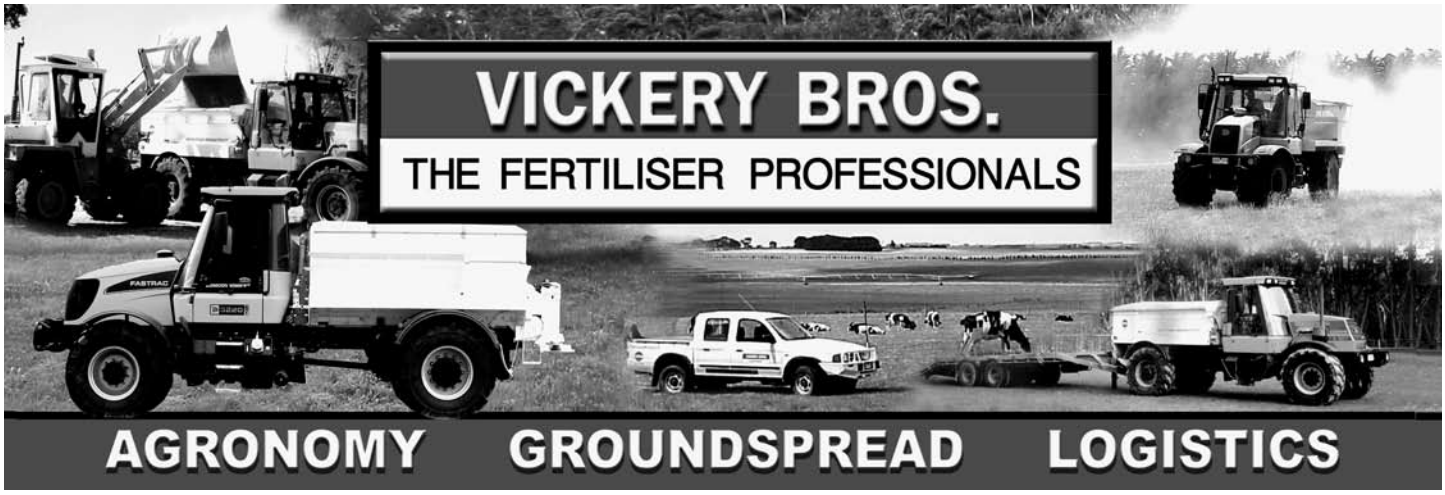


December 2007

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

By Geoff Robertson

As the year that was 2007 passes we have had another very interesting finish to spring. This year fortunately will be remembered for the late rains for most areas and the resultant phenomenal pasture growth in November and as harvest swings into gear potentially some excellent grain and hay yields.

So to the future. Where to for commodity prices? Most analysts are confident in the increasing demand for food and fibre globally, the booming growth that continues in China is being replicated in India, Russia and Brazil. Also the improvement in the standard of living of our near neighbours of Indonesia, Singapore and potentially Thailand mean that Australian producers should be well positioned to supply the growing demand for the "soft" resources of food and fibre.

Contents:

At the same time globally the arable area and water resources required to produce the extra food is decreasing. The challenge will be how we can continue to improve the productivity of our agricultural systems to meet the demand. Indeed the dairy and grains industries are benefiting already from the short supply of milk protein and grain energy. These price signals will see producers divert resources (capital, land and labour) from less profitable enterprises to increase the output of these products. Until supply meets demand we will see a continued repricing of protein and energy.

