

the burnett buzz...

Autumn 2016

Southern Qld Cropping bus tour

In early March landholders in the North Burnett headed off to tour farms in Kingaroy and the Darling Downs. The tour was a great chance to explore what producers in other regions are doing and how we can incorporate new ideas into our own practice. It was also an opportunity for the group to have some downtime together and recharge after some pretty tough years.

Leaving early from Monto on day one, the first stop was the Enkelmann's property at Heathlands—flood irrigated

"...it was an opportunity for the group to have some downtime after some pretty tough years."

Cotton, Maize and Pop Corn— where agronomist Wayne Seller from BGA was the guide.

The tour continued to Kingaroy Research Station where Peter Want (DAF)

provided a tour of the cropping trials currently underway. Then moving on to Julian Cross's property "Ellesmere" at Kumbia where we had Ian Crosswaite (BGA Agronomist) as the guide.

After an overnight stay at Toowoomba with plenty of reflection on the day's events, day two commenced at David Brown's Talgai Feedlot—Cattle feedlot and grain production, Talgai.

final stop on the tour was at Jimbour Station.



Enkelmann's property at Heathlands

Lunch was at the Jondaryan Woolshed where the tourists were treated to a tour of the woolshed and then continued on to Mayfield's irrigated and dryland grain and cotton farm. Owner Shawn Fresser guided us through his operations. The

Manager Karl Graham guided us through the history of the property and the current farming practices.

Producers provided positive feedback to the event—wanting to know when the next one would be held. Thanks to Nick Christodoulou (DAF agronomist) who assisted developing the comprehensive itinerary.

This project was Part of the Better Catchments project. The project is supported by BMRG and coordinated locally by BCCA, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



Julian Cross' property, "Ellesmere", Kumbia

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Highlights

- Southern Qld Cropping bus tour
- Reef Water Quality finalised
- Soil profiling equipment available for hire
- Herd management & reduced emissions
- The Burnett's contribution to 20 Million Trees
- Better Catchments update
- Compost workshop—a hit with growers



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Reef Water Quality grants program finalised

After three years the Reef Water Quality Grants program has come to a close. This project has seen an involvement by 105 farmers through workshops and participation in on-ground projects, with 70 farmers implementing 92 on-ground projects.

The on-ground projects have been focussed on improving land condition through better grazing land management practices seeing a large amount of the funding spent on subdivision of grazing country, creek fencing and improving water supply infrastructure. Graziers are definitely seeing the value in increased subdivision to allow implementation of rotational grazing practices, which lead to improved pasture condition and less patch grazing. Just over 94 kilometres of fencing has been constructed for paddock subdivision.

“... with 70 farmers implementing 92 on-ground projects”

The other encouraging aspect of this project has been an uptake in riparian fencing. Just over 19 kilometres of fencing was constructed to protect 270 ha of riparian areas, along creeks and rivers in the coastal Burnett.

Some other statistics for the program include:

- \$562,943 allocated for on-ground projects

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Peter Crawford conducting pasture budget estimates at the grazing management workshop held in Childers in May.

- \$812,586 cash investment by landholders
- \$675,846 in-kind contribution by landholders
- \$6,118 average grant paid per project

In addition to the on-ground component of the project, BCCA has facilitated several well attended workshops (focussing on grazing

management, soil health, and pastures), with 75 landholders attending workshops.

The most recent event was a grazing management workshop held at Childers, attended by 18 landholders.

BCCA Field Officer Peter Crawford would like to thank all the landholders who have participated in this program, and encourage you to continue to be involved in future BCCA projects.



Project trough—to help improve the distribution of grazing.

This project was an initiative of the Burnett Mary Regional Group and was supported by funding from the Australian Government. The project was coordinated locally by BCCA.

What's on 'round the Burnett...

