



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIBBY LITCHFIELD

Introducing Cameron Johnson – MFS Trainee

Cameron Johnson sits with his dog “Tom” in the *Coolringdon* shearing shed with a big smile on his face. Asked why he chose to apply for the MFS traineeship, he mentions “wanting to gain practical skills and grab the opportunity to work on different places on the Monaro”. Having completed Year 12 last year, Cameron had already gained work experience on several local properties and came with excellent references.

Now nearly five months into the program, the experience has exceeded his expectations and Cameron enjoys learning different ways on each place which he takes to the next.

Both trainees participated in the Shearing School run by Mick Schofield in May. MFS was able to gain funding from AWI to cover the cost of this training.

Cameron’s crutching and shearing skills have been put to good use for Craig Mitchell at *Gaerloch* as well as shearing cancerous sheep on several

other places. He hopes to take a full time job next year on a local property.

Lisa Philips who joined the program this year as a host employer, talks very highly of Cameron’s work ethic and how “easy he is to have around.” Lisa mentions she would have “no hesitation in recommending him on to any future employer.”

Malcolm Pearce feels “Having been through the Jackeroo system myself, I still look back on those years as being a good introduction to learning many skills that I often use today. I see the traineeship as mirroring that system with the added benefit, that you can learn how to perform a particular task many different ways.”

Cameron’s only challenge so far has been trying to work out the paddock lay-outs on all the different properties.



Cameron and his dog “Tom”

MFS Newsletter



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IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet the Cooma Trainee
- Wrap up of past events
- What’s Coming Up
- Board Update
- MFS Legume Project



Rabobank

Past Events

Strong turn-outs were experienced for recent communication workshops delivered by communication specialist veteran **Lyn Sykes**.

The Bombala and Cooma workshops held in early May, were a collaborative effort between Snowy River Interstate Landcare, Upper Snowy Landcare and MFS.



Jen Jeffreys, Col Murdoch & Michael Cavanagh (ABC Rural Reporter) enjoy a chat during a break.

The workshops were highly entertaining and informative and covered all aspects of family farm communication including expectations, roles we often fall into, resolving conflict, working well with different communication styles, how we react and respond to challenging situations and tips for smooth farm succession.

Lyn, with over 30 years of experience with farm family succession, brought stark reality to this often avoided topic and described many real-life scenarios and how they were resolved. She talked about the influences of family history, generational perceptions, self-esteem and behavioural styles.

Overall the days were very successful and highlighted the importance of getting the “people” side right to be truly successful in the farming Industry.



Trion Garnock, Mandy Horton & Georgie Hood enjoy catching up

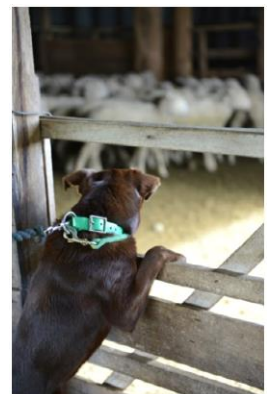
On a typically cold and blustery Monaro weekend, eighteen very dedicated producers turned out to brave the conditions, with their dogs, to attend a two day, “**working dog school**” at the Murdochs Bibbenluke yards.



The school was hosted and coordinated by Monaro Farming Systems and delivered by Jamie Barclay of “Barclay Livestock Management Services”.

The weekend, despite the weather, was both informative and enjoyable and really brought home the contribution a good working dog can make to your labour efficiency on-farm.

Participants commented how “with expert tuition, slight changes to your dog’s behaviour can save a lot of hard work...” and “starting a pup in the right direction will pay-off in the long run”.



The school focussed on each individual’s challenges with their dogs with a particular focus on getting your dog to back a race and bark on command as well as forcing and holding sheep in yards.

Having an “all-round” dog is very difficult and one of Jamie’s suggestions was to recognise and work to your dog’s strengths rather than try and make them do what may not come naturally.

Special thanks go to the Murdoch family at Bibbenluke for enabling the use of their yards, shed and sheep and to Jamie and his wife Kate for their volunteered time and efforts over the weekend.



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RB SELLARS

An **Animal Health Seminar** in Cooma on May the 20th was attended by over 40 Monaro producers. This event was another collaboration between MFS, Berridale Agricultural Bureau and Cooma Rural.

Speakers included Doug Alcock (Graz Prophet), Kate Woolley (Merial) and Petrea Wait (Cooma LLS).