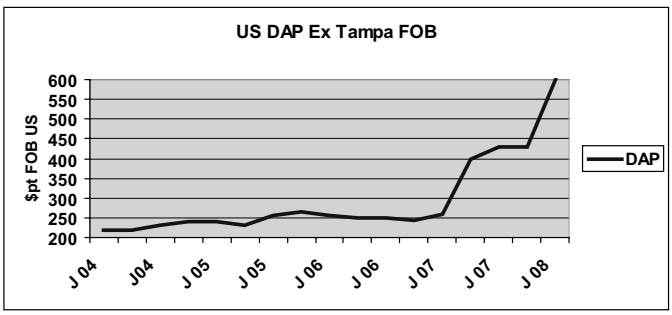
Increasing Costs

The downside of this increase in demand for food means producers targeting increased crop and pasture yields require more inputs, as suppliers struggle to ramp up production, we unfortunately will see an increase in costs of these agricultural inputs. Costs for these products will remain high until investment in new production facilities or cheaper sources of raw inputs occur, this enables an increase in production to meet supply.

Demand driven price increases has certainly been the case for fertiliser, in the last 6 to 8 months. Strong demand for Nitrogen and Phosphorus fertilisers to support the increase in food production and the extra inputs required to supply corn to the subsidised bio-fuel industry in the US, has outstripped the global supply capacity, resulting in significant price increases.

DAP

A December 2007 DAP price of US$550 (5th Dec) Ex Tampa with forward estimates of US$575/tonne Ex Tampa equates to an AUS price of $820 to $875/tonne port. Compared to December 2006 DAP Ex Tampa was US$280 equating to AUS of $530/tonne port. A portion of this increase is due to sea freight cost rising from US$65/tonne to its current level of US$135/tonne.

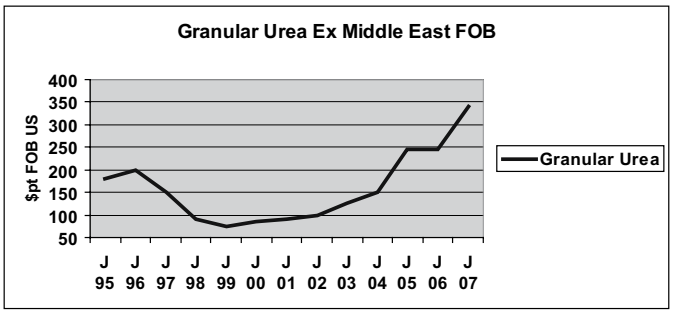


The Market: - Fertiliser News 6th December 2007

Manufacturing capacity will take several years to develop to meet supply demands, therefore the price of DAP and MAP will be at this level for several years and potentially will not fall to the lower levels seen in previous years.

Urea

Urea's price has also increased. Urea Arab gulf December 2006 $250/tonne US. December 2007 Urea Arab gulf $350/tonne.

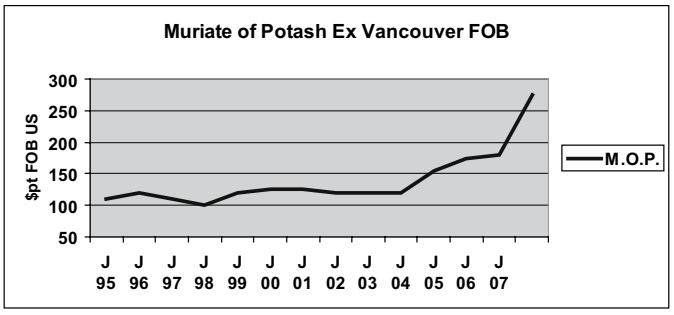


Fertecon World Fertiliser Review: - December 2007

Global capacity for the production of Urea has been expanding to meet the growing demand. However as gas is a major cost of production Urea is linked to world energy prices.

Potash

Traditionally Potash prices did not tend to fluctuate as there were adequate levels of capacity to meet demand. However the closure, for a short period of time, of a mine in Russia at the time of an increase in demand has seen an increase in prices.



Fertecon World Fertiliser Review: - December 2007

Superphosphate

So what are the implications of a high DAP and MAP price for superphosphate? The main components for the manufacture of superphosphate are phosphate rock and acid. The demand for phosphate rock globally to produce DAP/MAP has resulted in an increase in the price of rock and sulphuric acid.