Date	Event
23 Jun	Biosecurity Workshop—Gayndah
6—7 Jul	Bouncing back from Natural Disasters - Monto & Gayndah
12—13 Jul	Business EDGE, Gayndah
25—26 Jul	Grazing BMP and Carbon Farming—Monto
3—5 Aug	Property Mapping Workshop, Monto, Eidsvold & Gayndah
25 Aug	Precision Ag Workshop, Agforce, Gayndah
14 Sept	GPS Essentials Workshop—Monto & Gayndah
19 Oct	BeefUp Forum—Kingaroy

NOTICE:
New 5 year membership for \$5.00 available!
Call Melinda at BCCA for an application form on (07) 4166 3898 or admin@burnettcatchment.org

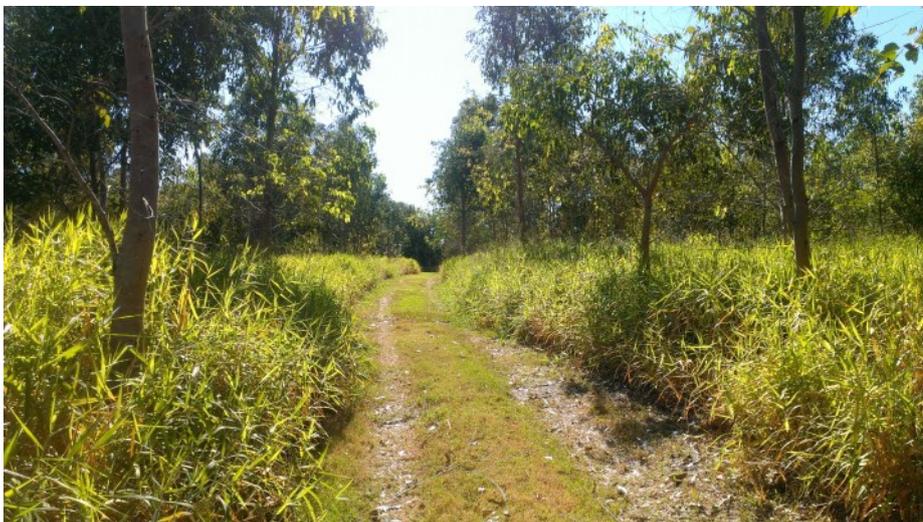
The Burnett's contribution to 20 Million Trees

The 20 Million Trees Program aims to re-establish green corridors along water ways by planting 20 Million Trees by the year 2020. The Australian Government program will address the loss of in-stream and bank riparian vegetation, trampling by grazing stock and declining water quality caused by overgrazing and sedimentation.

With no less than three major flooding events in the last five years within the Burnett catchment, natural plant diversity has been decimated and native pioneer species and pioneer weeds are taking the opportunity to spread without competition.



Plans to replant to a more natural density and diversity of trees and shrubs to maintain the bank stability into the future



Driving through the jungle –Planning for restoration of native habitat after the flood at a site near Gayndah

“...three major flooding events in the last five years within the Burnett catchment, natural plant diversity has been decimated ...”

years with the aim to restore the habitat of our threatened species; the Australian (QLD) Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*) and White throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*).

This project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

As part of BCCA's 20 Million Trees Project "Restoring Riparian Habitat in the Inland Burnett", Fiona Morris has been out and about the North Burnett identifying and assessing sites where natural diversity can be restored by planting other native species to help accelerate the ecological process of returning nature to "natural". The result will increase plant diversity and provide native animal habitats.

With two sites identified and prioritised in Gayndah, the Green Army team will get to work in early July clearing weeds and planting trees. BCCA's 20 Million Trees project aims to plant 5000 native plants and shrubs over the next two



Looking at sites to increase natural diversity – Planning to control thickening and add diversity

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Graziers better informed about herd management

Eighty-nine graziers and industry service providers from across the Burnett Mary region now have a better understanding of grazing and herd management strategies to reduce greenhouse gas 'emissions intensity' from their cattle herd while enhancing on-farm productivity and land condition.

Two events held in March – a Grazer Forum and Field Walk at Booubyjan as a joint initiative of the Carbon Farming Project and South East Burnett Landcare (SEBL) and a Grazer Forum in Monto in conjunction with FARMStuff - focussed on improving pasture and cattle nutrition for better productivity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Presentations by guest speakers, Roger Sneath, Stuart Buck and Damien O'Sullivan, from the Qld Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (DAF) highlighted practical ways to enhance the productivity and efficiency of a grazing operation in the Burnett Mary. Tips included determining pasture quality and quantity, understanding the nutritional needs of different classes of stock at different times throughout the year, using pasture (including legumes) to help meet these requirements,

establishing legumes in your pasture and grazing practices to ensure healthy pastures and sufficient feed for stock.

Veronica Chapman, BCCA, worked through two grazing scenarios to help participants better understand the link between the management strategies outlined by the other speakers & greenhouse gas emissions.