The main focus for the day was worm control and Doug gave a quality presentation covering strategic control of worm populations, targeted to the Monaro. He covered the three main worm types (Brabers Pole, Brown Stomach and Black Scour), their egg survival characteristics and seasonal patterns. He talked about the different susceptibilities of stock depending on age, sex and nutritional status and how this can be manipulated with knowing your likely paddock worm burdens to manage worm populations. Doug also discussed "smart grazing" steps to prepare lambing paddocks and also the chemical options of control and drench resistance.

Kate Woolley, a technical vet from Merial described the PCR technology which is now used for worm counts and identification. The benefits are a 2-3 day turn around time and almost 100% accuracy.

Petrea Wait, the District Vet with the LLS at Cooma gave an informative over-view of drench resistance trials about to start-up on the Monaro as well as local OJD status and lameness in sheep.

For a copy of the presentations from this day please contact Nancy (nancy@msanda.com.au).



Whats Coming Up?

MFS / Rabobank Event

"Raising the steaks: economics of local & global sheepmeat and beef Industries"

- Tues. the 22nd of July
- Nimmitabel Country Club
- 9.30am – 1.30pm (lunch provided)

Speakers

- **Rabobank**

Matthew Costello Animal Proteins Analyst – NZ

- **NSW DPI**

Phil Graham – Seasonal Outlook next three months

- **MLA / SARDI**

Janelle Hocking-Edwards – Selecting Meat Sheep Sires for Eating Quality Traits – local & nationwide trial results

MFS Benchmarking Group with Holmes & Sackett

- Register by Friday 27th June
- Identify potential to improve business productivity
- Measuring 2013/14 FY
- Input sheet completed by mid Aug. 2014

MFS Labour Efficiency Field Day

- **1st Part** - Using H&S benchmarking data, presentation of a top performing farm business to explore labour efficiency economics ie. enterprise size, labour units, outputs, investments in infrastructure etc.
- **2nd Part** – Showcase of commercial products / tools / devices that make farm businesses more efficient
- **Late Aug 2014** – date and venue to be confirmed



Commonwealth Bank
Regional and Agribusiness Banking



BOARD SUMMARY - MEETING 30TH MAY

- MFS to fund **5 free** soil tests again this year (est. at \$11,000) & put \$3 – 5,000 towards soil club data base enhancements.
Hoping for \$\$ contributions from Tableland farming Systems and Holbrook Landcare Network.
- MFS meeting with LLS to discuss **funding support** for the following;
 - ✓ Continuation of Seasonal Outlooks
 - ✓ Benchmarking Group Sessions
 - ✓ Expansion of the old “Top Crop” crop to a pastures and cropping group under MFS
- Significant **opportunities** for well established, networked groups like MFS for future funding BUT partnerships are the key.
- MFS needs to **maintain linkages** & access to key quality advisors.
- Will need to show **increasing accountability for \$\$**, produce solid data and evidence of practice change to position ourselves higher up the cue for funding.
- MFS looking for hosts for a **second wether trial** to start 2015.
- MFS **Website** nearing completion, all content loaded onto site, awaiting final functionality.
- MFS welcomes **new sponsor** Cooma Rural / CRT onboard.
- MFS welcomes **new members** for 2014: C Kieghley (Woburn), the Shannons (Lowanna), Jim & Clare Buckley (Highland Grange), Elders Cooma & Bolaro Station.

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MFS Legume Project

Establishing Persistent, Productive new legumes

The trial site at *Gaerloch* was sown on the 10th April 2014 with the help of Luke Pope (LLS) and a NSW DPI cone seeder & operator.

Site preparation included cultivation and summer fallowed followed by a spray of 3L Glyphosate 450 and 100mL Fastac Duo on 7 April 2014. The site was sown with excellent soil moisture and 21mm fell during the week following sowing. Soil Temperature at 10mm below surface was 17.5°C.

Seven (7) seed mixes were sown with three (3) replications making 21 plots.

The legumes under comparison include *balansa*, *gland*, *bi serrula*, *french seradella*, white & sub clovers mixed with various rates of phalaris, fescue, ryegrass and lucernes.

MFS has contracted Doug Alcock (GrazProphet) to conduct the measurements of biomass and production potentials at strategic feed accumulation periods ie. early winter, late spring and early summer.

The second site will be sown in Spring 2014 at Sth. Bukalong.