Domestically we will also see a shift in product use within the cropping market to some superphosphate in combination with ammonium phosphates, due to the difference in the value of P between products; this will certainly put pressure on the price of superphosphate.

By comparison if the retail price of DAP is $890/tonne and the value of the nitrogen in DAP is subtracted, the value of phosphorus in DAP is $3.31/kg of P. Using this value for Phosphorus and a value of Sulphur at 35cents superphosphate, which contains 88 kg of P and 110kg of S per tonne, has an equivalent nutrient value of $330/tonne.

Based on this scenario we could see Superphosphate retailing above $300/tonne by April.

Table 1. Cost to apply 10 and 15 kg/ha of Phosphorus using superphosphate at various prices per tonne.

	$250/t	$260/t	$270/t	$280/t	$290/t	$300/t
10/kg P/ha	$34.83/ ha	$35.98/ ha	$37.13/ ha	$38.28/ ha	$39.43	$40.57
15/kg P/ha	$49.83/ ha	$51.52/ ha	$53.22/ ha	$54.92/ ha	$56.61/ ha	$58.30/ ha

This range is some $50/tonne higher than last season, it will therefore be critical to make sure that the nutrients you're are applying to your pasture or sowing with your crop are the nutrients that are required to give you the most productive outcome.

We are currently ensuring we will have access to competitively priced nutrient for the coming season when it is required. However as the rapid rise in DAP/MAP prices impacts on the price of superphosphate early delivery of fertiliser will be critical.

LIQUIDS FOR LUCERNE

By Geoff Robertson

With favourable rains some clients will achieve several cuts from their lucerne stands this season. Average Lucerne hay cuts will remove 70 to 80 kg/ha of potassium, this year removal could be in excess of 100 kg of potassium per ha. Nutrient deficiency symptoms of pale leaves and spotting around the leaf margin have been observed in some stands already, tissue testing has reinforced these stands are suffering from low potassium, sulphur and molybdenum levels.

In these situations we can supply liquid fertiliser which is applied at 5 to 6 litres /ha via a boom spray to give quick nutrient uptake that complements the application of the maintenance granular fertiliser program.

AGRONOMY ALERTS

By Geoff Robertson

The timeliness of agronomic advice can make a huge difference to crop and pasture yields. Unfortunately the information is not as instant as we would like. The newsletter you are currently reading takes up to three months to produce from the initial planning till you receive it. As most produces now have mobile phones and the promise of improved mobile reception we are planning to provide a Short Message Service (SMS) Agronomy alerts service.

Each week our agronomists are viewing a range of crops and pastures in different areas dealing with production issues that are common to most of our customers. The Agronomy alerts will be based on our observations taking the form of quick texts to your mobile phone. At this stage clients can opt to receive three alerts Pasture, Crop and General.

We do not wish to add to the clutter of information that confronts you each day, so if you wish to receive the agronomy alerts you must "opt in". To do this speak with myself, Bill, Harry, Jane or James about the type of information you think is important and nominate which alert is applicable to you.

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND GM CANOLA

By Harry Armstrong
Sales Agronomist

Background

Biotechnology is a broad term used to describe any technology that uses living organisms or parts of organisms to make or modify products, improve plants or animals, and to develop micro-organisms for specific uses in industry, technology, medicine or agriculture. Biotechnology is used, for example in the production of foods and medicines, the removal of wastes and the creation of renewable energy sources.

Conventional plant breeding and biotechnology both depend on selecting genes to produce a plant with desired traits. The primary difference is that biotechnology is used to select traits at the genetic level, while conventional plant breeding selects traits based on expression in the plant.

History

In 1994 a conventionally bred Triazine tolerant (TT) canola was released, that is a canola variety that could tolerate pre-emergent herbicide being applied post sowing. Currently 80%-90% of canola sown in WA is TT canola and 30%-40% in all other states.