"...practical ways to enhance the productivity and efficiency of a grazing operation..."

BCCA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAF staff for their presentations and enthusiasm over both days. Thanks also to Beth Shanks (SEBL) and Hayley Webster (FARMStuff



Stuart Buck (DAF) & Beth Shanks discuss pasture condition at "Tomine" during the Booubyjan Grazing Forum & Field Walk

Monto) who were instrumental in event planning and preparation and for the sessions they conducted at the events. In addition, the SEBL committee ensured the Booubyjan event run smoothly. The combined efforts of all involved meant the days were well-attended and valued by participants.

The Carbon Farming Project is supported by funding from the Australian Government.

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Staff Profile—Naomi Purcell

Hi, I am Naomi Purcell and have recently started with BCCA on a part-time basis as Project Support and Communications Officer. Based in Monto, my role is to promote BCCA's community profile using different mediums and offer general support to BCCA staff.

With a Bachelor of Business Administration, majoring in Management and Information Systems and a Diploma in Purchasing and Materials Management, it follows that

my professional background is largely based in the fields of Administration, Marketing & Human Resources Management.

I have spent my whole life living and working in rural communities and moved to Monto in 2011 after purchasing a rural manufacturing business. My other pastimes include grazing stud and commercial cattle,



farming, artificial breeding, and horse riding.

I am looking forward to letting members and associates know of all of the BCCA teams' various milestones & achievements. Be sure to look out for us on Facebook (Sustainable Burnett Catchment News) and let me know if you would like to be on our email mailing list.

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BCCA are on Facebook— Like our page!!

Yes, BCCA is up with the times and on Facebook. Just head to: www.facebook.com/pages/Sustainable-Burnett-Catchment/197863326932611 or search for 'Sustainable Burnett Catchment News' on Facebook!



Action on the Ground—an update

The Summer Grain phase of BCCA's Action on the Ground project is completed following plant and grain plot harvesting of the sorghum in early May.

The DAF Kingaroy's plot harvester was employed to harvest samples from each treatment site. The samples were then weighed and sub-sampled to eventually provide us with a tonnes/hectare yield as well as Nitrogen analysis on the grain for comparison between treatment sites.

Unfortunately a major *Heliothis*



Summer sorghum crop AotG trial site

(caterpillar) outbreak early at seed set meant the crop was patchy in places and some of the treatments didn't perform as would be expected on one of the trial sites. However, it is predicted that there will be enough data from both sites to be useful.

Subsequent soil samples were carried out by DSITIA staff to a depth of 90 cm to determine how much Nitrogen was left in the soil post-harvest and where the Nitrogen resides in the soil profile. These will be analysed in Brisbane over the coming weeks.

The sites will remain fallow until September when the last phase of the trial will begin with sowing Spring sorghum. Gas chambers to measure Nitrous Oxide emissions have been replaced in some treatments to measure any emissions that may occur over the fallow period.

This project is an initiative of the Burnett Mary Regional Group and is supported by funding from the Australian Government. The project is coordinated locally by BCCA's project officer Jenny Voigt.



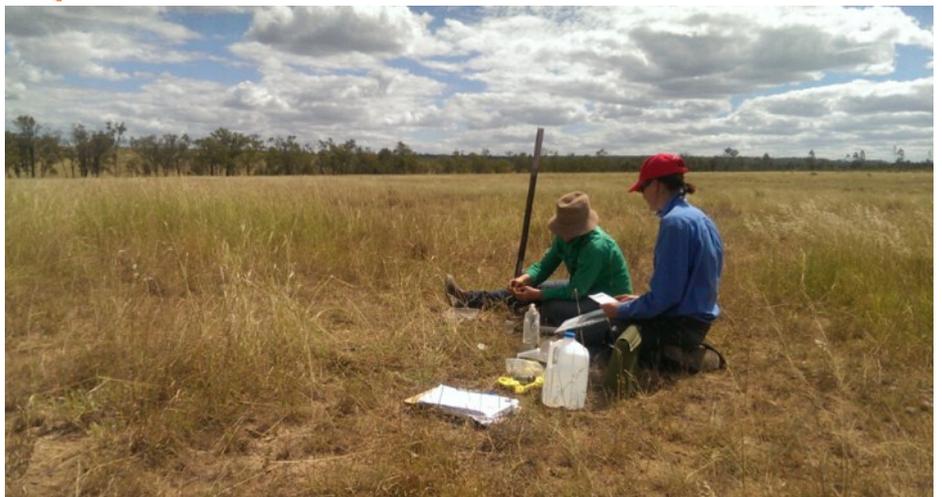
DSITIA staff soil sampling

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Soil Profiling Equipment available for use

