



**Monaro Farming Systems
2013 Annual General Meeting
27th Aug 2013**

Reports and Meeting Papers

Table of Contents

AGENDA	3
CHAIRMANS REPORT – Oliver Cay	4
FINANCIAL REPORT – Chris Blencowe	6
 PROJECT REPORTS	
MFS Project 08–1 - Grass Gro Project – “Seasonal Outlooks” Doug Alcock	9
MFS Project 10-6 - Genetic Comparison Evaluation Trial (Wether trial)	11
MFS Project 10-7 - Soil Club – Soil Fertility / Nutrient Management	14
MFS Project 11-10 - MFS Agricultural Traineeships Initiative	19
MFS Project 12 - 11 Action on Ground - Soil Carbon Project	21
MFS Member Survey – Summary Report	27
MLA Lean Meat Yield & Eating Quality Producer Demonstration Site	31
 PROJECTS PENDING	
DAFF - Innovation Grants – “ <i>Futuristic Farming Tools to Manage the Fertile and the Fragile</i> ”	32
MFS Website	32
MFS EVENTS SUMMARY	33
SPONSORS PAGE	34



Photo courtesy of Andrea Mitchell

Spring Seasonal Outlook / AGM Agenda

27th August 2013

Doug Alcock (Graz Prophet Consulting) – Spring Seasonal Outlook 2013

Jenianne Hall (Mecardo Business Manager) – Presentation of Mecardo Market Report

7.00am – 9.00am	MFS Board Directors Meeting
9.15am – 10.15am	Seasonal Outlook – Graz Prophet Consulting
10.15am – 10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30am – 11.00am	Jenianne Hall – Presentation of Mecardo Market Report
11.00am – 12.00pm	MFS AGM including Reports
12.00pm	Lunch



Photo courtesy of Andrea Mitchell

2013 – 14 Chairman's Report – Oliver Cay

Succession planning is a difficult but essential part of any volunteer organisation. The time and effort put in by the producer board members is at the heart of what MFS looks and feels like. Alan McGufficke and Ron Horton have served their term and over the past three years have helped shape the direction of MFS. I and the board thank them for this and look forward to their continuing input as members.

Alan has been the driving force behind the wether trial. Together with Phil Graham and Doug Alcock they have secured high accuracy link teams from away, made sure profitability is being reported in the right format and done the hard slog recording the information. It is refreshing when people high up in the industry say to me, "It is good to see a wether trial being run properly".

Ron has been at the helm of one of our most important projects to date, the Soils Club. Ron, Nancy and Richard Simpson have designed and implemented a project that is valuable to every farm business in the group. Matching feed supply and demand is one of the hardest and most profitable decisions business managers make and Soils Club is going a long way to address this.

I am pleased to welcome Angus Hobson and Stephen Rolfe who will fill the outgoing producer positions on the board.

Angus is currently CEO of the Red Meat Advisory Council of Australia (RMAC), the peak body representing the collective interests of the production, processing and live export sectors of Australia's beef, sheep meat and goat meat industries. With his industry connections and the grounding of being sixth generation family farm business operator on the Monaro I look forward to his strategic thoughts on MFS.

Steve is an ideas man, having once started a successful garden mulch business when the east coast of Australia was suffering drought. He runs an evidence based farm business to the west of Nimmitabel and will keep the board focused on the things that matter.

2012-13 has seen significant external funding changes which have challenged the way MFS will deliver its services in the future. Local Land Services (LLS) began its roll out from Nov 2012 and will continue the transition until Jan 2014. During this process MFS has negotiated an outcome that I feel will improve our information transfer and most importantly is sustainable. LLS are the amalgamation of Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA).

With the merger there have been structural and funding changes that have directly affected MFS. Most notable have been Doug Alcock and Luke Pope leaving DPI and Southern Rivers CMA and DPI being rolled into LLS. Prior to the restructure MFS was receiving funding for our coordinators position from SRCMA and using Doug and Luke's expertise free of charge. With some strategic input from past and present board members and the interim LLS, MFS has secured substantial funding and is well on the way to delivering improved communication whilst not losing sight of our original goal "To deliver timely and relevant information on productive agriculture".

In order to secure the funding MFS has taken on a role of productive farm practice extension for the wider Monaro. In Dec when the current member subscription expires there will be two tiers. The current member level will reduce to \$350 plus GST and there will be a new, free level introduced that will be able to gain limited access to our services. With the increased complexity, the board has begun the process of improving our communication. This will be based around a website that I am excited about as it will allow easier two

way communication, video recorded events, easy access to project details and targeted emails as well as making us look more professional to external parties.

Another exciting development that has been secured for the coming year is member access to the Mecardo market analysis website. This is the brainchild of Robert Herman and gives excellent price advice on all rural commodities, specialising in livestock and wool. MFS residual funds will cover the subscription fee for the first year to give members a chance to judge for themselves the value to their business. After this we envisage it will be on a user paid basis but at a reduced subscription because of a discount to MFS.

My top picks of our ongoing projects that are providing profitable and productive decision support are the GrassGro® Seasonal Outlooks, the Wether Trial and Soils Club.

-The Seasonal Outlooks will continue to be run by Doug in his new private capacity. GrassGro® has gained further accuracy with Mecardo being used for the economic inputs and with the BOM moving to a dynamic outlook model we can hope for an increase in their accuracy.

-October is the second shearing for the wether trial and this means we will be able to extrapolate on the information as most of the environmental conditions have evened out. I am looking forward to Doug putting the numbers through GrassGro® to examine the profitability of wool genetics.

-Nancy has been working with Richard Simpson to get a data base of the past soil tests organised. This will allow us to give members a paddock by paddock prescription and a powerful overview of Monaro fertility trends.

Thank you to the members for your support and input throughout the year and I look forward to a prosperous 2013-14.



Oliver Cay



Standard Profit & Loss – July 2012 to June 2013

June 2012

	Income		Notes
116,507	Government Grants	76,912.00	1
25,000	SRCMA Support	25,000.00	2
18,585.45	Membership	22,040.00	3
4,643.79	Other Industry Grants	15,900.00	4
12,909.09	Sponsorship	7,000.00	5
6,566.90	Wool Sales	0.00	
	4-0200 · Bank Intrest	1,815.43	
2,710	4-0400 · Reimbursed Expenses	4,877.26	6
186,922.23	Total Income	153,544.69	
	Expense		
3,232.23	Advertising	3,024.48	
883.95	Board Meetings (teleconference)	0.00	
1,209.11	Catering	5,587.91	
1,000	Charitable Donation	1,000.00	7
87,407.69	Contract Work	132,331.79	8
4,458.91	Materials / Capital Items	9,257.34	9
	Office Operating Costs		
572.3	Internet	779.11	
1,405.34	Phone	717.14	
516.69	Postage	651.24	
356.55	Stationery	478.46	
188.73	Other		
3,039.61	Total Office Operating Costs	2,625.95	
912	Office rent	312.00	
224.54	Sundry	324.52	
4,704.44	Training	3,014.89	10
6,348.54	Travel, Accommodation & Meals	11,166.62	11
33,465.68	wages	29,473.22	
146,886.70	Total Expense	198,118.72	
40,035.53	Net Income	-44,574.03	

Balance Sheet – July 2012 to June 2013

June 30, 2012

ASSETS		
	Current Assets	
	Chequing/Savings	
64,295.00	Action on Ground Project	2,412.30
92,461.85	Monaro Farming Systems Inc	-7,730.89
	NAB Business Cash Maximiser	33,005.43
	NAB TERM DEPOSIT	81,310.00
<u>156,756.85</u>	Total Chequing/Savings	<u>108,996.84</u>
156,756.85	Total Current Assets	108,996.84
	Fixed Assets	
1375.63	Computer	1,375.63
<u>1375.63</u>	Total Fixed Assets	<u>1,375.63</u>
<u>158,132.48</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>110,372.47</u>
LIABILITIES		
	Current Liabilities	
	Other Current Liabilities	
-2306.43	GST Payable	-5,492.41
<u>-2306.43</u>	Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>-5,492.41</u>
<u>-2306.43</u>	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>-5,492.41</u>
<u>160,438.91</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>115,864.88</u>
EQUITY		
120,403.48	30000 · Opening Bal Equity	160,438.91
40,035.43	Net Income	-44,574.03
<u>160,438.91</u>	TOTAL EQUITY	<u>115,864.88</u>