In 2003 a genetically modified canola was developed that is tolerant of glyphosate (Roundup). Australia's gene technology regulator known as the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) found that genetically modified (GM) canola does not pose any risk to human health, safety or the environment that are greater than the low level posed by conventional (non-GM) canola. To quote an OGTR spokesperson. "I have closely examined an extensive range of possible risks including potential for toxicity, allergenicity, gene transfer to other crops, the likelihood of creating problem weeds and possible impacts on wildlife and soil micro-organisms but have found no appreciable risks that would adversely affect human health or the environment"

Early in 2004 the Victorian State Government imposed a 4 year moratorium on the release of GM canola. Sir Gustav Nossal was appointed by the state government to examine the trade and economic implications of releasing GM canola in Victoria.

Sir Gustav Nossal's report recommended the immediate lifting of the moratorium. The full report can be accessed at the DPI website. www.dpi.vic.gov.au. From February 2008 GM canola will become commercially available to growers in Victoria. Growers now have a choice as to wether they continue with their pre 2008 canola varieties or use the new GM varieties.

Agronomic Benefits of GM Canola

There are several direct benefits for farmers from the adoption of GM canola, including increased yields and improved risk management systems (from the use of hybrid varieties, improved weed management and earlier sowing options) and reduced on farm costs as a result of reduced tillage practices. Flow on environmental benefits associated with reduced tillage practices includes improved soil health and the option to use more environmentally benign herbicides such as roundup.

Given the direct relationship between planting date and yield, (Norton 2003) farmers seek to sow as early in autumn as possible. Yield reduction is estimated to be between 2%-5% for each week that sowing is delayed. GM canola allows earlier sowing through improved management of weeds without reliance on a pre-emergent herbicide. Carmody et al. (2001) observed the time of sowing and paddock selection far outweigh the choice of variety in terms of yield. The Birchip Cropping Group expects yield improvements of between 10%-20% with GM canola.

GM canola has several traits that allow growers to modify their tillage, weed and disease management practices, resulting in the potential to capture the agronomic benefits of canola while ensuring production efficiency and profitability.

Having said this, there are still a large number of well proven non GM canola varieties available for growers to choose from.

Future Developments

In the future growers can look forward to improvements in other crop and pasture species. Possible developments may include enhanced disease resistance, improved uptake of nutrients and advances in nutritional values. Traditionally farmers have been very good at embracing new technology and practices. With input costs continually rising producers need to continue to look at any advances in technology that offer the potential to improve their efficiency.

DON'T FORGET THE PHOSPHORUS

By Bill Feely
Sales Agronomist

"May you live in interesting times" is an ancient Chinese proverb that really encapsulates the state of agriculture in Australia. I say this in reference to the return by some to farming practices that date back thousands of years. This change in philosophy stems from a desire to pursue a "clean" farming lifestyle and the perception that synthetic chemicals and current farming practices are detrimental to the environment. This occurs at a time when the demand for food globally is predicted to double in the next 50 years, putting pressure on our already fragile arable soils. To prevent further clearing of rainforests and the further degradation of farming soils we must continue to improve the productivity of our farming systems. That means embracing the best practices that science and research have to offer. The welfare of the environment is of concern to all farmers and a sustainable farming system encompasses environmental as well as profitability targets.

Organic Matter

Proponents of organic farming promote the view that it is beneficial for the land and the food produced from it if organic matter is returned to the soil. Are they right? If organic farming is about returning organic matter to the soil, then yes they are right for organic matter is an essential component of healthy soils. It stores nutrients, helps preserve soil moisture, fosters healthy growth of soil micro-organisms and improves various physical properties of the soil. But all sound farming practices such as appropriate crop rotations, use of green manure crops, stubble retention, proper grazing management, appropriate nutrient replacement and minimum tillage all contribute to maintaining and improving soil organic matter levels.