BCCA have recently completed a Soil Assessment and Management project (funded through the Burnett Mary Regional Group) which involved working with landholders to conduct soil coring and basic soil assessment. The project aimed to identify any risk areas (eg high sodium soil that will erode if exposed to weather elements) and management practices to avoid or manage the risks (eg. maintaining healthy pastures and good ground cover on this soil type).

As part of this project, BCCA purchased soil profiling equipment that is now available for landholders to use to assess their own soils. Understanding the characteristics of the different soil types which exist on your property helps ensure you manage your soils to avoid degradation and to make best use of them within your production system.



Veronica Chapman conducting soil profiling at 'Twin River' Mundubbera

In addition, understanding your soil characteristics can help you determine the most suitable areas for improved pasture, the best place to build subdivisional fences when fencing to landtype (for enhanced rotational grazing) and which areas are most

suitable to the different crops you grow.

If you are interested in utilising the soil equipment on your own property please contact the office on (07) 4166 3898.

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Better cropping and grazing for a Better Catchment

BCCA has been working with landholders on Grazing and Cropping projects under the Better Catchments program for the Inland Burnett since mid-2015. These projects are supported by BMRG and coordinated locally by BCCA, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

Under the Cropping Project, ten landholders attended the Grains Best Management Practice (BMP) led by Nick Christodoulou— Senior DAF Agronomist. Landholders had two intense days benchmarking their business against Industry best practices in August last year. There were many who found the process an “eye-opener” and also a great opportunity to direct focus, as they all developed an Action plan to identify their priority actions.

BCCA has been working with all these landholders to implement some of their priority actions.

“...many found the BMP process an “eye-opener”...”

In addition, BCCA has provided \$2000 grants to assist each of these landholders to implement projects to start them on their way to meeting BMP standards.

One example was the purchase of a weather station to ensure spraying regimes avoid environmental impacts through drift and to ensure optimal time is identified to undertake activities involved in hay production.

Some other projects include modification to tractors and implements with GPS systems to allow for more accuracy in cropping practices, less waste with chemicals and seed and/or to move towards controlled traffic or zero till practices. The aim for landholders is to undertake practice changes to improve soil health and enhance sustainability which they are all on their way to achieving.

Under the Grazing project eight landholders attended the Grazing Best



New fencing for improved grazing distribution

Management Practice (BMP) workshop—led by an expert team from DAF Future Beef, BMRG, private consultants and BCCA in August last year. Similar to the cropping group these landholders had two intense days benchmarking their business against Industry best practices. They all developed individual action plans for all grazing modules for their future reference.

“...two intense days benchmarking their business against Industry best practices.”

As with the Cropping project, BCCA has been working with all these landholders to implement some of their priority actions. In addition, BCCA has provided \$2000 grants to assist each of these landholders implement projects to start them on their way to meeting BMP standards. Examples of projects include, improving pastures through establishing legumes on their properties, subdivisional fencing for more even grazing and/or for land types. Landholders are well on their way to completing their projects to undertake practice changes that will improve soil health and enhance sustainability.

The project will continue until 2018 where there will be the opportunity for more graziers and growers in other areas of the Inland Burnett to be involved.



EZ-Boom installed on a growers boom spray for more precise spraying

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Monto Manure Composting Day

BCCA hosted a pig manure compost workshop on 14 April in Monto as part of our 25 year anniversary Landcare grant funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the pork industry, croppers and people involved in composting businesses. The day included presentations by Tony Craddock (Aust. Pork Ltd) on piggery spent litter and its value as a fertiliser; and Dr Kelvin Montague who covered soil health and practical ways to improve soil carbon and soil health.

An update on the Pig Manure Composting Project formed part of the afternoon session and although not yet finalised, some results on the sorghum harvest were reported. The yield in tonnes/hectare appears to support physical observations in the field following inundation of the sorghum

"..the addition of compost allowed the plants to cope better"

site for 10 days in January; that is, the addition of the compost allowed the plants to cope better with waterlogging in terms of plant health and subsequent size and quantity of sorghum heads.

