

LAND TALK

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

It's hard to believe that the year is three quarters over already! The CLMA staff have been busy promoting the landcare efforts of the Central Australian pastoral industry locally and interstate. We've organised displays at the Arid Zone Research Institute open day, ABC Garden Fair and Meat Profit Day. We also presented CLMA work at an Old Man Plains field tour, the Australian Rangeland Society conference and the Lake Eyre Basin Conference. We'll also be showcasing pastoral landcare to the Australian Landcare Council on a local tour in November.

Rebecca Cadzow did Mt Riddock and the CLMA proud at the recent Lake Eyre Basin conference in Renmark, SA. She gave an excellent presentation on EMS, rotational grazing and buffel management which was very well received by the audience. Well done Bec!

Don't Miss the Grazing & Soils Field Day at Idracowra Station

Wednesday 25th October
2006

Following the exceptionally successful Mt Riddock Rotational Grazing Field Day held in February, the Central Australian Grazing Strategies Partnership project is claiming the date for another exciting Field Day, to be hosted by Jim and Sue Murphy at Idracowra Station.

The grazing trial currently underway at Idracowra essentially uses a waterpoint moving along a 32km pipeline at 1km per week, bisecting a 600km² paddock, to spell country without additional fencing.

With producers, particularly in the southern region, looking for alternative solutions when facing an increasingly dry outlook into summer, the Field Day is a chance to evaluate the concept, hear the reasoning behind such an innovation and discuss its application in the region.

It is not often that innovative alternative grazing systems can be examined closely under

the same climatic and land system conditions as we experience in central Australia.

Your fax, email and phone will be running hot leading up to the event with the day's details and we look forward to seeing you there!!!



**Annual General
Meeting &
Christmas Drinks**

**Late November - Details to
be Advised**

Nominations for committee places are open now. Nominate yourself or someone you know today!

Positions: President, Vice President North, Vice President South, Secretary, Treasurer, General Committee Members.

CLMA BULLDOZER UPDATE



- ⇒ The CLMA executive met on August 11th and decided to sell the dozer due to increasing costs and declining interest in hiring.
- ⇒ All stations were faxed, emailed or mailed a tender document and the machine was advertised in Earthmovers & Excavators, the Centralian Advocate & the Queensland Country Life.
- ⇒ Tenders will close on the 4th October and the committee will meet to decide the outcome.
- ⇒ We'll advise of the result in the next Land Talk and at the AGM.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA GRAZING LAND MANAGEMENT (CAGLM) COURSE

TILMOUTH WELL
31ST OCTOBER – 3RD NOVEMBER

Registrations close 2nd October

To register, or express interest in a future workshop, phone the CAGLM officer, Ellena Hannah on 8951 8143.

Central Australia Grazing Land Management package.....

..... Launched and ready to roll

The Central Australia Grazing Land Management (CAGLM) package; consisting of the CAGLM workshop and the appointment of a CAGLM officer, was launched at the Alice Springs Show Cattle sale on the 6th of July.

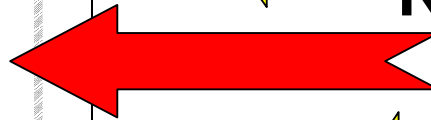
Roy Chisholm and John Carroll launched the package as representatives of the two key partners involved in the project; the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association and the Department of Primary Industry Fisheries and Mines.

President of the NTCA, **Roy Chisholm** said that the NTCA saw the project as something that will contribute to the longevity of the pastoral industry in central Australia.

“This is a valuable opportunity to make a real difference to the productivity and profitability of your business through understanding how to manage for country that is rain ready”, Roy said.



**REGISTER
NOW!**



Northern
Territory
Government

Department of
Primary Industry,
Fisheries and Mines



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Program



CAGSP PROJECT UPDATE

Jillian Fisher

The Central Australian Grazing Strategies Partnership project is gathering momentum.

Beginning with the successful Mt Riddock Rotational Grazing Field Day held in early February, sparking pastoralist interest in the project, the scope of the project has broadened.



With both commercial property trials at Idracowra and Mt Riddock underway for some months now and the Old Man Plains Research Station finalising their trial plans, the focus has moved to another of the key components of the project. That is, the development of a number of case studies illustrating local central Australian approaches to “spell grazing” management. These case studies are your stories.

Documenting the experiences of pastoralists who are implementing their own spell grazing systems successfully, both economically and sustainably, would prove invaluable to landholders who are unsure about incorporating spell grazing into their management.

As is human nature, before adopting a new technique or technology many pastoralists seek information informally from their peers, discussing the gains and successes of a design, together with the actual trials and tribulations of installing and maintaining the system prior to going ahead on their own properties.



For the case studies to be applicable to a wide audience of producers, we are striving to document a vast variety of approaches to spell grazing. Working examples of spell grazing can be as simple or as complex as producers choose to make them. Be it rotational, deferred or opportunistic spelling or indeed any other successful approach involving the concept of spelling country, or even alternatives like conservative set-stocking, the project is keen to document these landholder experiences within this region. When published, the information will be distributed as a practical resource available to landholders from arid rangelands across Australia.