Phosphorus

Farming is a business that invests in nutrients, turns them into saleable products that add value. In doing this there is a net export of nutrient off the farm. Fertilisers are used to replace these nutrients. Failing to address this will have dire consequences in relation to maintaining nutrient levels, especially phosphorus.

Because Australia's soils are generally not fertile enough to produce high yielding crops and pastures, deficiencies of key plant nutrients are widespread even in virgin country, fertilisers are required to supply the bulk of crop and pasture nutrient needs. Furthermore they replace those removed from the soil by crop and animal production.

Most of the soils we deal with in Australian grazing enterprises have a relatively high capacity to accumulate phosphate. In many cases this phosphorus is fixed (locked up) and is resistant to degradation by soil micro-organisms. So to offset this situation occurring, the application of phosphorus fertiliser is imperative and must not be ignored.

Fertilisation through organic farming is designed to maintain soil fertility but not directly feed plants. Nutrients are applied in organic forms in the belief that plants will obtain balanced nutrition through the action of soil microbes. The probability of farmers selling themselves short of nutrient by adopting this approach is inevitable. A feature of Australian grazing systems is their dependence on organic nutrient cycles to drive mineral release and pasture productivity. Systems using legumes and nitrogen fixation rely entirely on cycling of P, K and S, and trace elements for there nutrient. The supplementation with fertiliser is necessary for this cycling to commence and continue. Failure to address this approach will inevitably result in a shortfall of available nutrients. The nutrient content of conventional mineral fertiliser is known, predictable, and in fixed ratios and readily available, allowing for precise delivery of nutrients to plants. Nutrients from organic sources are only available slowly because they have to break down and convert to the mineral or inorganic form. This is appropriate if plants only need a small quantity of nutrients slowly. However, if the rate and timing of availability does not meet the needs of the plant, it can suffer deficiency symptoms.

Plants can only take up P from the soil in the form of inorganic phosphate (Pi). Breakdown of organic phosphorus (Po) compounds in the soil into inorganic (available) phosphorus (Pi) by the activity of soil biomass (micro organisms, worms and beetles etc) and the resultant release of P(i) to the soil solution is also an important source of P for plants.

Grasslands Conference Murray Bridge.

The cycle of P through organic matter in the soil is large. Soil biomass and the microbial action in the gut of ruminants work on phosphorus in organic matter and converting it to (Pi) for release to the soil. Much of the Pi that is present in plant materials is also utilised by the soil biomass before it is released for plant use.

Some may ask, what is the importance of applying phosphorus given that the inputs of P from natural cycling processes account for a portion of available P? The bottom line is that we need Pi to build up the fertility and to increase the quality and quantity of organic matter so that the soil fauna i.e. micro organisms can keep the cycling process occurring. The results from the Long Term Phosphate Trial at the PVI Hamilton showed that Olsen P levels of 13-15 were ideal for maintaining the P cycle in beef sheep systems.

Cayley J and Saul G (1984) Long Term Phosphate Trial.

Ellinbank Dairy Research Centre found that Olsen P levels of between 20-35 were ideal for maintaining the P cycle in dairy pastures.

Gourlay C, Awty I (2002).

Summary

P fertiliser applications predominantly feed the soil and build the organic and inorganic P cycles to the point where they supply a major portion of the P required for each years pasture growth. The activity of soil biology is crucial to the management of soil fertility and this has to be encouraged and nurtured. Balance is the key to managing and sustaining farming systems.

Appropriate fertiliser use, proper species selection combined with well proven grazing techniques will promote both healthy soils and profits simultaneously. Water use efficiency of the pasture is increased and imminent environmental issues such as salinity and acidification are averted. The maintenance of our pasture systems is dependent on phosphorus and its importance cannot be underestimated. The bottom line is not about organic versus conventional farming practices, but about sound farming practices. By promoting healthy plant growth greater amounts of crop residues can be returned to the soil as organic matter. Healthy plants combat land degradation.