Financial Report Notes

- Note 1:** Evergraze Perennial Pasture Trials \$17,005, DAFF - Soil Carbon Project 2nd Installment \$49,907 & 3rd Installment \$10,000
- Note 2:** In addition the SRCMA Ag & MFS Partnership Agreement (1st July 2013 to 30th Sept 2014) includes a total payment of \$84,230 (GST excl.);
- \$31,237 paid 3rd July 2013
 - \$35,000 payable 9th Dec 2013
 - \$19,230 payable 30th May 2014
- Note 3:** Includes 49 farm business memberships
- Note 4:** Woolworths / Landcare Soil Club \$14,580, MLA PDS Lean Meat Yield Project \$1,320
- Note 5:** Incitec \$4000, LambPro \$1000, Commonwealth Bank \$1000, GLW \$1000 (NAB \$1000 paid July 2013)
- Note 6:** Member soil tests over allocation \$1,320, Incitec soil test subsidy \$3,180, travel reimbursement (Jake Goodlock) \$373
- Note 7:** 2nd installment to Monaro Education Foundation (MEF) (total \$3,000 paid over three years)
- Note 8:** \$97,000 soil analysis & reporting (MFS Action on Ground (AoG) Soil Carbon Project)
\$5,399 Richard Simpson / CSIRO technical advice for Soil Club & data base formation
\$20,682 soil testing for Soil Club & MLA PDS Project
\$5,584 Mike Stephens professional advice for traineeship program, financial management, corporate governance
- Note 9:** \$8,651 weather stations (MFS AoG Soil Carbon Project), \$272 pocket knives for 2012 MFS trainees, \$200 four bags MoP for MLA PDS Fertiliser Project
- Note 10:** Training allocation for MFS Project Officer & QuickBooks training & advice
- Note 11:** Travel costs for MFS Project Officer to manage project base, travel and accommodation costs for 2012 trainees, Mike Stephens travel & accommodation costs for MFS activities

Out of a total bank balance at the 13th August 2013 of \$147,395 (\$10,288 main operating account, \$2,412 Action on Ground account, \$53,385 cash maximiser account, \$81,310 term deposit) we have approx. \$30,000 already committed to specific projects leaving a balance of approx. \$117,395 in the operating budget.

Project Reports

MFS Project 08-1 - Grass Gro – Seasonal Outlooks

Project Leader: David Mitchell / Oliver Cay

Project Manager: Nancy Spoljaric

Project Collaborators: Doug Alcock (Graz Prophet Consulting)

Project Funders: MFS

Project Story

Grazing systems are very complex and due to variable economic conditions and climate it is very difficult for producers, land managers and advisors to accurately predict the impact of management changes without the use of simulation modeling.

GrassGro® is such a powerful tool which can be used to examine strategic decisions on farming systems or to look at the effect of anticipated weather conditions within a growing season. It provides powerful facility for analysing risk (climatic, economic and environmental) over both the short and long term.

This project aimed to use the decision support system (DSS) GrassGro® developed by CSIRO to assist producers to manage climate variability.

MFS initially trained a group of their members (16) in how to use GrassGro® with the future aim being that these farmers would share the results of their modeling with their peers. This group formed a “core group” of 8-10 members who persevered with the mentoring assistance of Doug Alcock to develop “farm systems” for their own individual farm enterprises. These validated “farm systems” were used as examples in future presentations given by Doug Alcock when delivering “seasonal outlooks” for the Monaro.

Doug has also used GrassGro® to analyse results of other MFS Projects such as the Evergraze Pasture Trials and MFS Wether Trial and deliver comprehensive reports and presentations.

A survey of MFS members was conducted to evaluate the success of the project. The results of the survey showed that the farmers thought that the project was a success with all farmers wanting to receive the seasonal outlooks in the future with a minority prepared to pay for this information. Two farmers had changed their management as a result of the project and one said that this financially was a benefit of \$50,000.

NSW DPI also indicated it intends to expand the “seasonal outlook” concept for various parts of NSW based on the quality of information that had been presented in this project to MFS members by Doug Alcock.

Project Aims and Future for GrassGro® modeling

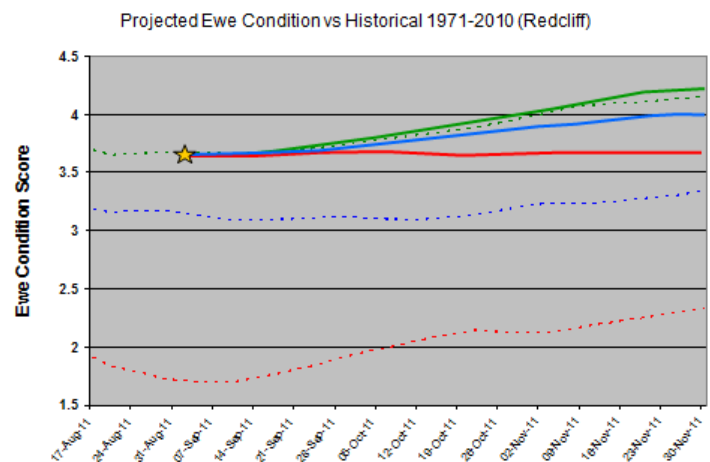
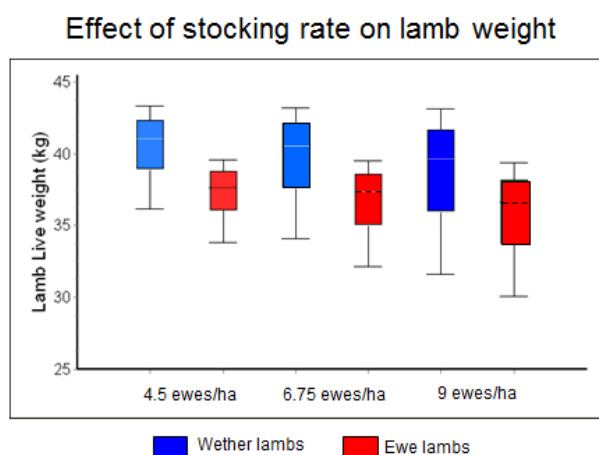
The MFS Board agreed that although Project Funds allocated to GrassGro® activities had been expended, it would be counterproductive and disappointing to stop work in this area given all the investment into

GrassGro® by MFS members and others such as Doug Alcock and Stuart Burge over the previous three years.

Therefore MFS has now entered into a contractual arrangement with Doug to continue presenting “seasonal outlooks” at strategic decision making times of the year. These will include three annual tactical projections per year, each with a written report and one with a presentation at an MFS event.

GrassGro® analysis will continue to be firmly integrated into the majority of our project reporting especially in the area of enterprise analysis, seasonal outlooks and the wether trial. Coupled with the *Mecardo* market analysis data input, this will ensure our evaluation / outcome reporting is of the highest accuracy and quality.

Examples of GrassGro® generated graphics....



Doug Alcock presenting a GrassGro outlook to MFS members

Nancy Spoljaric - Co-Project Manager

MFS Project 10-6 Monaro Farming Systems Genetic Comparison Trial

Project Leader: Alan McGufficke

Project Manager: Nancy Spoljaric

Project Funder: MFS with support from Gordon Litchfield Wool (initial support from Jemalong)

Project Collaborators: Rowan Wright, Doug Alcock & Luke Pope (NSW DPI), Phil Graham (NSW DPI)

The 1st even-up shearing for the MFS merino genetic comparison took place on the 17th October 2011 at “Knockalong”, Tombong.

24 teams delivered 15 wethers per team to “Knockalong” for the “even-up” shearing. The teams included seven (7) from the Yass, Bookham, Crookwell region, and seventeen (17) teams originating from the Nimitabel, Bombala, Jindabyne, Cooma, Bungarby, Berridale and Jerangle regions.

These trials are designed to demonstrate the genetic variation to the participants and the wider sheep industry. It shows genetic variations that exist between our merino flocks which can lead to substantial differences in financial returns.

The trial runs for three years and **objectives** include evaluation of economic performance measuring traits including FD, GFW, yield, bodyweight, condition / fat score and carcass yield over a three year period. The 1st shearing took place on **October the 16th 2012** and the 2nd shearing is scheduled for the 14th October 2013 (all wethers will be mid-side sampled on the 11th of September 2013).

The second instalment of \$1000 was donated this year to the local charity, the Monaro Education Foundation (MEF) (total of \$3,000 over a three year period).

Comments from Alan McGufficke (Project Leader)

It was pleasing to note in the 2013 MFS Survey that members had evaluated the information from the MFS Wether Trial and some had changed direction with their Merino genetics as a result of information generated from this Wether trial and others across the State.

It is a credit to Rowan Wright for the management of these sheep with very minimal losses.

Thanks to Doug Alcock and Phil Graham DPI for their invaluable contribution to the Wether Trial.

Thank you to Gordon and Sam of Gordon Litchfield Wool and staff for their enthusiastic continued assistance and support with the Wether Trial.

We also appreciate the assistance from those people who have assisted with mid side sampling and shearing for 2012. And not to mention, our dedicated office support - Nancy.

Alan McGufficke

Photos of the 2012 shearing.....



