

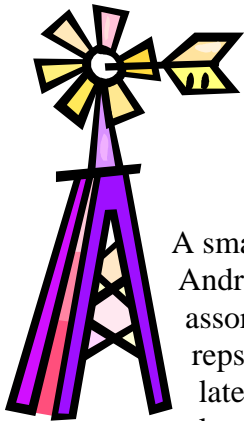
LAND TALK

Newsletter of the 'Centralian Land Management Association' (CLMA)

Greetings everyone,

No doubt you're all busy chasing water, so we hope you have made the time to sit back with a cuppa and get stuck into this bumper edition of LandTalk! Yep it's that time of the year again where we're asking you to pull out the cheque book and renew your annual membership. With the onset of another very dry year, now's a more important time than ever to have a group like CLMA on your side. Those properties waiting for a visit from the Lazer Truck to do ponding work, we're looking for a driver. So if you know anyone who's looking for a bit of part time work and has a bit of nouse and good knowledge of country, let me know.

You will notice reference to a lot of websites in this newsletter. Whether we like it or not...it's happening, the revolutionary age of the world wide web is taking over! IF you don't have web access or hate doing stuff on the computer, give us a ring at the CLMA office and we'll send you out a paper copy. Hope to catch up with you soon, and we look forward to your continuing or new membership! Cheers, Andrea



TELEMETRY FIELD DAY,

William Creek S.A.

A small team of NT producers, Andrea & Jo from CLMA, and an assortment of NT Government reps traveled to William Creek late last month to check out the latest technologies to improve water pumping and monitoring on property.

Of interest were the displays on remote monitoring systems using UHF to monitor tank levels and activate pumps with genset control by radio. Some of the producers we spoke to who currently use the UHF technology, praised its' reliability and the cost savings are very impressive.

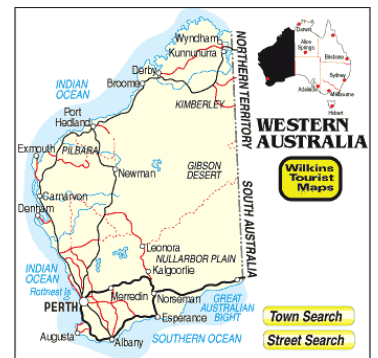
In the CLMA office we have a range of information collected from the numerous distributors and displays including notes on : Mono pumps, solar water pumping & UHF Telemetry and remote monitoring systems. For more info, give us a call or drop into the office to have a look.

INTERESTED IN SOME BOUNDARY JUMPING?

CLMA is looking to sponsor a group of Alice pastoralists to look at station soil management and grazing projects in the Gascoyne-Murchison region in WA.

After helping host a group of WA visitors to central Australia mid last year, and visiting SA pastoralists at William Creek last month, we've been hearing great stories about what producers are doing in other regions. Visiting projects and other properties is a great way to get new ideas and share past successes. If you're keen to have a look around the Gascoyne Murchison region in WA (there may be a gap or two on the agenda for a spot of "marine surveying" if you're up to it!) let us know so we can get something organized.

Obviously everyone is busy most of the year round, so let us know the best month for you. Get in quick, numbers are limited to only 10 people!



MANAGING HEALTHY SOILS

The “scoop” on Dung Beetles

Healthy soil is made up of an extremely complex civilization of living organisms. As land managers, we often ignore using soil organisms as a tool, because they are so small, so easily out of sight and out of mind. Yet, healthy soil is the corner stone of diversity and health for both plants and animals.

On pasture and rangeland grazed by livestock, the dung beetle is a soil organism that is visible to humans, beneficial to soil health and easily monitored. They aerate organic matter, increase water infiltration, and help control pest insects. Dung beetles work for free, and they love their work! The only thing they really dislike is insecticides and parasiticides.



Research carried out on a property in Oklahoma in the U.S. found, that dung beetles **buried the equivalent of 2 metric tons of cow poo / hectare per day**. The activity of breaking down and burying organic matter **increased soil water infiltration by an average of 129%** on the studied plots. Every extra inch (25mm) of water that was able to be absorbed, **added an extra 254,530 litres / hectare to the soil!** That’s a lot of water for pasture growth!