SOIL TESTING FOR OPTIMUM CROP YIELDS

By James Stewart

As we approach the warmer months of the year it won't be long before harvest is underway and headers are going full tilt around the district.

Looking back at the past growing season we would all agree that it has been a great year, with fantastic opening rains in the autumn. The winter months were what we should expect (cold and wet) although maybe too wet in spots - but overall a reasonable winter with minimal frosts.

Grain prices kept us all happy as they hit record highs and still remain very strong historically at today's prices. The spring start was not ideal, with quite a few of us getting nervous. We all saw the season finishing early, bringing back terrible memories from last year. Late spring rain did finally arrive, which would have been nice if it came a month earlier but all in all it has turned out to be a brilliant growing season for most.

As the season comes to an end we need to start planning for the '08 season and a farm plan would be a great way to start. Such plans include:

- Reviewing individual paddock yields.
- Mapping out crop rotations for individual paddocks.
- Set achievable targets working from paddock history, fertility and soil types.
- Earmark paddocks that need to be soil tested at 0 – 10cm. As well as deep N at 10 – 60cm, which can be an important guide to determining optimal nitrogen status to maximise gross margin.

When trying to determine which paddocks you should soil test, there are some interesting statistics about soil testing and the grain industry. Just over 20 percent of farmers use soil testing to predict best possible outcomes from fertiliser use. The level of use for plant tissue tests as a monitoring tool for optimal crop nutrition is even lower.

This situation exists even though the cost of soil or tissue testing represents less than one per cent of the cost of fertiliser at average rates applied.

The increase in fertiliser prices this year means that soil testing is critical to ensure the right nutrient at the right rate is being applied to achieve optimum yields.

Soil analysis can be placed into 4 categories and is normally undertaken for one of the four reasons:

Diagnostic

This is when samples are taken from areas displaying poor or inconsistent growth. In this day and age these areas can be easily identified with yield monitors, which are found in most headers. Select an area that represents the poor growth / low yield for a sample to be taken. When determining poor yield areas it is good to take a sample from the good area as well to help in troubleshooting.

Monitoring

Monitoring samples are taken from an area that is representative of the soil type or paddock to asses the suitability of current management practices.

Fine Tuning

Fine tuning is required to adjust fertiliser programs to ensure optimum soil nutrients during important growth stages of the crop to maximise yield and quality. This is normally done with tissue testing during certain growth stages of the plants life cycle and determines plant uptake whereas soil testing gives you soil nutrient status at the time of sampling.

Predictive

Predictive samples are taken from monitoring sites and are used to identify any limiting nutrients or limiting plant growth. Real time plant nutrient values can be compared with historical values meaning areas can be targeted to achieve maximum yield potential.

To get 2008's crops off to a good start the planning process should start straight after harvest so soil testing can be carried out in February early March.

LIME & GYPSUM

By James Stewart

James Stewart Healthy soils are needed to grow high yielding pastures and crops to sustain the productive capacity of the farm in years to come.

Soil testing will indicate your farms requirement for lime or gypsum.

Applying lime does many things to the soil:

- Reduces aluminium and other metal toxicities.
- Helps to improve the physical condition (pH) of the soil.
- Stimulates microbial activity.
- Increases the availability of several nutrients.
- Supplies Calcium.
- Improves symbiotic nitrogen fixation by legumes in acidic soils.

Gypsum has beneficial effects as well:

- Supplies Calcium to the soil when pH levels are high and lime is not required.
- Is an effective source of Sulphur.
- Helps in saline and sodic soils with the exchange of Calcium for sodium in affected soils.
- Helps soil structure.

If you are considering Lime take advantage of Vickery Bros early delivery scheme. Take delivery and spread lime in the months of December and January and not have to pay for it until April. A great incentive to help improve your farms productivity.

