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WOOL BESTPRAC - BACK ON STREAM



coming to an END.....

The AWI and MLA funded program, BestPrac has been voted as the most successful extension program for wool producers funded by AWI in the past decade. It has been operating throughout the southern and central western regions of Queensland for the past 8 years and is set to continue for a further 3 years. BestPrac was once a wholly government supported program and is now fully industry funded and managed for producers. This is your industry group established to work for you. So, please get in touch with your local facilitator or group members to find out how you can be involved.

From February, groups operate under a new program called PAR (Participative Action Research) which means all groups and businesses develop action based projects to help grow their business. The local facilitator assists groups to source funds to promote activities. This exciting new initiative will work hand in hand with NRM bodies, industry and community programs.



BestPrac group contacts include:

- Mick Alexander— 0438 395 255**
- Claudia Power— 0429 153 155**
- Lloyd Dunlop— 0409 575 200**
- Blackall - Jack Banks 46575958**
- Tambo - Hume Turnbull 4654 6163**
- Muttaborra—John Hardie 4658 7285**

The 30th June 2008 (4 months away) is the last day any primary producer in Qld potentially will ever be able to participate in any FarmBis supported program and that means the end of any 65% support grants for training in Queensland. All potential training must be already booked in to FarmBis by the 31st March 2008, less than 5 weeks time. Please, please, please consider any training you or any family members or friends or staff would like to participate in as an urgent issue and ring 0438 395 255 or (07) 4927 6790.

I have had many people come to me in the past months asking about programs such as the QRAA Vegetation Assistance grants, Envirofund and many other programs to see if they are eligible and if we are able to assist in preparing applications. My answer has been generally not at this time, as those programs have all finished and are no longer available. We don't know as yet what the new Federal Government initiatives will look like or the target areas being proposed. So, once again, get your applications for training in ASAP. The approved programs we have at this time include: "Leadership in Business", "Technology of Growing Grass", "Goals and Visions", "Strategic Planning" and "Computerised Mapping" courses. The dates are on the back page.

Agfund Project gets green light

After much confusion and 3 months waiting, the Blackall & Benlidi BestPrac Group project "E-SHEEP" has finally received a green light by the incoming Federal Government. The project will establish trials and several demonstrations of electronic ear-tagging, automatic drafting, weighing and fleece recording equipment to minimize human error and labour management issues. We will advertise activities as they become known. For more info phone 0746575 958

NLP Sustainable Practices Grants – Up For Grabs



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Programme

Queensland State Landcare Facilitator,

Rick Kowitz hosted a series of information forums in December prior to Christmas to assist regional NRM groups and Landcare groups to develop locally based projects which will support sustainable practices. These forums explained the Federal Government initiative for rural and regional industry in a new round of grants called “NLP – Sustainable Practices”. Ph

The priority for funding through NLP Sustainable Practices investment is on-ground activities that:

- significantly increase the uptake of sustainable production and other NRM practices;
- support Landcare group and primary production activities which contribute to NLP outcomes;
- enhance the knowledge and skills of natural resource managers;
- promote implementation of best management practices; and
- improve integration of NRM into management practices at the enterprise level.

Agforward & Landcare (have your say)

At this point in time the NLP fund is the only grant left in-which small Landcare and Community based groups can apply for project funding. However, one of the more disturbing comments reported recently was that organizations such as Agforward are lobbying NRM bodies to secure large amounts of these funds to add to the more than \$8 million already in their keeping. This would mean that Agforward is taking community funds ahead of local Landcare and catchment groups, simply due to having a more organized structure and more clout. Is this accurate?? Please email me with your thoughts mick@grazingbestprac.com.au



Mark and Simone Howard “Balmoral” Yaamba with the lively Tom O’Toole at the Rockhampton Workshop.