Yearly Averages Summary 2012

Ranked By Average Wool Value

Rank	Team	Entrant	No. of Wethers	Greasy Wool Wt.	Micron	Schlum. Yield	Clean Wool Wt.	Clean Price	Fleece Rot.	Wool Value
S 1	29	Tallawong Past. Co.	15	5.3	15.8	77.4	4.0	1980	0.71	\$76.77
S 2	12	Bellvue	15	5.6	16.2	76.3	4.2	1856	0.33	\$75.00
S 3	11	Greendale	15	5.3	15.9	73.5	3.9	1933	0.33	\$72.15
4	21	Mayfield Partnership	15	5.4	16.0	74.4	4.0	1854	0.73	\$71.57
5	6	Anunka	15	5.1	16.1	76.1	3.8	1920	0.33	\$70.73
S 6	2	Cunningham Plains	15	6.0	16.8	73.9	4.4	1618	2.13	\$68.55
7	14	Dungaree Pastoral Co	15	6.0	16.9	73.1	4.3	1609	0.53	\$67.50
8	19	Athlone	14	6.1	16.8	71.0	4.3	1637	0.79	\$67.24
9	25	Curry Flat	15	6.0	17.1	74.8	4.4	1560	0.80	\$66.77
10	7	Gaerloch	15	5.0	16.2	73.1	3.6	1860	0.60	\$64.26
11	13	Pineleigh	15	4.9	16.1	74.0	3.5	1879	0.60	\$64.17
12	16	Woodstock	15	6.3	17.8	73.3	4.5	1455	2.13	\$63.73
13	26	Buckley	15	5.7	16.9	72.7	4.0	1637	1.00	\$63.48
14	17	Werralong	15	6.1	17.5	72.9	4.3	1495	0.73	\$63.00
S 15	1	Grogansworth	15	5.7	17.4	75.1	4.2	1531	2.53	\$62.61
16	20	Coolringdon	15	5.7	16.9	73.4	4.1	1584	0.57	\$62.39
S 17	18	Muniong	15	5.6	17.0	74.0	4.1	1578	1.33	\$62.32
18	4	Bertangles	14	5.2	16.7	74.5	3.8	1685	0.36	\$62.05
S 19	28	Grogansworth	15	5.5	17.4	77.6	4.2	1508	2.73	\$61.50
S 20	22	Merambego	14	4.8	16.4	74.2	3.5	1807	0.20	\$60.12
21	15	Jerangle	15	4.9	16.2	70.9	3.4	1802	0.60	\$58.90
S 22	10	Sherwood	15	4.6	17.4	76.1	3.4	1529	0.87	\$53.04
23	27	Culley	15	5.5	18.8	74.5	4.0	1348	2.40	\$52.52
24	24	Old Springfield	15	4.8	17.5	75.2	3.5	1476	1.13	\$50.58
Averages				5.5	16.8	74.2	4.0	1672	1.03	\$64.21



Oli Cay, Phil Graham, Doug Alcock and John Murdoch assist with the mid-side sampling Sept. 2012

MFS Project 10-7 -**Soil Club – whole farm soil fertility management**

Project Leader: Ron Horton

Project Manager: Nancy Spoljaric

Project Funder: MLA – Producer Demonstration Site, Woolworths / Landcare Australia

Project Collaborators: Richard Simpson (CSIRO), Luke Pope (formerly NSW I&I, Elders), Andrew Speirs and Paul Talay (MS&A), Jim and Vicki Haylock, Bill and Sue Stephens and Dean and Anne Campbell

Background

The Monaro has contrasting soil types which differ substantially in their intrinsic fertility and fertiliser requirements.

MFS initiated a “Soil Club” in Oct 2010 to provide support for producers to start to critically analyse their soil fertility profiles and build a whole farm soil fertility management plan which facilitates better targeting of phosphorus (P) and sulphur (S) applications to underpin sustainable increases in stocking rates.

Bulk Soil Testing Program and presentations from Dr Richard Simpson (CSIRO)

2013 will be the fourth year of an annual bulk soil testing program which aims to build on a data base of 822 Monaro soil tests and paddock histories.

It is hoped that this year MFS with Richard’s assistance can move towards using the data base to generate “paddock history reports” for individual paddocks over the previous three years, summarising nutrient profiles to help producers program their fertiliser applications to actual targets for each paddock.

Results**Conclusions from 2010-2012 data:****Basalt soils**

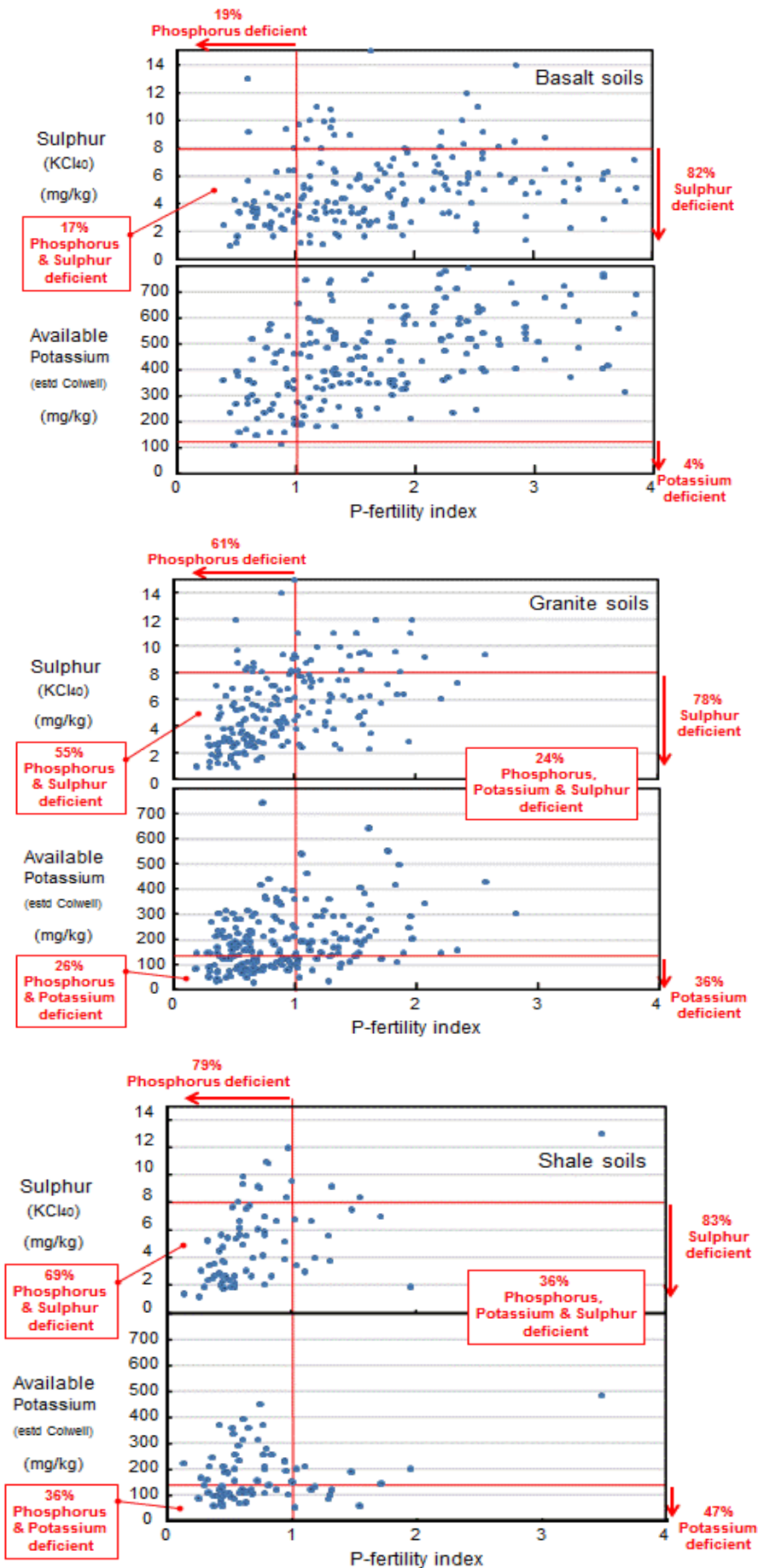
19% below optimum for P
82% below optimum for S } 17% P & S deficient
Adequate to high K levels

Granite soils

61% below optimum for P
78% below optimum for S } 55% P & S deficient
26% below optimum for K } 24% P, K & S deficient
Some soils may benefit from lime