CUSTOMER PROFILE
"AYRHAVEN" - GREG AND SUE COOK

By Jane Wilkinson
with many thanks to Greg Cook

Greg believes in constant improvement whether it is in himself, soil fertility, pasture species, paddock sizes, stock health or even changing the analysis of profit and division enterprises. He appreciates the need for specialised advice to minimize risk of failure, and will experiment with new ideas yet understanding when seasonal conditions do not allow for success.

The property

'Ayrhaven' is a 1,291 hectare (3,191 acre) grazing property located approximately 20 km's north of Casterton that receives an average of 686 millimeters of rain and was purchased by Greg & Sue Cook in July 2002.

Then

Given its very rundown condition when purchased there has been no other choice but to literally start with 'a blank piece of paper' with regards to pastures, fencing and stock handling facilities. Establishing some form of structure in relation to prioritizing issues to achieve a desired outcome has been found to be an extremely difficult task. Throw in several droughts and Greg openly admits "it's been and will continue to be a challenge to say the least!"

Now

Today, 'Ayrhaven' runs approx. 8,000 DSE; Superfine Merino's (70%) and First Cross (30%), but given time, patience and a few dollars, experiences with renovating pastures dictates that there is no reason why 'Ayrhaven' could not increase its annual average stocking rate on the more improved pastures to 15 DSE/ha.

Soil Type, Terrain and Fertility

One of the first tasks undertaken was to obtain soil test results using the assistance of an agronomist to establish a pasture renovation program that suited the vast array of terrain; flat to very steep and soil types that ranged from clay through to sand. It was decided the smaller paddocks that enabled good grazing management be initially renovated, followed by the steeper country and larger paddocks containing native grasses.

The soil tests conclusively proved that in order to dramatically increase stocking rates each paddock needed to be prescribed a different regime of products to rectify the deficiencies and other soil constraints. Prescription superphosphate blends were required and lime at 2.5t/ha was spread to correct the pH level and in some cases high aluminum levels. Olsen P levels were low; varying between 3 and 9, so there was plenty of scope for future improvement. Given the cost of fertilizer the cost of a soil test (approx. $100) to ascertain the soils deficiencies becomes somewhat insignificant when comparing it to the overall cost of renovating a paddock.

Single superphosphate has been applied at 200 kg/ha in the majority of cases to increase P (phosphorus) levels and prescription blends

with a K (potassium) component have been used in paddocks that are cut for hay. Greg observes that the loss of nutrients in a pasture when it is cut for hay is at times not truly recognized by many growers.

The strategic use of nitrogen applied in the form of urea at 80 kg/ha in August and/or Gibberellic Acid on Phalaris based pastures has recently been incorporated into the pasture program to increase pasture levels and provide sufficient feed for ewes and lambs through to the end of November when weaning occurs.

Paddock Sizes and Grazing Management

Large paddocks (up to 450 acres) in size comprised of both tablelands and hilly valleys presented a huge dilemma initially, but after reducing several of them down to a more manageable size (approx. 40 acres) and on a more uniform land type basis the benefits in terms of better pasture utilisation has been enormous. Land previously only used to graze wethers can now lamb down Merino ewes. Rotational grazing is practiced for the majority of the year, excepting lambing time when a set stocking policy is adopted.

Improving Pastures and Summer Feed Gap

Phalaris, cocksfoot and sub-clover base pastures sown with 100 kgs of DAP or MAP have thus far proven to be the most productive and persistent. In an attempt to create an alternative feed wedge several trials have been conducted with summer active fescue but has tended to lack persistence after receiving less than adequate summer rainfall.

In 2007, in excess of 500 acres was sown down to new pastures in both late autumn and spring. Good preparation of paddocks prior to sowing has been an important key to the success of the program, with all paddocks being sprayed with Brushoff the previous year to eradicate onion grass. Greg's firmly of the opinion that spraying out onion grass is one of the cheapest and most effective forms of a pasture renovation. Balansa Clover spread at 4 kg/ha with fertiliser was used to 'bulk up' paddocks cut for hay.