“The case studies will be your stories documenting the social, economic, environmental and production factors associated with your grazing strategy. What are your decision making criteria, how long do you spell country, when did you recoup expenses?”

It would be fantastic if you could be a part of this by just volunteering a bit of information over a cuppa (or a bore run) about your grazing strategy on the following topics:

- Setting the scene and describing your particular Spell Grazing Strategy;

- Stocking Rate Decisions (including carrying capacity and class of stock used);
- When is it time to move?
- Coping with Seasonal Extremes;
- Use of Fire within your strategy (including wild fire control and using fire as a tool);
- How you assess Pasture and Soil Condition;
- Infrastructure and labor;
- Economics; and
- Summing up the advantages and disadvantages of your Spell Grazing Strategy.

If you are interested in sharing your wealth of knowledge on the spell grazing subject, call the CAGSP Project Officer, Jillian Fisher at the CLMA Office – 8953 4230 – to start the ball rolling, organise a date and time and have that cuppa!

Partnership members:



INTERESTING WEB SITES



The CLMA Website!

www.clma.com.au

Landcare Farming information

www.landcareaustralia.com.au/page.asp?pID=30

Free access to livestock industry publications

www.livestocklibrary.com.au

Free online agistment and backgrounding service

www.twohills.com.au

Sustainable living Kimberley station style www.kachana.com/index.php

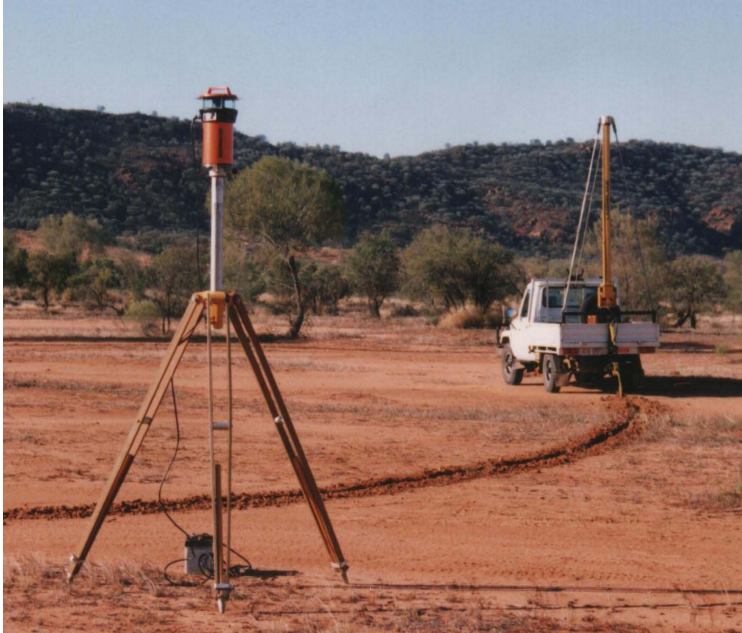
ABC's Landline Program

www.abc.net.au/landline/



CLMA LASER TRUCK HIRE

\$350 PER DAY (INCLUDES THE LASER TRUCK AND OPERATOR)



The Laser system (set up on the back of the CLMA Toyota) marks the correct position for banks and drains, by accurately marking along the contour line.

This minimises the chance of banks and drains busting after rain and maximises the success of the soil rehabilitation works.

The laser truck can mark out 30 banks a day. Even if you don't want to push them up straight away, the marks last several months or more.

Bookings can be made by contacting the CLMA office in Alice Springs.
Phone (08) 8953 4230, Fax (08) 8952 3824 or Email: clma@clma.com.au

CLMA MEMBERSHIP – FACTS & FIGURES

- 51 stations are current financial members of the CLMA.
- This represents more than 70% of the industry.
- 47 members are in the Northern Territory.
- 4 members are in South Australia.

**CLMA IN 2006
CELEBRATING 18 YEARS
OF
LANDCARE ACTION!**



SPATIAL GRAZING – WHERE, WHY & HOW CATTLE GRAZE

A 2 day workshop was held at Rockhampton in June and was attended by our grazing project officer, Jillian Fisher. The event was funded by the CSIRO under the banner of the “Water for a Healthy Country National Research Flagship”.

The workshop invited guest speakers from the USA, Canada and Australia to address the main issues arising from their individual grazing trials under the theme of “**livestock monitoring, modelling and management**”. The main points of interest about livestock monitoring are summarised in this article. Some points about virtual fencing will be included in the next issue of Land Talk.