Shale soils

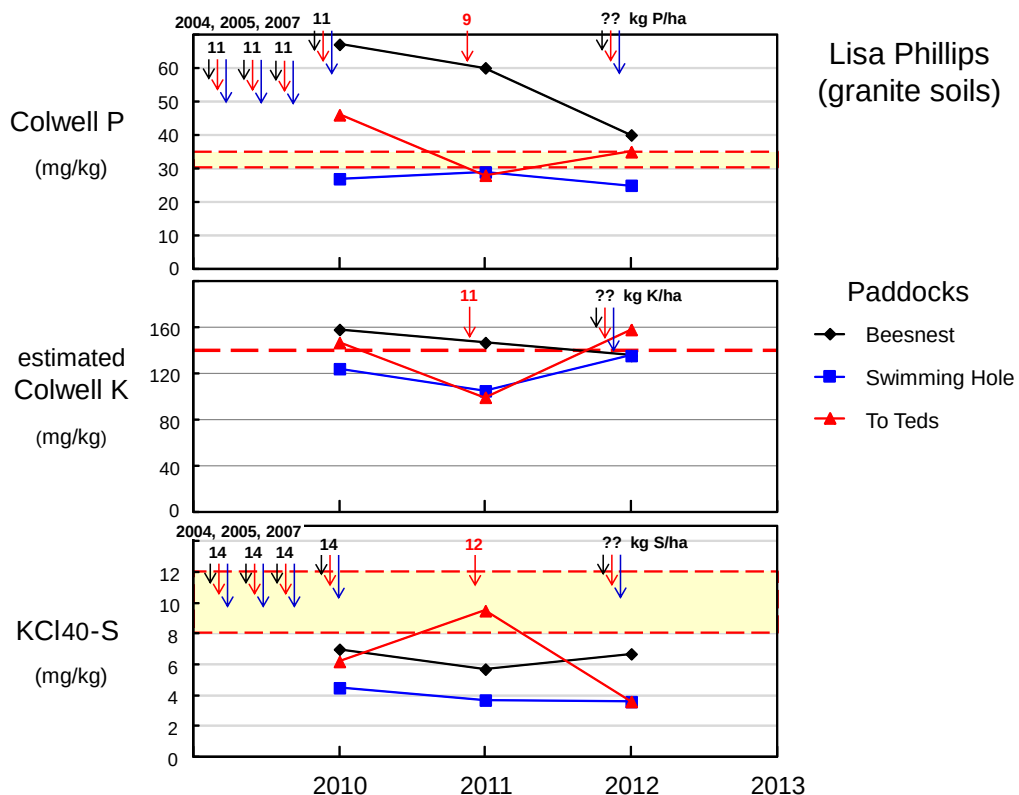
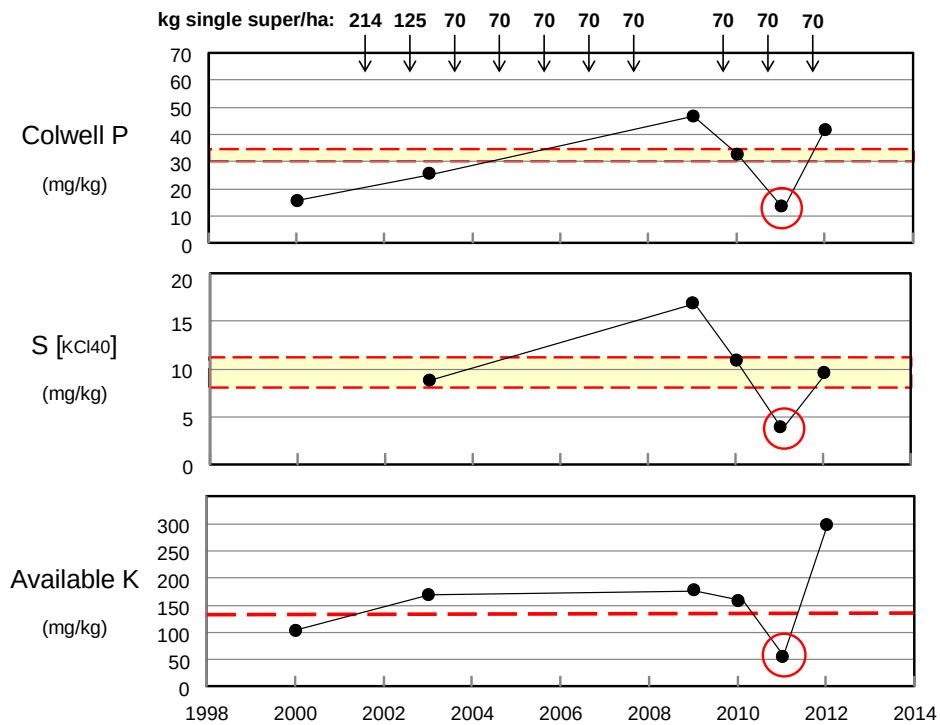
79% below optimum for P
83% below optimum for S } 69% P & S deficient
47% below optimum for K } 36% P, K & S deficient
Some soils may benefit from lime



Example of paddock history reports tracking nutrient profiles of P, S and K.

Paddock soil fertility trends

Dave Mitchell
Gambola paddock (granite soil)



Aim

1. Establish paddock trials on three soil types (granite, basalt and shale) to (i) investigate the impact of optimising S, P and K management on legume persistence and overall pasture production, and (ii) examine the use of alternative Sulfur fertiliser types to improve S retention in top soils.

Three trial sites;

- ❖ “Terrick Terrick” – Haylock – **Basalt Site** – Soil Deficiencies Identified – S only
- ❖ “Rye 1” – Campbell – **Shale Site** - Soil Deficiencies Identified – S and P
- ❖ “Swinglebar Super” – Stephens – **Granite Site** - Soil Deficiencies Identified – S,P and K (add Mo)

Activities to date.....

Main Trial

- ❖ 1 ha trial sites on three soil types (basalt, shale and granite) were established in Oct 2011 based on “deficient paddock” soil tests taken as part of the 2010 Soil Club testing program. Appropriate rates and types of fertiliser were sown on each site in Oct 2011 based on agronomic advice to start the process of correcting the soil deficiencies and measuring the resulting pasture response.
- ❖ Over the previous two years, soil tests (0-10cm) have been collected approx. every 6 months from both the 1 ha trial site and outside this area ie. the control area.
- ❖ Pasture biomass cuts have also been collected from the granite and shale sites and dried and weighed to measure any response differences in pasture growth. The prevalence of native tussock at the basalt site has made collection of accurate biomass cuts impossible so in this case pasture composition estimates have been taken.

S Trial

- ❖ At the same sites, an **S Trial** was also fenced off, to trial up to 7 different types of alternative S fertilisers in smaller plots replicated 3 times. The S fertilisers being trialed include **Tiger90CR, Brimstone 90 Sulphur, triple super phosphate, single super phosphate, Superfect26S and Granulock S** at different rates and in various combinations
- ❖ Approx. every six months, soil tests have been collected to a depth of 30cm in 0-10cm increments (0-10cm, 10-20cm, 20-30cm) to look at the S retention in the soil profile. Their efficacy will be examined primarily by periodic measurement of the S concentrations in the soil profile (ie. 10cm, 20cm, 30cm). This will monitor movement of S over time and the retention properties of the different forms of S ie. elemental sulphur and sulphate.
- ❖ Biomass cuts have been conducted periodically at the granite and shale sites to look at any differences in pasture growth between treatments.

Observations to date...

- ❖ Andrew Speirs (advising agronomist) reports that the sulphur levels in the soil analysis results shows sulphur movement through the soil profile to be as expected and consistent with the physical form of sulphur treatment applied.

- ❖ Significant differences in treatments cannot be validated until the statistical analysis is performed which will be done when a full data set of results has been collated (end of Sept 2013).
- ❖ The Final Report is due Dec 2013 and will summarise the main findings for this trial over the previous two years including any statistically significant differences in treatment.
- ❖ MFS has invited Lee Menhenett (technical agronomist - Incitec Pivot) to attend the upcoming Soil Club field day on the 28th of November 2013 to discuss the different types of S fertiliser products currently on the market and what products would be most suitable to use specifically in relation to the Monaro soil test deficiencies identified.

Legume Trial

- ❖ 3 annual legumes sown in May 2011 into all three sites which included;
 - Prima Gland Clover (6kg/ha)
 - Antas Sub Clover (4kg/ha)
 - Scimitar Burr Medic (3kg/ha)

Establishment counts

Establishment counts have been done at all 3 sites and were as follows.

Basalt site

	Av plants / m	Plants / sq m
Scimitar	3.9	22.29
Antas	0.6	3.43
Prima Gland	4.7	26.86

Granite site

	Av plants / m	plants / sq m
Scimitar	0.9	5.14
Antas	0.3	1.71
Prima Gland	1.8	10.29

Shale site

	Av plants / m	plants / sq m
Scimitar	4.9	28
Antas	4.6	26.29
Prima Gland	3.3	18.86

Comments on Soil Club from Ron Horton (Project Leader)...

Soil Club members will be offered up to five free soil tests this year. The results from these will be added to the last three years and continue to grow the picture across a wide range of soils on the Monaro. The MLA PDS plots will be wrapped up at the end of this year. A comprehensive report will be compiled by Nancy, and available to all. The Soil Club presentation will be held on the 28th November, with Dr Richard Simpson, who will again analyse soil test results and we are expecting to get "Lee Menhenett" from Incitec Pivot to talk about sulphur deficiency on the Monaro specifically addressing S fertiliser products on the market.