Through an analysis of the nutrient

content of the compost and subsequent calculations by Tony and Kelvin, it is estimated around 105kg N/ha was added in the compost when applied at a rate of 10t/ha. Not all of the Nitrogen was available immediately but due to the warm and wet conditions, the rate of mineralisation was higher and the compost broke down over that period to keep the supply of Nitrogen to the plants. In the block with no compost close to the swamp, most of the Nitrogen was lost as emissions or it had leached through the profile.

The difference in plant health at the swamp end

is obvious where the water sat for 10 days but not significantly different at the road end which drained much quicker.

No visual differences were observed with the Lucerne sites but we are awaiting the results of the soil biology, nutrient and carbon sampling before drawing any conclusions here.

While the compost appears to contribute some benefits to the soil, the evidence seems to suggest that for



No compost applied at the swamp end



Compost applied at the swamp end

brood-acre application, the composting process may not be economically viable and simply spreading aged spent bedding would be of benefit to the soil as well as a source of some nutrients.

To be considered aged, the bedding is stockpiled for 12-18mths, turned a few times which makes it partially composted and spread with a high capacity, chain based spreader with vertical or horizontal beaters to handle the large clumps that are present.

Tony Craddock's research shows the material has good levels of Nitrogen and Potassium, some Phosphorous and Sulphur and high levels of Zn (if it's from younger pigs). There are high Nitrogen losses (mainly as Ammonia) if the spent bedding isn't incorporated or washed in.

Hard copies (and an electronic version) of Tony Craddock's presentation are available if you would like further information on the use of spent bedding on broad acre crops. They include composition, application rates and research on response of crops and soil to spent piggery litter.

The Monto Manure Composting project will be finalised in June 2016.

Sorghum Grain Harvest

Swamp End		
Compost 8.3t/ha	AotG Trial	No Compost 6.6t/ha
No Compost 8.0t/ha	AotG Trial	Compost 8.3t/ha
Road End		

Sorghum grain harvest yield in t/ha—pig manure compost trial site

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Burnett Catchment Care Association

BCCA is a member-based, not-for-profit organisation, employing professional staff to develop and implement natural resource management projects across the Burnett Catchment.

We work directly with landholders to support sustainable land management practices.

We partner with associated, like-minded organisations such as the Burnett Mary Regional Group and landcare groups where much of our funding is derived from State and Federal Government funding programs.



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ERF auction price

Did you know? \$10.23 was the average price paid per tonne of greenhouse gas abatement at the most recent Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) auction held in April 2016. If you are interested in knowing more about the auction results, such as how much abatement has been secured under the Federal Government's ERF to date and the types of projects that have been successful at auction, head to the

Clean Energy Regulator website www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Auctions-results. This page features results from the first three ERF auctions which were held in April 2015, November 2015 and April 2016.

For graziers, the Clean Energy Regulator has published a quick reference guide for the 'Beef cattle herd management' method which will help graziers better understand this method and whether it

may offer them the opportunity to become involved in emissions abatement; details can be found on the Clean Energy Regulator website at www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Choosing-a-project-type/Opportunities-for-the-land-sector/Agricultural-methods/beef-cattle-herd-management.



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The interest in pasture improvement, legumes and animal nutrition was evident at our Pasture Forums held in Boobyjan and Monto in March where almost 90 graziers were in attendance. Stuart Buck (DAF Rockhampton) emphasised the potential of legumes to delay pasture rundown, improve pasture condition and fill animal nutritional gaps.

Congratulations to BMRG in their successful bid for Reef Trust III funding as a partner in the Reef Alliance. The successful bid will see investment in to

the cane and grazing industries in the coastal Burnett, Baffle and Mary catchments over the next 3 years. BCCA will be expressing interest in delivering the grazing component for the Baffle and Burnett regions as we have for the last eight years of Reef investment.

BCCA's website will receive a well deserved revamp by the new financial year. The new website will allow BCCA to better demonstrate its project activities and allow people to easily subscribe and become a member.

In a further effort to enhance BCCA's online and social media profile, BCCA has employed (part time) Naomi Purcell to work on our communication. Naomi has a business management and administration background and is concentrating on better publicising the good work BCCA does. Welcome to the team Naomi.

Katie Muller



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2016/17 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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- \$1 cash stamps **NEW \$5 for 5 year membership**

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