Calcium is Priority issue for Old Pastures

There are many exciting changes occurring within the grazing industry and broadacre cropping in Queensland and it seems, producers in Central Queensland are leading the way. Several farmers in the region have been trialling new technologies for a couple of seasons without too much noise, until recently. As we all have found, it seems the “old technology” no longer works and new age farmers are looking to improve yields initially with minimum/ zero-till, controlled traffic, organics, pasture leys and more recently balancing soils with microbes (compost teas) and minor nutrients (calcium).

In early December, Scott Stevens (DNR) Biloela and Matthew Barnes (Barnes Consulting) Emerald, hosted a workshop in Biloela, to discuss the issue of pasture run down in Queensland. Matthew has been working with several extremely successful graziers and farmers in the Emerald/Clermont districts where their change in practices have increased yields in crops by up to 50%, by change of management regimes.

Specialist presenter, Martin Hockey of “Australian Soil Planners” assessed several soil tests carried out by local graziers and found the single common thread was that all soils were lacking in available Calcium for plants to utilise. He believed the Calcium would be a major yield factor and recommended that all paddocks should trial a spray on soluble calcium supplement. That is the supplement would need to be aerial or boom sprayed onto growing plants for best results.

Several Graziers are now trialling the products in compost tea applications and trials will be carried out by the Fitzroy Basin Association later in the year. Please stay tuned for updates or contact (07) 4927 6790 for more information or the Fitzroy Basin Association 0749992800.

“Leadership in Business” was a Huge Success

Leadership in Business is a new workshop program developed by Grazing BestPrac and Tom O’Toole of the Beechworth Bakery and delivered for the first time in Queensland at Rockhampton last week. The workshop had a total of 50 participants from both rural and urban based small businesses. The exciting program was supported by FarmBis and AIM and covered three key areas of business including life balance, leadership and goal-setting.

Grazing trainer, Mick Alexander, was excited to see the support the new training program had received. Participants risked the un-seasonally wet conditions to travel from as far away as Clermont, Jericho, Gogango, Yeppoon and from Rockhampton to participate in the program and listen to guest speaker Tom O’Toole of Beechworth Bakery fame.

Mr. Alexander commented, “Business in regional Queensland is crying out for good news stories and training to help small business to grow sustainably into the future. Tom O’Toole is our best example of a small business in rural Australia having continued sustained growth for more than 20 years. He was the feature story for 2007 on Business Sunday and continues to win tourism and business awards annually.”

Mick commented that “Leadership in Business” is one of our many training programs which are developed for small to medium business and delivered in group or individual format. Grazing BestPrac is best known for training in the grazing industry with “Technology of Growing Grass”, “Goals and Visions”, Strategic Planning” and “Computerised Mapping” courses, and has become involved with urban based businesses in recent years. Most small businesses have similar issues with staff management and customer service being the most important.

If you missed the Rockhampton workshop, Tom is coming back to Rocky on the 17th March... And will be at Richmond on the 19th March, .

For more information, phone 0438 395 255.



Crowds flock to hear Tom O'Toole in Rockhampton

On the 12th February, the wettest day of the decade, more than 90 people flocked to Kershaw House in Rockhampton to listen to the inspirational baker, Tom O'Toole of the Beechworth Bakery, Victoria. Tom was brought to Rockhampton by Mick and Noela Alexander, "Grazing BestPrac" Rockhampton to assist the local Rockhampton Business community to grow and have fun in the future. Tom is currently the most sought after business and life speaker in Australia, because he has achieved real success in developing a business in a small country town which was dying. Mick Alexander commented "Tom has a rags to riches story and we need to hear how successful people have done it. We all need mentors who are willing to be open and honest and share".

Tom inspired the huge crowd of forward looking business people and excited staff by explaining how he began with nothing and built a business which in 2007, turned over more than \$10 million and made a profit of nearly \$2 million. He explained the inspiration behind the success story was that of leadership, customer service and goal setting. Tom strongly believes that staff need to be led by example and are generally willing to work hard if recognized and rewarded. One of his key rewards includes constant training and promotion of initiative. He said, "You need to love your staff, because the only way you will succeed is if your staff make the business work".

