morning tea, and to Rob for such an interesting presentation.

Further information and web links from Dale Grey's presentation.

Sea Surface Temperature Anomalies chart
<http://www.osdpd.noaa.gov/PSB/EPS/SST/climo.html>

Pacific Ocean depth analysis, Trade winds, SST (go into assorted plots for depth)
<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/tao/jsdisplay/>

Outgoing Long Wave Radiation (cloudiness maps)
<http://www.bom.gov.au/bmrc/clfor/cfstaff/matw/maproom/index.htm>

Monthly Mean Sea Level Pressure charts (mean and anomaly)
<http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/climate/cmb.cgi>

The BoM's monthly summary of the Pacific Ocean (includes updated daily SOI graph)
<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>

The BoM's weather for farmers site
<http://www.bom.gov.au/watl/index.shtml> (includes the world computer model summary rainfall forecasts for Australia)

The BoM's POAMA computer model (Experimental but useful, go to Australian Rainfall for short, medium and long range forecasts)
http://poama.bom.gov.au/experimental/poama15/r_gen.htm

QDPI's phase system (go to climate forecast)
<http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/>

The phase of the Madden Julian Oscillation
<http://www.bom.gov.au/bmrc/clfor/cfstaff/matw/maproom/RMM/phase.Last40days.html>

Synoptic charts (including southern hemisphere)
<http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/national/charts/>

Synoptic chart 500 hPa prediction ECMWF
http://www.ecmwf.int/products/forecasts/d/charts/medium/deterministic/msl_uv850_z500!Geopotential%20500%20hPa!240!South%20hemisphere!pop!od!oper!public_plots!2009041912!!/