MFS Project 11-10**MFS Agricultural Traineeships Initiative (on-going)**

Project Leaders: Craig and Susan Mitchell

Project Collaborators: AUSWIDE, Jillian Atkinson (TAFE), Phil Graham, Mike Stephens, Oli Cay, Charlie Maslin and Nancy Spoljaric

Project Funder: MFS, Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI), AUSWIDE (Government traineeship incentives), RB Sellars

Thanks to a promising show of support from MFS members for this initiative, Monaro Farming Systems again was able to offer two, full-time, paid traineeships to school leavers in 2012. The two successful trainees included Alec Boyd (Sydney) and Kristy Wassink (Cooma). This year we trialed some changes to the way the program was run in 2012 ie. moved away from an employment provider (like AUSWIDE) and the trainees were employed on an individual basis by each farm business.

MFS has experienced a few challenges this year and certainly learnt a lot about how to run successful traineeship programs. MFS has received some excellent professional advice from both Boyce and MSA (Mike Stephens & Associates) which will help ensure the program will be run efficiently next year.

It is likely the program will move back towards a "formal traineeship" which will include running the program through an "employment provider" like AUSWIDE. This then requires a compulsory TAFE course to be completed, professional inductions, contracts and employment agreements for both the employer and the employee and incentive eligibility for both TAFE and MFS.

MFS will ensure the interview process is rigorous and an initial probation period of three months is adhered to as well as implementing weekly feedback forms and formalising commitment ahead of time from host employers.

Thank you to Boyce (Gabrielle, Karen and Jono) who have provided meeting rooms, conducted presentations & provided professional advice on HR management & also to Mike Stephens who has provided professional advice in this area.

Thank you to RB Sellars who have donated clothing again for both Alec and Kristy to a value of \$1000.

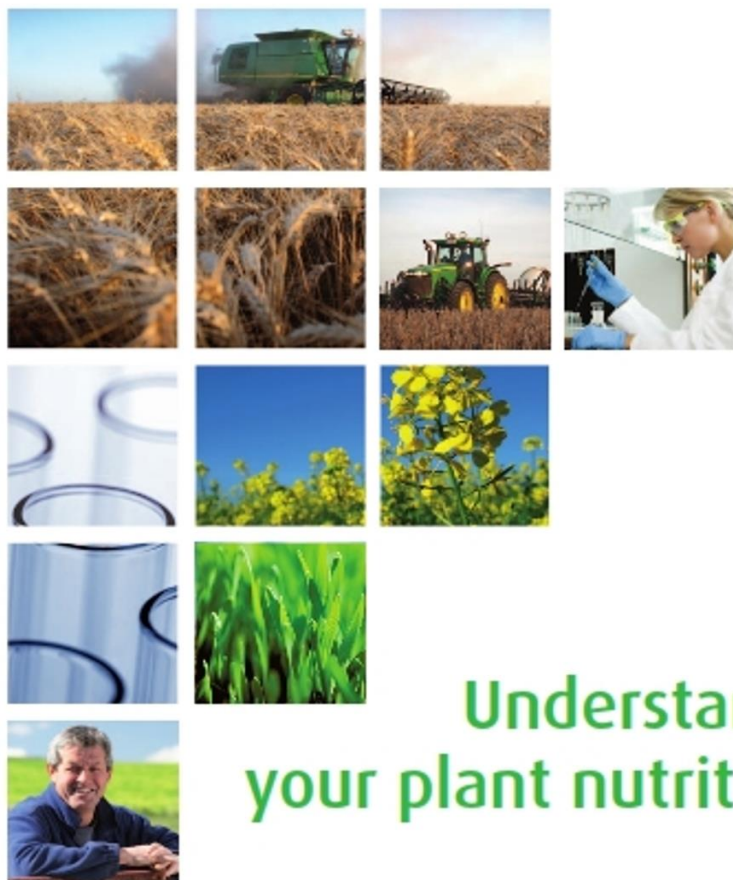
Thank you also to Craig and Susan Mitchell who have again put a huge amount of time and effort into this program as well as Oli Cay, Denham Williams and Craig Mitchell who conducted the initial interviews. Thank you also to Angus Hobson who has provided a cottage for Alec to rent.

Comments from Craig Mitchell (Project Leader)

Thanks to all the trainers for the time and effort that they have put into our two trainees this year. We realise that it is not always easy to have a young pup about, but MFS and I'm sure the trainees, appreciate your efforts.

MFS has decided to form a committee to organise the trainee program. This committee will manage the selection of trainees and specific details of their employment. They will be having their first meeting after the AGM.

If there are any other members of MFS who would like to become employers, please let Nancy know. The more it is spread around, the better. Also, the general consensus from this year's employers seems to be that we should go back to a group employer, as this year's system placed too much responsibility on the individual employers. The final decision about this will be with the new committee, but if you have any strong ideas about the system of employment please let us know.



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AUGUST 2012

MFS Project 12-11 Monaro farm management strategies and their effects on soil carbon

Project Leaders: Charlie Reynolds / MFS

Project Manager Nancy Spoljaric

Project Collaborators: NSW DPI (Susan Orgill, Rob Smith), Doug Alcock (Graz Prophet consulting), Luke Pope (Elders), Sydney University (Lachlan Ingram), SRCMA (Brett Miners, Tim Fletcher), MFS members

Project Funder: DAFF (Dept. Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Carbon Farming Futures - Action on the Ground Program)

Background

MFS secured \$276,989 through the Dept. Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) “Action on the Ground” Program for a three year Project to measure soil carbon under different land use systems.

The following systems are being compared in terms of soil carbon levels and potential changes, nutrient profiles, grazing practices and gross margins;

1. **Pine** plantation versus **improved pasture** versus **cropping** - Delegate Station
2. **Cropping** versus **native** pasture - Delegate Station & Corrowong
3. **High fertiliser** native pasture versus **low fertiliser** native pasture - Idaho, Bungarby
4. **Limed** improved pasture versus un-limed – Springvale, Mila
5. **Aspect**, west versus east facing slope — Quinburra, Craigie
6. **Pasture Age**, 40yr old versus 5yr old phalaris pasture – Sth Bukalong, Bombala

Variograms at five of the sites will also be done which will measure spatial variation of carbon across a paddock demonstrating the inconsistency and unpredictability of soil carbon levels within a small sampling area.

Weather stations have been installed at the aspect sites (east and west slope) and a third site to measure differences in Max and Min temp., daily rainfall totals, relative humidity, and solar radiation (Wm^2), wind speed & direction, soil moisture and temperature.



Questions the project will address

1. How does land management affect carbon stocks in the Monaro region?
2. Does minimum disturbance cropping influence carbon stocks over a 3 year period?
3. What is the effect of “parent material” ie. shale, deep granite and basalt (ascending texture, fertility and structure) on carbon stocks in the Monaro region?
4. What influence does “aspect” have on carbon stocks in a system with optimum sequestration potential ie. fertilised, permanent, perennial pasture system?
5. Does liming improved pasture increase C sequestration?
6. What effect does soil fertility have on C stocks in the Monaro region? Support current research work that suggests fertility has a significant effect on C sequestration potential of soils.
7. What effect does pasture age have on the potential of a phalaris perennial pasture to sequester carbon, does age create a “ceiling” on sequestration potentials?