“Are some alternative legume species better (in terms of establishment, persistence, & production) than traditional legumes commonly sown on the Monaro?”

“Can alternative legumes be successfully sown into existing pasture swards (perennial grasses), and increase pasture and animal production?”

Do a range of new legume species establish and persist better when existing perennial grasses are set back with herbicides?



Luke Pope sowing the seed with the NSW DPI Cone Seeder at Gaerloch.

The following links take you to published booklets on the MLA website detailing scientific research on how *biserrula*, *french serradella* legumes have been used to increase crop and livestock production in Southern Australia.

1. Using *Biserrula* to increase crop & livestock production

<http://www.mla.com.au/News-and-resources/Publication-details?pubid=6125>

2. Using *French serradella* to increase crop & livestock production

<http://www.mla.com.au/General/Search/Search-Results-ISYS?keyword=using+french+serradella>

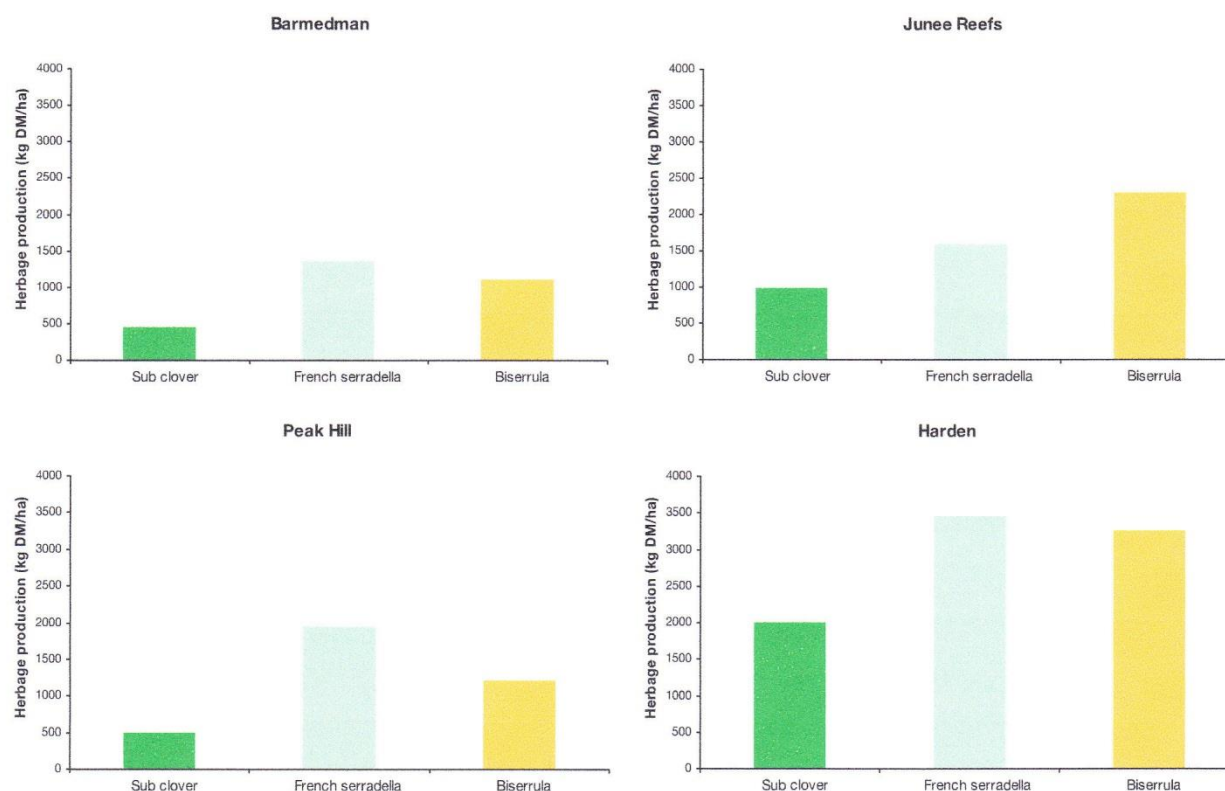


Figure 4. Herbage production of subterranean clover, French serradella and biserrula at four locations in NSW in 2008. Note: Dalkeith subterranean clover was used at Barmedman and Peak Hill, Seaton Park subterranean clover at Junee Reefs and Harden. Margurita French serradella and Casbah biserrula were used at all sites.

6 Using biserrula to increase crop and livestock production