Doug Veira from *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*, spoke about meeting the water quality requirements of livestock on the Canadian prairies. Drinking water quality is a major issue in Canada where major towns have been affected by *E.coli* and *Giardia* outbreaks caused by the impact of feral animals and livestock in the upper catchments of their water sources. Fencing off the creek systems was found to be cost prohibitive across the more extensive livestock properties so other methods were being analysed. **The property studied installed a trough away from the creekline, attracted cattle to it by locating it by a shaded area and provided lick blocks to draw cattle away from the original unfenced water source. Once established the cattle preferred to walk through the creek to drink from the trough, the water in which was drawn from the creek so the quality was similar. The banks of the creek were later revegetated to lessen access and to control erosion.** www.cowsandfish.org

Leigh Hunt, *Senior Research Scientist with CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems*, presented “**Monitoring cattle movement in Northern Australia using GPS**” focusing on the work undertaken at “**Pigeon Hole**” as part of the **Heytesbury/MLA/CSIRO extensive grazing trial**. GPS collars are used in three paddocks with four cows wearing collars in each paddock. The collars are attached to different beasts every six months at each round of mustering. The GPS records its position hourly and collars also contain activity sensors which can discriminate between a range of grazing and ruminating activities. From the information gained several questions arose which could direct future herd management. The home range differences of individual beasts could determine behaviour trait selection as a breeding tool. Centralising water points in an extensive paddock system was also traded off against cattle preference in pastures – will cattle really consume less palatable feed just because it is now closer to water? Or by managing this resource by turning water points on/off will it save this as a drought reserve? Despite variances in paddock size, areas of concentration remain. This is could be corrected by recent developments in “virtual fencing” technology.

<http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/InformationCentre/AnimalProduction/Grazingmanagement/NorthHornbeef/Pigeon+Hole+Projects.htm>

Julian Derry, *University of Edinburgh*, described the relationship between predicting spatial distributions of livestock to identify areas most at risk of erosion. An interesting point he made was that by increasing the number of waterpoints, the risk of changing the landscape is greater – that is the plants that can tolerate frequent grazing are normally less palatable than some of the better grasses that decrease in number when grazed constantly. Introducing more waterpoints with overlapping grazing zones increases this pressure and could detrimentally change your pasture. www.sags.bio.ed.ac.uk/

To be continued next edition.....virtual fencing

Do You Have Boofheads in Your Garden?

There is a risk that you may have introduced these aggressive and damaging ants to your garden via nursery plants, garden supplies or 2nd hand pot plants bought from Alice Springs.

The Big-headed Ant is the only introduced ant in Alice Springs. It is highly aggressive and can rapidly establish nests, replacing native ant populations, and causes considerable damage to housing by chewing through wiring and tile grout.

What Do They Look Like?

- Most are very small (about 2mm long) – smaller than black ants.
- About 1 in every 100 is longer (3-4mm) and has a big head.
- They are pale ginger in colour.
- They move quite slowly compared to other ants.



Minor worker (2mm)

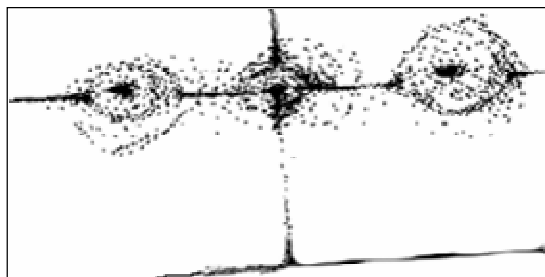


Major worker (3-4mm long)

Source: University of Nebraska

What Do Their Nests Look Like?

- Their nests often occur in pavement cracks, paving, lawns and around irrigation drippers.
- They need water to survive, so they will often be found in gardens or watered areas.
- They are highly active in their nest building and frequently move soil at the nest entrance during the night.
- The larger big-headed workers might not be seen around the nests at all, which can often lead to infestations reaching considerable size with damage occurring to housing before the ants are correctly identified.



Big-headed ant nest in pavers



For ant identification and nest treatment advice, please contact the Threatened Species Network in Alice Springs on 8952 1541 or email rangelands@wwf.org.au or collect some ants in a jar and bring them into the CLMA.



COMING EVENTS:

What	Where	When	Who
Meat Profit Day	Alice Springs	29 & 30 September	Ian MacLean at NTCA on 8952 5122
National Landcare Awards	Melbourne	9 October	Good luck to Dick & Anne Cadzow!
CLMA Field Day – Grazing Trial & Soils	Idracowra Station	25 October	Jillian at CLMA 8953 4230
Grazing Land Management (GLM) Course	Tilmouth Well	31 Oct – 3 November	Ellena Hannah at DPIFM on 8951 8143.

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For general enquiries & to contact Dionne Walsh or Peter Armstrong clma@clma.com.au
 For info about the Sandover weeds project, contact Peter McDowall weeds@clma.com.au
 For info about the Central Australian Grazing Strategies Partnership, contact Jillian Fisher cagsp@clma.com.au

CLMA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- ⇒ Hire of the CLMA laser truck.
- ⇒ Free hire of CLMA seed harvesting quad bike.
- ⇒ Local native grass seed for purchase.
- ⇒ Access to CLMA staff to write funding applications.
- ⇒ CLMA staff assistance with weed control, seed harvesting, photo monitoring, plant identification and EMS.
- ⇒ Staff promoting the environmental credentials of the industry far and wide!