When asked the question, "What if you train the staff and they leave?", He answered, "What if you don't train them and they stay?" Tom was so excited to speak to the large enthusiastic group at Kershaw House, that he has agreed to come back to Rockhampton on the 17th March for a second evening seminar. Be fast to book in to see and hear Tom O'Toole.

As a training seminar, this one is one of the best promoted and attended in Rockhampton's history with people from dozens of businesses from across the region. Tom is not a motivational speaker, but an inspiration to many small business and aspiring business owners, who find it difficult to work out how to achieve success. In Tom's words "Business is simple, but that doesn't make it easy. You need to work out the difference between simple and easy".

If you missed this one, don't despair. Tom is coming back to Rockhampton next month for an evening seminar on the 17th March and will be in Richmond on March 19. For more information and to keep in touch with future training programs, phone 0438 395 255.

Read more www.tomotoole.com.au

Right: Tom O'Toole with Mick and Noela Alexander

Compost Tea—The Next Horizon 26th March & 10th April

Who can remember the smell of fresh living soil, the rich smell of freshly ploughed soil, just after it has been cleared of scrub and planted to improve pasture? It is very rare to find that odour anywhere today, due to soil & pasture run down and our management programs. The only place you will find it is in compost.

The terms Compost and Compost Tea are becoming well known in places like the Rockhampton region of Central Queensland with more than a dozen grazing families forming the best practice in soils group called "Healthy Soils - CQ". This group has become educated about the importance of microbes in the soil and the balance between Bacteria and Fungi as well as the balance of nutrients. In fact, it would be true to say the science of soil and pasture management will be rewritten in the next decade by graziers and farmers in Queensland and other states. This is in part due to lack of scientific knowledge about microbiology in the soil and the fact that even government bodies do not recognise that soil fertility and sustainability are driven by the life in the soil.

The "Healthy Soils - CQ" group are working together to trial and develop methods of improving soil health using a range of products including compost teas, nutrients and management programs. The first major project will see members build compost tea brewers and trial various commercial products. **Anyone requiring more information on Compost Tea, phone Peter Attard on 4995 7244. Next Compost Tea Field day will be on the 26th March and 10th April.**

Below: Tom O'Toole in action!



WOT'S ON IN 2008



Leadership in Business & Tom O'toole.

Richmond 19th March

Rockhampton 24th June



Goals n Visions Workshop

Longreach 31st March & 1st April

Rockhampton 17th & 18th April

Charters Towers 13th & 14th May

Mackay 26th & 27th May

Richmond 26th & 27th June



Tom O'Toole, Mick Alexander and Roger Simpson

**FarmBis is finishing on June 30th—
All workshops need to be booked in by**

31/03/08 to be eligible

**65% subsidy on all courses for
eligible primary producers.**



Technology of Growing Grass Workshop

Taroom 21st & 22nd April

Rockhampton 28th & 29th April

Richmond 19th & 20th May

Emerald 2nd & 3rd June

Roma 16th & 17th June

Toowoomba 19th & 20th June



Computerised Property Planning Workshop

Calliope 31st March

Blackall 3rd April

Charleville 4th April

Rockhampton 15th April

Clermont 1st May

Charters Towers 12th May

Richmond 16th May

Toowoomba 19th June



Compost Tea Brewing

Moura 26th March

Moura 10th April

WOOLWORTHS—Sustainable Farming Program Grants (\$1.5M total grants)

Woolworths has raised more than \$4.7M in the past year and is giving away some \$1.5M directly to the grazing and farming community in Australia via grants in the next few months.

Applications are now open and will close by the 30th March for grants

- Farmer/ Group grants up to \$10,000 plus GST
- Innovation grants up to \$5,000 plus GST

For more information please go to www.landcareonline.com.au

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