



Grazing Management Fact Sheet 1

Getting started— develop a grazing plan

Why

Planned grazing has the potential to significantly increase animal production per hectare while improving condition of the land and pasture. In particular, it allows better control of pasture utilisation and favours desirable perennial plants.

What

AIMS eGraze® is an electronic grazing plan which provides you direction to the most suitable paddock or paddocks to best meet the needs of your stock and your pastures. The grazing plan helps you to manage production targets, records grazing movements, calculates pasture growth rates and explores future seasonal scenarios.

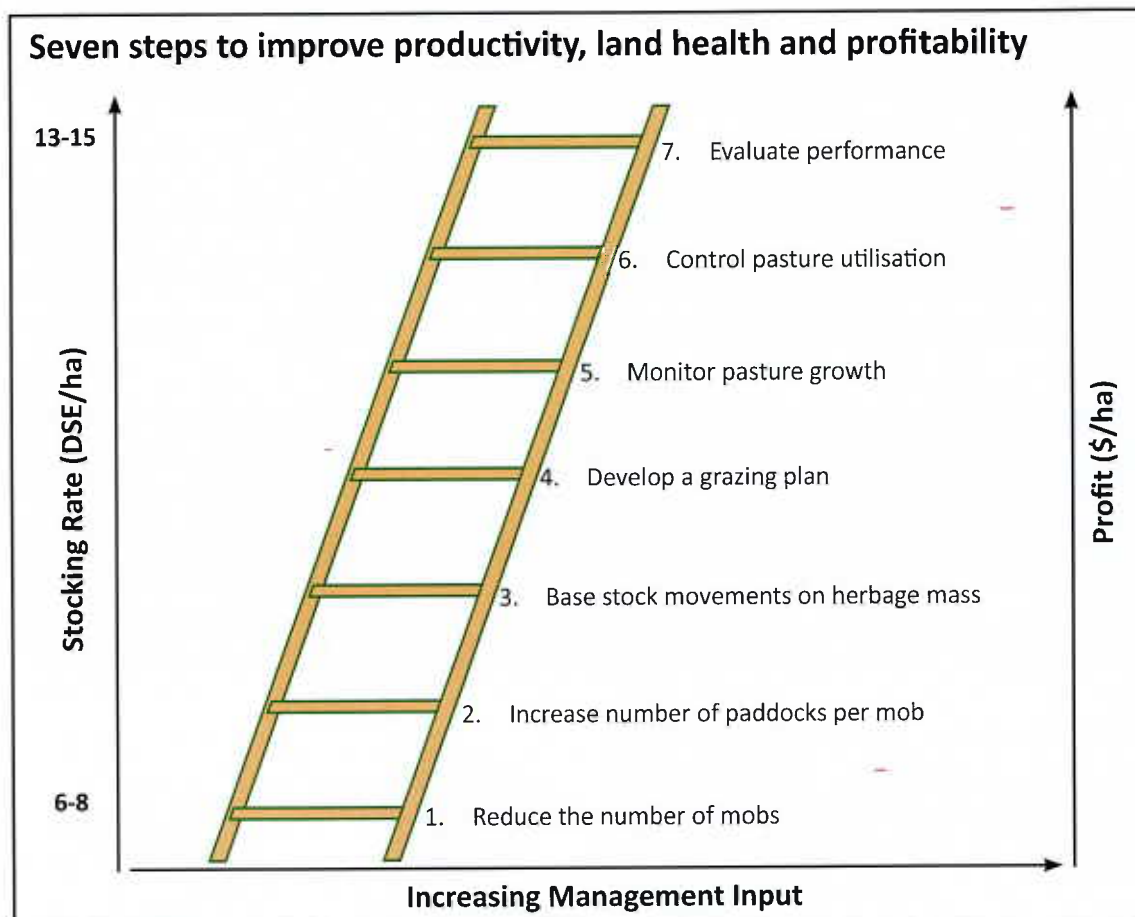
How

Planning the movement of grazing livestock is based on assessing the amount of available pasture and at all times managing to leave a sufficient amount of residual herbage after grazing.

This is the first in a series of four fact sheets designed to provide a guide to increase pasture production and potential carrying capacity and at the same time improve the health of your land resource.

Seven steps to improve productivity, land health and profitability

The AIMS eGraze® approach is a proven tool that improves the amount of quality feed produced and provides the land manager much greater control and flexibility when considering future stocking and grazing decisions. The end result is an improvement in how feed is utilised across the farm and an increase in carrying capacity.



The seven steps explained

1. The most effective first step is to reduce the number of mobs being run, if not for the whole year then for as long as possible. If single sire mating is part of the management program, animals can be combined later to run as one mob. Often this can be easily done using existing paddocks.
2. Increasing the number of paddocks per mob provides greater control over the grazing. If there are fewer than 15 paddocks per mob then consider creating more paddocks by subdivision. The final number of paddocks per mob will depend on the number of mobs, stocking rate and the degree of flexibility that management requires. The more paddocks per mob the greater the flexibility in management that can be achieved and the greater control the land manager has over the grazing process.
3. The ability to estimate herbage mass is critical to ensure that stocking rate does not exceed the carrying capacity of the farm. Appropriate grazing days in each paddock or subdivision are calculated based on the available herbage mass and the desired minimum residual herbage required when animals leave the paddock.
4. A grazing plan is developed based on the available herbage mass and the needs of livestock. AIMS eGraz^e indicates the appropriate number of days grazing available in each paddock. You then plan the movement of stock to meet your management needs and the needs of livestock to optimise animal and pasture production.
5. Pasture growth is the main factor that influences productivity and potential stocking rate. The ability to measure pasture growth rate on different areas of the farm or paddock allows you to identify more productive areas, prioritise areas for inputs and plan appropriate grazing periods.
6. Utilisation refers to the proportion of pasture growth that is consumed by livestock. On the Northern Tablelands, up to 60% on an annual basis is considered a sustainable level of pasture utilisation to enhance long term production potential. Carrying capacity will increase with appropriate utilisation of pasture. Fact Sheet 4 in this series describes the importance of utilisation and how to measure it in more detail.
7. Frequent monitoring of paddock production, grazing days and livestock performance allows evaluation of performance of the land and each enterprise. With AIMS eGraz^e monthly, seasonal and annual performance reports may be produced to help guide your future management decisions.



Tools to assist in measuring herbage mass, calculating pasture growth rate and developing a grazing plan are available for download from www.aimsag.com.au and navigating to software.



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