Project Objectives

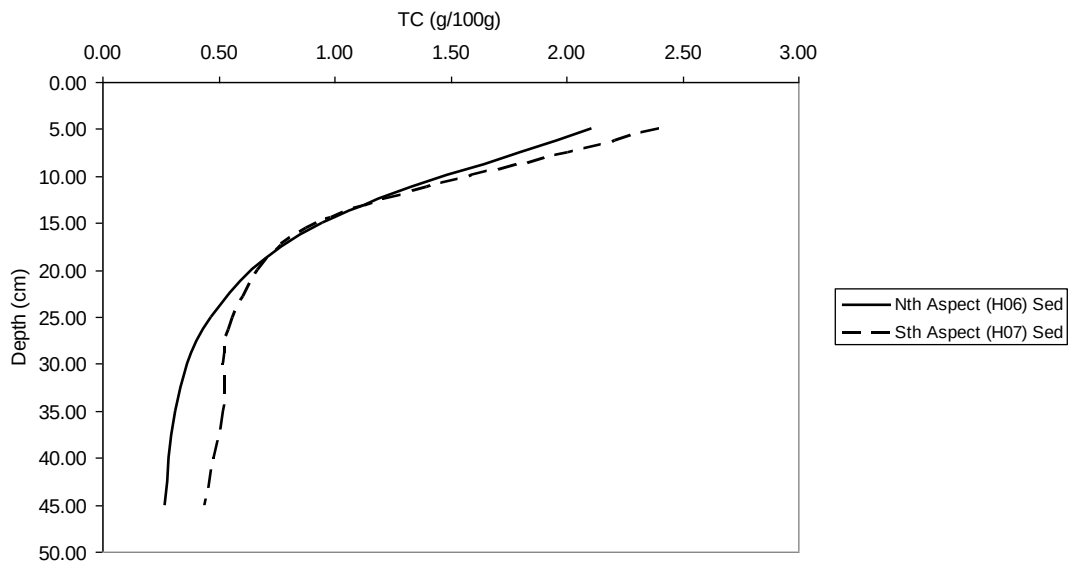
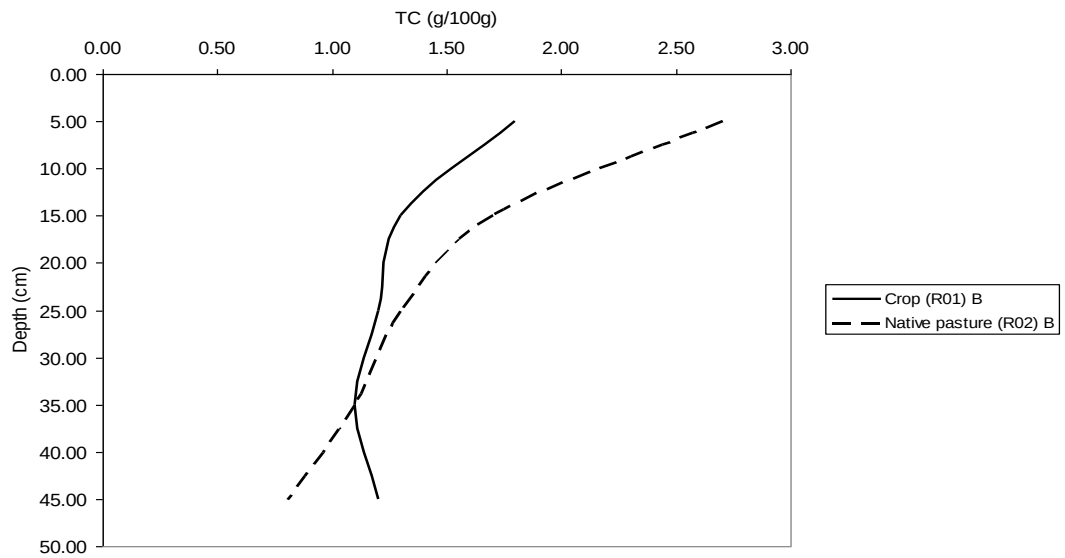
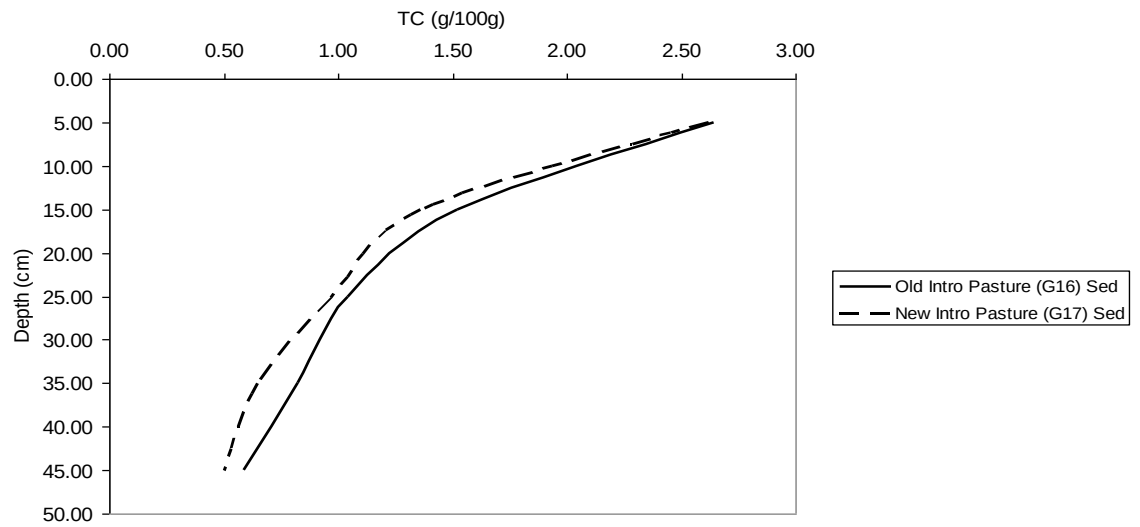
- develop soil carbon data base
- compare the influence of soil type, rainfall and land management on carbon stocks
- assess spatial carbon variation at a paddock scale for three soil types
- model changes in soil carbon pool structure for both the lifetime of the project (3 years) and predictions over much longer time frames using the Roth C model for all land use systems being compared
- model soil carbon profiles and predicted pasture systems under all land-use comparisons using GrassGro® software
- develop fact sheet on project outcomes and co-author peer reviewed paper for publication
- host field day with key speakers

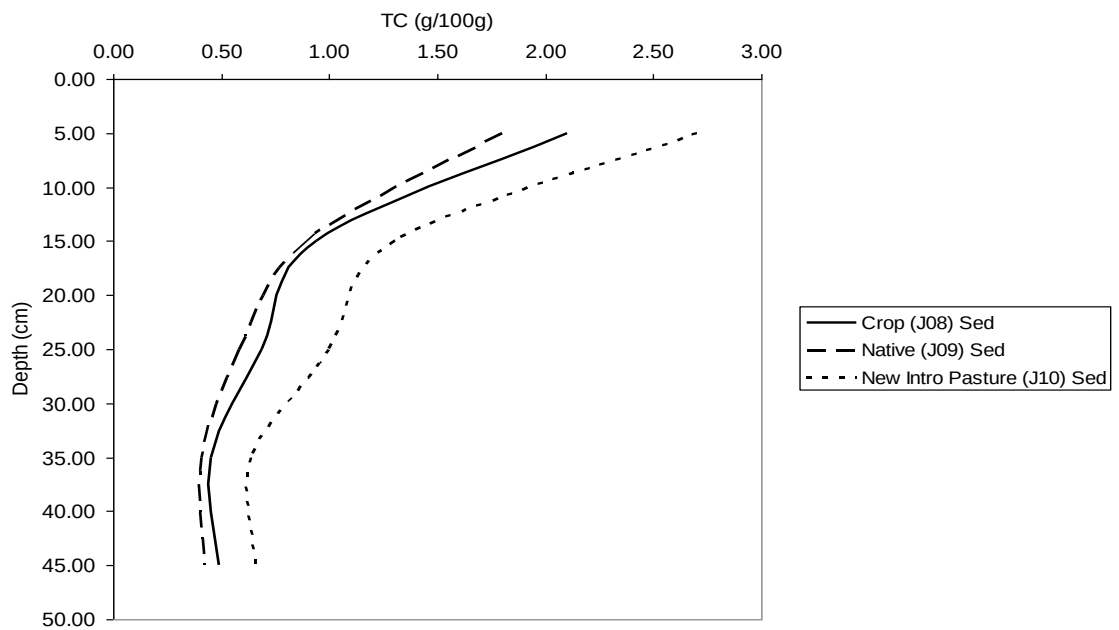
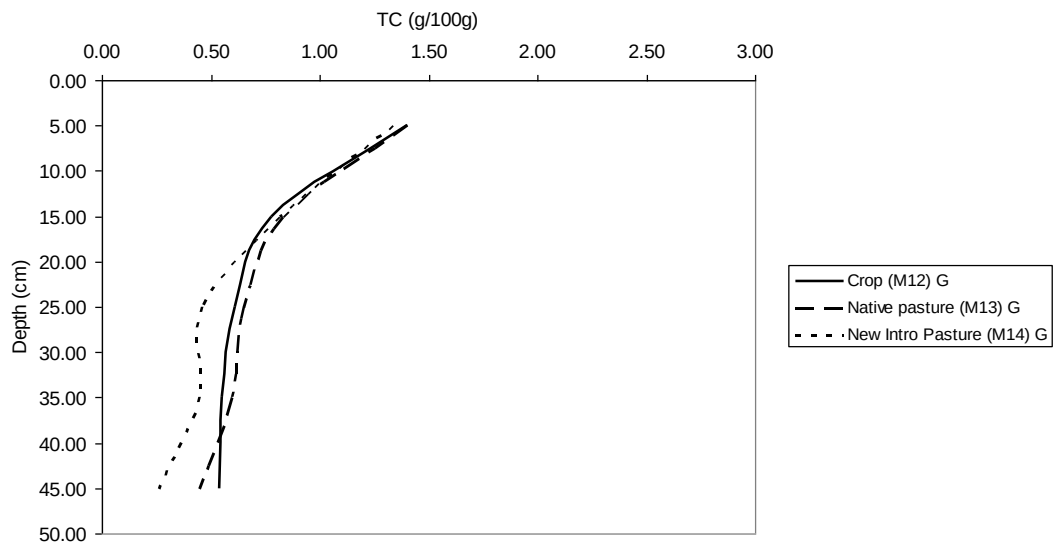
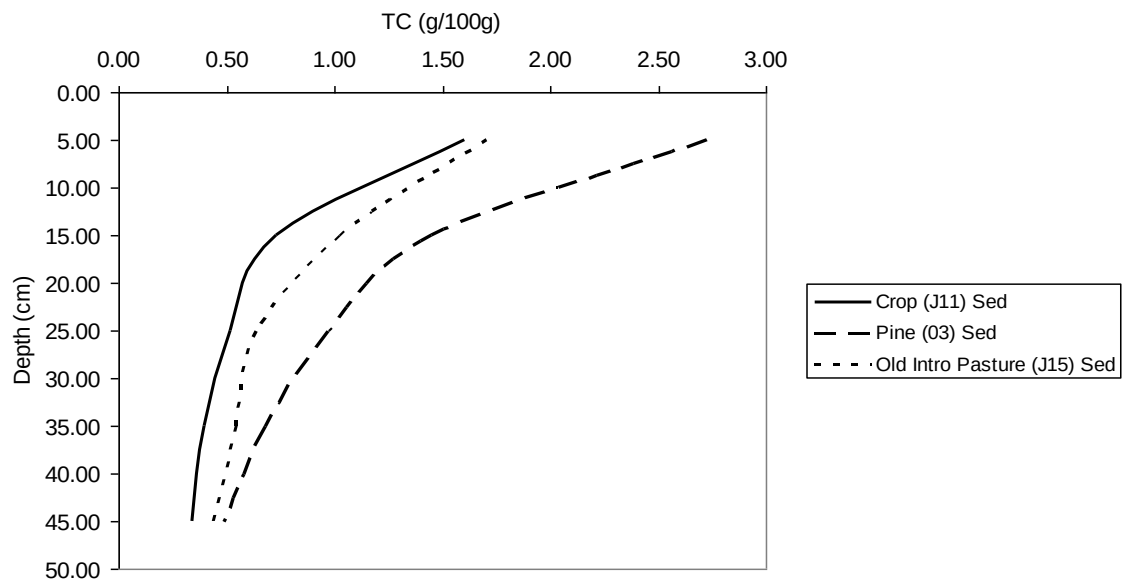