[The dung beetles at work on this property were identified as *Onthophagus gazella*, a tropical species of dung beetle introduced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in the mid 1970's for bio-control of pest face and horn flies]

The work of dung beetles has huge favorable outcomes for pasture. Soil in good condition is more resilient to erosion and better able to absorb and store moisture thus helping the soil to be better able to manage the effects of drought.

[Extracts taken from Wholistic Management Website. For more info on principles of “wholistic management” check out the site at www.managingwholes.com]

In Australia we have over 350 native species of dung beetle, and about 22 species that have been introduced and become established. Dung beetles have been introduced into Australia from places like Mexico, Spain and South Africa.



How does the poo on your place look?

EMS Project Update
Dee Walsh (08) 8953 4230

Following on from the article in the January 2005 Land Talk newsletter about Soil Management, I'm pleased to say that we got some feedback from "Mr Soils" himself, Bob Purvis of Woodgreen station.

Whilst Bob agreed with some of the ideas on what constituted good soil management, there were quite a few that he disagreed with. The original statements (gathered from EMS participants) are in bold. Here's what he had to say:

It's cheaper to build a new road properly than maintain an old poor road.

Bob says: This is a fool of a question. Both may be true, it depends what is wrong with the old one.

Flatten at least one windrow to allow water to run off the road rather than down it.

Bob says: There should be almost no windrow.

Try to keep roadsides clean and clear to avoid water running down them.

Bob says: Grass is the best thing to slow running water.

Construct new drains if the current ones aren't keeping up / Put in drains or blocks along fence lines to repair or avoid erosion problems / Rehabilitate erosion along fence lines by backfilling eroded areas and installing drains to prevent future problems.

Bob says: Drains should be avoided at all times for they increase the velocity of the water and so can carry larger grains of soil. There is almost always a better alternative to a drain. Put stops instead.

Try to grade when the soil is a bit moist.

Bob says: It depends on what you are trying to do.

Ponding banks are not suitable for all soils or all slopes. Sometimes they can cause more erosion.

Bob says: If a ponding bank causes erosion it is either designed incorrectly or it is in the incorrect place in the landscape.

Avoid over-grading cleared fence lines.

Bob says: Fence lines should never be graded.

Only clear vegetation along fence lines in high fire seasons.

Bob says: You should try always to keep fence lines clear of bushes and trees and build fences that can withstand fire with minimal damage. e.g. Do not strain fences too tight and have the bottom wire high off the ground.

Keep fences away from erodable soils.

Bob says: Sometimes that is impossible. Put stops/humps/bunds in when you build the fence and make sure they are close enough so the country can't erode and do not grade the fence line ever.

Manage erosion along fences by shifting the fence and not grading along it.

Bob says: There is no need to shift the fence. Fix the problem.

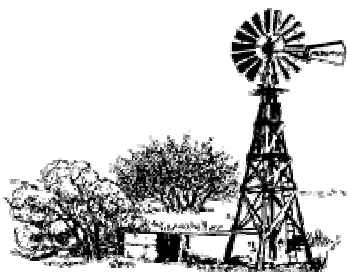
WHAT'S HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT?

Holistic Management is a term being used more and more both inside and outside of our industry. For those of you who haven't heard much about this, it is very basically a way to describe managing and understanding the **whole system** of resources that we have available to us. For people on the land, this means understanding the grazing system and all its parts, and understanding the consequences of changing one of the many parts to the greater whole.

Here's what producer Chris Henngler from Kachana Station in the Kimberley has to say about Wholistic management;

“Our immediate challenge as resource managers is to stabilise our eroding resource base and to revitalise the landscape so that the area can meet our human demands. Our aim is a biologically healthy landscape gaining in biodiversity. The fundamental ecosystem processes at work in this landscape as well as our expectations need to be in tune with Nature's original design.

*In the context of environments,
MANAGEMENT CANNOT EQUAL
CONTROL.”*



For more info on what the people at Kachana station are doing to improve profitability and environmental stability, ring us at CLMA or log onto Kachana's website at www.kachana.com

CLMA WEEDS ROUND-UP

According to Tony Grice of the CSIRO, over 700 non-native plant species have naturalized in the arid and semi-arid rangelands, of which scientists rate 150 as serious or potentially serious invaders.