Stocking rates were initially very poor due to paddocks being heavily infested with onion grass, silver grass and cape weed and whilst no where near perfect are now much improved after using the spray & graze technique.

Summer crops of Winfred rape and Tonic plantain, sown prior to the end of September have proven to be quite a successful pasture renovation tool prior to sowing down in the following autumn. Some paddocks have been successfully sown with Saia oats or Winter Star annual ryegrass as a 'cleanser' in the year prior to being sown to pasture. A lack of summer rain in 2006 on a Mammoth Purple Top Turnip crop meant that "…..the lambs that walked through the gate would have been lucky to get one turnip each!"

Continual Self Improvement

Over the past 5 years Greg has attended a 'Prograze' course and is currently in Best Wool/Best Lamb, Mike Stephen's and Associates Grower Group and Lifetime Ewe Management as he has felt that an important part of the process has been to learn and openly discuss issues regarding pastures and stock with other growers in the area. He is also involved with SARDI (Naracoorte) in trialing Pasture Watch which involves pasture assessment using satellite technology.

Greg finds visiting first hand and receiving information from the DPI's trials such as EverGraze and The Long Term Phosphate Trial, very helpful, and finds implementing just one aspect of a trial can be beneficial in increasing profit. Developments in pasture production and effective utilization techniques can only lead to increased profits

Profit drivers

Greg commented that due to a dramatic increase in land prices throughout the Western District in recent years there appears to be many more growers contemplating renovation of their existing farm's pastures to increase their stocking rates rather than considering purchasing additional land. As with all grazing enterprises it has been a constant dilemma at 'Ayrhaven' to match the number of stock with pasture availability and not incur huge supplementary feed bills.

Greg perceives the key profit driver in grazing these days is the ability to grow and effectively utilize good quality grass that is best suited to the environment. Good pasture grazing techniques ensure the sheep are in a more improved and healthier condition and tend to look after themselves better.

Return on assets is Ayrhaven's major definer of profit.

Planning

Greg emphasized the need to plan ahead for two to three years and "……not between the back door of your house and the seeder" as a much needed requirement to ensure profitable outcomes. Given the plant back times with several of the herbicides it can be a costly and wasteful exercise not to adhere to the instructions on labels. Escalating costs of the required inputs (i.e. fertilizer, seed and diesel) in recent times have proven that good agronomy advice is invaluable and has the potential to have a recognizable impact on the bottom line of the business.

Contracting

The property is owner-operated and uses contracted labour for most of the pasture renovations and some of the fencing. The capital costs required do not make it economically feasible to own the large array of machinery necessary to properly renovate such a large area.

With a small glimpse into Greg's mind you can see he is keen to push current thinking in everything he does. It is very exciting as a visitor to their farm to see how it is progressing and to find out where we can help them to achieve their goals.

SUCCESSFUL FESCUE ESTABLISHMENT AT BALLANGEICH WEST

By Harry Armstrong
Sales Agronomist

Tony Allen of Ballangeich West has sown Jesup Tall Fescue in autumn 2007 into heavy flats at his property at Woolsthorpe. Ryegrass persistence in these areas has been poor, often failing after only one season. The main factors affecting ryegrass persistence in these flats is heat over summer and cricket attack.

Tony is extremely enthusiastic about the production and the high level of livestock performance achieved with fescue in these areas and is planning to greatly expand the area sown to fescue in 2008.

Good weed control and fertility is essential for successful fescue establishment. Tony sprayed the paddock out and sowed this stand in early April 2007 at 20kg/ha fescue with 2kg/ha of white clover. This represents a substantial up front seed cost, but the increased production and persistence over many years would rapidly repay the extra expenditure on seed. DAP was sown down the tube at 100kg/ha and urea applied at 80kg/ha twice during growing season. Fescues respond very well to urea or boosta type products.

Tony Allen of Ballangeich West inspecting 2007 sown Fescue paddock

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Agronomy Team

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