

"After sales service" in grazing land management

Jack Wheeler has managed the Katherine Research Station for 18 years.

Attending the GLM course gave him the confidence to initiate feed budgeting and an aerial spraying program for weed control.

Grazing Land Management workshops

Grazing Land Management (GLM) workshops provide you with the skills and ability to assess the health of each paddock and manage stocking rates to optimise the carrying capacity of your enterprise.

The workshop will assist you to:

- Assess the condition of your paddocks and improve carrying capacity
- Understand the relationship between pasture, water, soils, woodlands, biodiversity, fire and weeds
- Investigate pasture restoration techniques
- Determine the financial impact of grazing management options

The workshop, one of MLA *EDGEnetwork*[®] training packages, pools scientific and landholder knowledge specific to northern Australia.

The workshop consists of open discussions and builds on the wealth of knowledge and experience that already exists within the industry.

Technical information is demonstrated both in and out of the 'classroom' therefore a 'hands on' approach is used.

A GLM workshop will help you to develop grazing management strategies to optimise land condition, production and profit.

Producer:

Jack Wheeler, Manager,
Katherine Research Station

Location:

Katherine, Northern Territory

Property area:

1,200 hectares

Enterprise:

Production of replacement heifers for Kidman Springs Research Station and feeder steers for the boat market

Goal:

"To maintain the cattle herd at a level that allows ongoing research to be conducted"

Livestock:

Senepol and Brahman bulls over Brahman cows

Annual rainfall:

About 950-1,000mm, summer predominant

For further information contact

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How can a GLM workshop help your enterprise?

Case Study: Katherine Research Station

Background

Jack Wheeler has managed the Katherine Research Station for 18 years.

He first came to the NT in 1972 as head stockman at Wave Hill and worked on various stations until joining the NT public service in 1986.

After a recent visit from a Queensland colleague who was talking about feed budgeting, Jack decided to attend GLM to learn more about it for himself.

How GLM has changed him

“I went to learn about feed budgets but I ended up getting so much more out of it than that.

“I’ve now got an increased awareness of how fragile our native grasses are and how careful you need to be to not overgraze palatable species.”

The issues

Jack notes that the research station has a moderate weed problem and there have been issues with overstocking. For the past six to eight years they’ve been agisting cattle on nearby properties to ease the stocking rates on the research station. Jack feels that GLM helped him to get a better idea of how their stocking regime compared to the theoretical carrying capacity.

“We want to put less pressure on the better grass species” Jack says. “As a result of going to GLM, we’re now arranging more reliable agistment and trying to rotate our paddocks more.

“The planning we did at the GLM course also helped us to get a better handle on our weeds because by writing things down it made us go and have a proper look. As a result of going to GLM we planned an aerial weed control program and it was so successful we’ll be doing more of it” he says.

The future

“One of our goals is to produce a tighter weight range in our steers. Bringing the stocking rate back will hopefully tighten up the weight range of the steers a lot. The minus is that we will run lower numbers but the plus will be that we will have a more saleable product” says Jack. “We will have a more even line and we will get to the 320kg target quicker.”

Jack found one of the best things about GLM was having access to a dedicated Grazing Land Management Officer after the workshop.

“The support and after sales service was incredible, especially the mapping” he says. “Mark produced some excellent paddock maps for me and helped me with my feed budgets.”

“I’m not the sort of person that can read things in a book and then go and do them. I need to be shown by someone in the paddock. I learn by doing and it was great to get Mark out to show me things after the course.”

Final word

“I recommend the GLM course to everybody I come into contact with. It is a really worthwhile investment. It was a real eye opener to me.”