In Central Australia **6 percent of listed plant species** now come from somewhere else on earth, while in western NSW, one plant in five is a foreigner.



A cool couple of days here and there in February saw Andrea & Pete treating Devils Rope on Undoolya, Rubber bush on The Gardens and also Temple Bar. We also worked with the Kramers to clean up Rubberbush on the rifle range off Ilparpa Road.

Weeds know NO boundaries, borders or fence lines. It doesn't matter who you are or what you do, we all need to work together on this one!

SANDOVER WEED PROJECT

It's been too hot for any decent attempt at successful weed work in the last 4 months. [Air temperature higher than 35 degrees evaporates chemical before the plant can absorb it.] Towards the end of April, we'll be visiting downstream parts of the Sandover to formulate the next plan of attack. If you are in the Sandover region and waiting for a visit from the weed team, expect to hear a call from us soon!

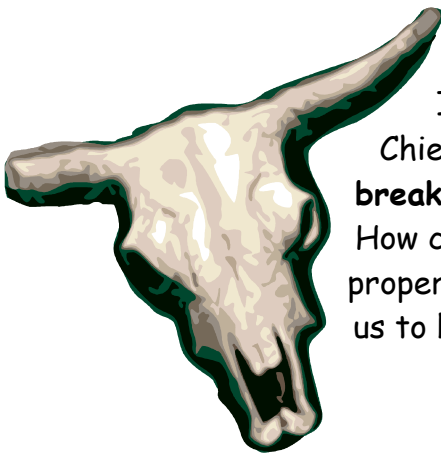
NTCA Conference – Alice Springs 8th April 2005

A variety of speakers gave interesting presentations at the 21st NTCA conference. The main flavours of the day focused on NLIS, and getting the Australian beef industry better fitted for the international export trade. Dr Gary Smith from the US spoke on the effects of BSE on US export and domestic markets. Of interest, was his presentation on producer developed "branded beef".

A key message from the learning's of US beef producers was to BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE. Recent visits from other national visitors (including Hunter Lovins - expert on 'Natural Capitalism') identified that the Central Australian beef industry is in a prime position to better brand and promote beef that is clean & greena product becoming more and more popular in the domestic and export trade. Give us a call at CLMA if you think you need help to get better fitted out to brand as "clean and green"



For an example of what other groups in the Australian beef industry are doing with branding, check out OBE Beef's website at www.obebeef.com.au



In his opening address at the NTCA Conference, John Keir (Joint Chief Executive of AMH) said**"The cow dead at the bore at the break in the season, has no value"**. Well, we all know this is true! How can you better budget your feed for the stock you have on property, without sacrificing cattle or country? Call into CLMA and get us to help you to work out a feed budget.

Don't forget the Roos! Many of our members are reporting Wallabies and Roos to be at a record high at the moment. It has been estimated that the average Roo needs to consume about 1kg of dry feed per day for survival. This equates to 10 roos per 420kg steer. Don't forget the roos when you're doing the feed budget and planning to move stock or open up new country in these dry times.



EVENTS COMING UP:

- ⇒ **Aileron Bush Meeting** 30th April – 1st May
- ⇒ **Barkly May Day Muster** 29th April – 1st May @ Tennant Creek
- ⇒ CSIRO seminar presentation **“Birds, Mulga & Fire”** Friday 29th April, 3:45 @ CSIRO Conference room - Adam Leavesley (doing his PhD in the Tanami region.)
- ⇒ **Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference** 19 – 21st April, Ross River Homestead

CENTRALIAN LAND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
 PO BOX 2534
 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871
 Phone: 08 89534230
 Fax: 08 89523824

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SURFACE
 MAIL

POSTAGE
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 AUSTRALIA

For general enquiries, & to contact Andrea
 For info about EMS, & to contact Dionne
 For enquiries about Grazing Land Management, & to contact Jo

clma@clma.com.au
ems@clma.com.au
jo@aglingo.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- ⇒ Steve & Rebecca Cadzow on the birth of baby Bridget
- ⇒ Angas Downs for being the newest members of CLMA
- ⇒ Jo & Alan Fogarty - a new baby boy!
- ⇒ Andrea for tying the knot with Kurt on Easter long weekend. Your CLMA Coordinators' new name is now Andrea Tschirner!