Results from 1st testing Oct 2012

Site ID	C stock (t/ha to 30cm)	C stock (t/ha to 50cm)
Lime (H04) G	46.9	62.8
No lime (H05) G	52.8	66.7
Nth Aspect (H06) Sed	47.3	56.4
Sth Aspect (H07) Sed	45.7	55.6
Old Intro Pasture (G16) Sed	73.6	96.6
New Intro Pasture (G17) Sed	75.2	92.7
Crop (R01) B	46.8	72.4
Native pasture (R02) B	61.3	82.5
Crop (J11) Sed	42.7	54.6
Pine (03) Sed	67.2	85.7
Old Intro Pasture (J15) Sed	45.2	60.2
Crop (M12) G	41.4	58.1
Native pasture (M13) G	41.4	58.5
New Intro Pasture (M14) G	39.5	51.5
Crop (J08) Sed	52.1	68.0
Native (J09) Sed	46.5	60.6
New Intro Pasture (J10) Sed	70.3	90.1

Soil carbon profiles (TC g/100g)





Preliminary Findings

- Strong positive correlation between C and N at all sites and depths and to some extent with P and S (within some parent material classes)
- Majority of the variation in carbon concentration and stock in the surface 20cm
- Little difference with aspect, lime and pasture age
- Highest carbon stocks for perennials (pastures and the pines)
- Good seasons preceding sampling may be masking treatment comparisons
- Need to remember that this is a point in time sampling, T2 results will help with comparisons

Take Home messages

- What we can't manage:
 - Parent material and climate major drivers of carbon
- What we can manage
 - Soil nutrients, specifically N and S. But, this may come at a substantial cost...
 - Grazing to maximise plant growth, groundcover and organic matter supply
- Any rapid gains in carbon can generally be lost just as rapidly
- There are on-farm productivity and environmental benefits of organic matter in soil



MFS 2013 Member Survey – Summary Report

Q1 Do you support in principle the “new direction proposal for MFS?”

82.35% YES
0.00% NO
17.65% UNSURE

Comments

- Yes but you could be creating a monster, while your proactive approach it great, would it be better to wait and see what service LLS is offering?
- Sounds an excellent development. But locally applicable research and info delivery needs to remain a focus. Be careful of "by default" control by government. Be careful of the delivery contracts back to government.
- Probably no change in active participants (ie active people already members), however in public eye viewed as much larger organisation to attract funds, etc. need to ensure production direction of MFS maintained.
- This should be an exciting development and can only broaden the scope of MFS activities.

Q2 Are you happy with the current level of MFS service to members?

93.75% YES
6.25% NO

Comments

- Well I can't say no since I regrettably fail to attend most activities. You get out what you put in.
- Good objective sound topics.
- I do look forward to the comprehensive website and improved communications so I can access information at my convenience as I find it difficult to attend face to face presentations.
- A broad range of projects and excellent speakers.

Q3 Please rate the following services MFS provides;

	Poor	Fair	Good
MFS Newsletters	0	31%	69%
Email notifications & content	0	18%	82%
MFS traineeship program	0	43%	57%

Comments

- Traineeship working well. Newsletters are informative and easy to read. Emails usually important for reminders and info on upcoming field-days but there is industry information passed on that I tend to get from a few different sources, perhaps this could be better accessed through the website?
- I do battle with information overload - battle to keep abreast of what you young guns are up to.
- The traineeship program is a good idea just difficult by its nature to get correct.
- Perhaps make trainee program back to one (1) however user members would have to treat this labour as purely for trainee purposes rather than reliance for active on farm work.
- Have not been involved but it is a great idea.
- I haven't been involved in the trainee program, but the trainees spoke highly of it.

Q4 What would you like to gain / access from the proposed MFS Website?

- Calender of events, access to news / research of interest to members, history and industry information.
- Any research results or suggested trial work done by MFS or other relevant trial work. Also simple links to useful websites such as weather / Wormboss.
- A library of past results and information or links to such things eg past presentations etc. that would be good to have access to. Also contact details of people involved in the major projects.
- MFS content plus easy to use links to Monaro applicable global research etc. would be excellent. Whereby MFS could sort this info before posting.
- Research results, field day information (ie if you can't make it). Other related research.
- Events, research results, link to other useful sites.
- GrassGro®, climatic predictions, new innovative ideas.
- Up to date seasonal outlooks.
- Access to all current and past projects.
- Links to information that may be relevant to my business - The opportunity to feel more involved in MFS.
- Information and links to other relevant info and statistical data.
- Concise summary information on all projects including third party variety trials both current and archive, decile information on rainfall and pasture growth, market trends etc.
- GrassGro® forecasts, analysis and research updates.

Q5 Of the field days / projects listed below, please indicate if you have changed any aspects of your farm business as a result of attending or participating?

	No change	Change in thinking / attitude only	Actual practice change on-farm
Enterprise Comparison Field Day June 4th 2013 (D Alcock)	33%	58%	9%
Carbon Day Out 2 (Ross Garnaut / Mick Keogh)	58%	42%	0%
DAFF Soil Carbon Project (on-going)	18%	73%	9%
GrassGro® Seasonal Outlooks (D Alcock)	15%	69%	16%
GrassGro® Farm Ready Project	27%	55%	18%
MFS Soil Club (Richard Simpson)	7%	13%	80%
Evergraze Pasture Trials (Cobana & Bellevue)	39%	46%	15%
MFS Farming Families (Rob Napier)	38%	39%	23%
MFS Wether Trial (on-going)	47%	40%	13%

If changes made, please specify?

- More consistent soil testing and more targeted fertiliser program.
- Extensive soil testing and info clarified S status, regular fert program initiated as a result.
- basically quality information that deserves some thought, not suggesting change in operation necessarily but definitely useful for fine tuning.
- Ram selection, different fertiliser application and soil testing, different lambing date and stocking rate.
- Implemented family meetings with better structures. Change way we buy and apply fert. Genetics comparisons interesting versus feed input.
- Ongoing CSIRO/GRDC work on dual purpose cropping has doubled our profitability for this enterprise, through crop nutrition and disease management.
- Using GrassGro® and the seasonal outlooks to manipulate stocking rate and enterprise mix. Used wether trial to change ram source.
- When discussing the wether trial at our board meetings, Oli was adamant that it was not a competition, but a learning tool. I would very much like to learn, but am wondering when and how this will take place?
- Trying to maximise phosphate utilization.

Q6 Of the items listed below, indicate which ones you would like MFS to focus on?

Benchmarking / Comparative Analysis	65%
Enterprise Analysis – wool / genetics versus meat etc	59%
Marketing Product	24%
Decision support tools	77%
Stock Management – reproduction efficiency, animal health	53%
Agronomy – pasture production, dual purpose cropping, fertiliser usage, soil fertility	77%
Business Management – risk management, farm planning, strategic planning etc.	77%
Social Issues – Communication, goal setting, Staff Management (HRM)	30%

Other – please specify

- Let's not try to do it all - results will get diluted - resources stretched etc. Keep it simple.
- All items listed are useful information, however I think there is enough research or funding available for those items not checked and just a supporting role by Nancy and MFS if they have time such as the current DNA validation test on Cobana that is actually making members money (I think).
- Need to continue on the ground research / trials.
- Obviously not all are possible. The theory of not duplicating what is readily available to members from outside sources is still relevant.
- WEEDS, especially AFRICAN LOVEGRASS. If we don't find a way to beat this scourge, it will destroy farming on Monaro, as we know it.

Q7 What suggestions do you have for MFS to improve current service delivery / value to members?

- Website would be good, I think Nancy does a really good job of keeping every one informed and reminding us of what is coming up as well as managing and sourcing projects.
- Not in a position to comment due to my poor attendance. Webinars at night may be??
- Keep going, stay grounded and relevant.
- More local research projects. Need to allocate time to identify critical production areas for focus.
- Get a comprehensive website.
- As someone who has been unable to come to the last 3 or 4 events, this is really important. It only takes missing a couple of events to start forgetting what MFS can offer. This is probably made worse because I am geographically separated from other members so therefore rarely get the opportunity to discuss what was

offered - a website will help this. Also the speakers' notes that Nancy sends out are very good. Although you don't want to be inundated, it is important to be engaged and electronic media is best able to deliver this. Would it be possible to record (visually as well) field days and have those available from the website? Webinars are great, but it would be better to be able to access the information in our own time. It would also be a wealth of information that eventually would be a great asset to MFS and the members.



MLA Lean Meat Yield & Eating Quality Producer Demonstration Site

Summary

This project, funded by MLA, is trialing, on-farm, the efficacy of research breeding values (RBVs) for lean meat yield (LMY) and eating quality. It is aiming to demonstrate that the RBVs for LMY, tenderness (SF5) & Intra Muscular Fat (IMF) can be translated through the lamb supply chain.

Currently there are sites throughout Vic, NSW and SA. The Bombala site at Brad & Lauren Yelds property "Greenlake", involves 8 groups of 40 crossbred ewes which have been AI with semen from 8 different terminal sires. The pregnancy scanning (June 2013) showed conception rates ranging from 49% to 72% across the 8 groups of ewes with a high percentage of twins. The potential lambs out of 317 ewes are 307.

All 8 rams have different indexes / ASBVs for common traits such as WWT (weaning weight), PWWT (post weaning weight) etc. therefore, rams will have either high or low RBVs for LMY, tenderness (SF5) and/or IMF. The lambs will be blood typed to identify sires and then slaughtered at weaning and re-tested to demonstrate that the traits for eating quality are heritable and replicable.

Initial results interstate have found measurable differences between sires in progeny carcass traits and positive relationships between progeny carcass traits and sire RBVs for example;

- a 1kg increase in sire RBV translates to a 170g increase in average progeny HCWT (hot carcass weight)
- a 1mm increase in sire RBV translates to a 0.6mm increase in average progeny carcass fat (cfat)
- a 1% increase in sire RBV translates to a 0.2% increase in average progeny LMY (lean meat yield)

MFS will have access to the results, both for the local Bombala trial site and Nationally via this site coordination role.

Photo 1



Photo 2



LBS (Livestock Breeding Services) Michelle Humphries and assistant Mel, during laparoscopic insemination procedure (Photo 1) and Brad Yelds assisting with the pregnancy scanning, recording pregnancy status, on a wet winters day (Photo 2)

Projects Pending....

MFS Project 13 – 12

“Futuristic Farming Tools to Manage the Fertile and the Fragile”

Dept. Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) - Innovation Grants

If successful, this project will promote the application of new technologies that may help to optimise productivity while improving the resilience of native perennial pastures on the Monaro, within grazing enterprises. Establishment of six case studies will demonstrate the feasibility of emerging innovative pasture assessment tools (using remote sensing technology) to assess pasture growth potential and assist in identifying different zones of resilience to grazing intensity based on growth potential and land capability (McIntyre model).

The outcomes will include an increase in the number of farming entities implementing improved grazing practices that maintain groundcover, optimise productivity opportunities and reduce impacts on more fragile areas and native pastures within the landscape.

MFS Website

The development of a MFS website has been motivated for the following reasons:

1. To lift the communications profile of the organisation
2. To include functionality that will help achieve the goals of the organisation and its members
3. To enable MFS to broaden its scope to a wider target audience
3. To integrate a graphic design bringing the website 'look-and-feel' into alignment with the existing identity of MFS and presents in a professional but still down-to-earth appeal.
4. To build a website which promotes the organisation in a professional and credible way whilst building on and recognising past achievements
5. MFS has only now reached a financial position (with assistance from the SRCMA Ag / MFS partnership) which allows the development of a quality website.

After researching the providers, the MFS board has selected Darryl Butler of *Itchybrain Productions* to develop and build the website for MFS. Darryl is based in Merimbula and travels frequently to the Monaro. He has offered MFS a very competitive and comprehensive website proposal.

Functionality

The website aims to target members (existing and prospective), as well as general viewers and Investors and / or grant providers. As such the functionality needs to have both a public interface and a private members-only aspect.

The public website will require a page structure based on the following pages/areas:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| - Home page | - Past projects archive |
| - Projects | - Notifications |
| - Innovations | - Members |
| - About MFS | - Board Members |
| - Calendar of events (with detailed entries) | - Photo Gallery / testimonials |
| - Research | |
| - Sponsors | |
| - Seasonal Outlooks | |
| - Newsletters | |

The members-only area will house additional privy information such as more detailed information for the aforementioned areas of interest, with downloadable PDF reports/resources, and more areas such as photo and video libraries. Ideally, the members will be able to contribute their own photos through a webpage (eg. to enter competitions and/or send images that help to identify and illustrate certain topics of discussion). An important new feature requires eCommerce capability for members to pay membership renewals online.

MFS Events Summary 2013

- ❖ **29th January** – MFS Traineeship Program commenced
- ❖ **14th & 15th March** – MFS Soil Carbon Information Sessions
- ❖ **9th & 10th April** – Crookwell Farming Group Visit & Monaro Tour
- ❖ **13th & 14th April** – MFS Working Dog School (Rob Cox, Manildra)
- ❖ **4th June** – MFS Breakfast “*Where’s the money in grazing enterprises today*” (speakers Doug Alcock, James Whiteside Incitec, Ian Page Commonwealth Bank)
- ❖ **Aug 27th** – GrassGro® Spring Seasonal Outlook, Doug Alcock (Graz Prophet Consulting) & Jenianne Hall (Mecardo Business Manager) & MFS AGM
- ❖ **Sept 11th** – Mid Side Sampling – MFS Genetic Evaluation Trial
- ❖ **Oct 14th** – 2nd Shearing – MFS Genetic Evaluation Trial
- ❖ **Week beginning Oct 28th** – GLW / MFS - presentation of wether trial results (2 years of data) & Jimmy Jackson (AWI) presentation
- ❖ **Nov 28th** – Soil Club, 4th Session -Dr Richard Simpson (CSIRO), Lee Menhenett (Incitec) [to be confirmed], Susan Orgill (NSW DPI) and Mark Trotter, Research Lecturer, Precision Agriculture, CRC Spatial Information [to be confirmed]



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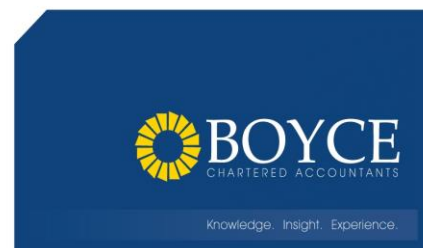
Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority

NSW Industry & Investment

Mike Stephens & Associates

Sydney University

Boyce Chartered Accountants



Project Funders

Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority

GRDC

FarmReady – DAFF

Carbon Farming Futures - DAFF

Woolworths / Landcare Australia

Community Action Grants (CFOC)

Central Highlands Agribusiness Forum / Evergraze

CSIRO

Meat & Livestock Australia



The University of Sydney

Special Mentions for thanks....

SRCMA for their on-going financial assistance and support.

Boyce for continuing to provide meeting rooms on numerous occasions & advice on traineeship program.

No Fuss Tax & Book Keeping (Bombala) for help and advice with QuickBooks on a regular basis.

Mike Stephens & Associates for Mikes continued efforts to support the organization above his Board duties.

MFS Board & especially Oli Cay who gives countless volunteer hours to sustain & direct the group.



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