

SPEAKERS

SUSTAINABLE
GRAZING FORUM |
MACKAY 2015

MEGAN STAR

Manager Strategic Projects (Economic Services)
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Economic implications of adopting improved grazing management practices

Megan is an agricultural economist who is Manager of Strategic Projects for Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. She recently complete her PhD on the trade-offs facing grazing business in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Her research interests exits with both extensive rangelands grazing and sugarcane, and leads projects predominately exploring the productivity and environmental trade-offs in achieving improved sustainable agricultural industries. Recent research has focused on working in multidisciplinary teams to understand the viability and implications of innovations to achieve changed management practices for both sugarcane and grazing production systems.



MICHELLE SMITH

Stock Inspector Mackay Whitsunday | Biosecurity Queensland
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

On-farm biosecurity planning & Biosecurity Act update

Michelle Smith is a wildlife ecologist with a scientific research background in feral animal management and control (predominantly rodents, pigs and dogs). She commenced working with Biosecurity Queensland (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) in 2010 as the Stock Inspector for the Mackay and Whitsunday region, dealing with health and production, livestock movements, animal welfare and the agricultural regulatory environment.

In 2014 Michelle was appointed as the Principal Biosecurity Officer for the Central Queensland region of the Invasive Plants and Animals program of Biosecurity Queensland. Pest animals and weeds have adverse economic, environmental and social impacts, particularly in agricultural systems, and Michelle's current role enables her to work closely with local governments, community groups, landholders and other stakeholders to minimise these impacts by implementing comprehensive biosecurity measures.



GEOFF NIETHE |

(B.V.Sc.) Hons. (MVS)
Research Coordinator, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)

Foundations of a breeder herd – junior development

Since graduating in 1974, Geoff worked for 12 years for the NT government in the development and successful implementation of Brucellosis and TB eradication programs. He obtained his Masters in Productive Herd Health & Management at the University of Melbourne and was appointed Principal Animal Production Officer with the Department in Darwin. In 1988 he was appointed Director of the University of Queensland's Pastoral Veterinary Centre at Goondiwindi where he lectured in Beef Cattle Medicine and Production to veterinary students and supervised postgraduate training in pastoral herd management. He has consulted both interstate and overseas and spent 2 years in Turkey establishing a successful lot feeding operation for McDonalds. He currently works for MLA as animal production coordinator for the northern Beef Program. Geoff was president of the Australian Association of Cattle Veterinarians (1994/95) and national president of the Australian Veterinary Association (1998/99).



LAUREN HEWITT |

General Manager of Policy
AgForce Queensland

Update to Vegetation policy in Queensland

Raised on a banana farm into a family of woodchoppers, Lauren appreciated at an early age the level of misunderstanding that could develop from a failure to engage with the environmental sector. This experience sparked a passion to specialise in environmental law and science at university and a desire to ensure that environmental regulation be based on both reason and science. Lauren currently works as General Manager of Policy at AgForce Queensland where she coordinates a team of policy specialists who provide important links between individual primary producers and government and industry body regulators. In this role Lauren has represented AgForce Queensland's 5,000 strong membership at state and national forums and conferences, including a range of State Ministerial forums and a National Farmers Federation Policy Committee.

The majority of broadacre agriculture in Australia occurs on leasehold land which is owned by State and Territory governments and is therefore only leased by producers. Lauren has spent several years working with producers to bring about substantive reform of this arrangement – to reduce the risk of producers losing their land – either through increasing rentals or through lease termination. This policy research has involved working with producers and other professionals such as lawyers, property valuers and academics. The latter culminated in the publication of a paper into leasehold profitability in Queensland which highlighted the negative consequences of a failure to reform leasehold land policy.





SPEAKERS | SUSTAINABLE GRAZING FORUM | MACKAY 2015

JIM FLETCHER |

Beef Extension Officer | Mackay
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Managing pasture nutrition by growth phase

Jim has worked in the Mackay region for 7 years. His area of work incorporates Grazing Land Management, Animal Nutrition and Breeder Management. Jim places an emphasis on practical, simplistic management of Beef Cattle. He is also the project leader on an MLA funded project looking at biological control options for Giant Rat's Tail grass.



ROSS DODT |

Senior Industry Development Officer
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Challenges for the local grazing industry

Ross Dodt is an Industry Development Officer with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Specific projects during the past two years include documentation of Mackay's regional peri urban beef sector, coordination of the placement of drought impacted cattle on Queensland's National Parks and a desk top study of Queensland's beef processing sector.

Previously Ross was a beef extension officer based in Mackay since 1982. In this role he was an accredited presenter of the MLA Nutrition, Grazing Land Management and Marketing workshops. For a seven year period Ross managed a live export project involving the placement of weaner age cattle from north west properties on the Departments Julia Creek Toorak Research station and then monitoring cattle live weight change on pasture, during transport and shipping, in Philippine feedlots and carcase market suitability. The project included coordination of the marketing of cattle for the twenty four cooperating cattle owners.

Ross studied at Queensland's Agricultural College Gatton and New Zealand's Lincoln Agricultural College. Apart from a short period in the Thoroughbred industry experience was gained on Research stations at Ayr (Swan's Lagoon), Theodore and Julia Creek. Extension experience has included Toowoomba, Charleville, Mount Isa and Mackay.



SPEAKERS | SUSTAINABLE GRAZING FORUM | MACKAY 2015

DR PAM PITTAWAY

University of Southern Queensland
National Centre for Engineering in Agriculture

Soil Health

Pam's passion for soil health started at La Trobe University (Victoria), with her Doctor of Philosophy topic on the role of the soil environment in Eucalypt dieback associated with the fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Since then she has lectured in plant pathology and integrated pest management (Roseworthy Campus of Adelaide University), microbiology (Gatton Campus of the University of Queensland), and agricultural science (Toowoomba campus, University of Southern Queensland). She is currently an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow with the National Centre for Engineering in Agriculture at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. Her research includes the feasibility of improving the resistance of wheat to root rots, free-living nitrogen fixation in ponded pastures, composting as an alternative waste management strategy for agricultural industries, the leaching potential of liquid fertiliser formulations for plant cane, and developing a novel soil health testing method.

In 2004, Pam was invited to join the MLA Edge Network Soil Health team as a technical advisor, and was an invited speaker at International Conferences in Japan (Greenhouse Gases and Animal Agriculture, 2001) and Malaysia (National Seminar on Integrated Farming Systems, 2002). She has consulted at the national and international level on the development of objectively defined, composted soil conditioners, and has given presentations on soil health to Grain Grower Updates, Conservation Farmers, Landcare Groups and sugar cane growers. Collaboration with primary producers has been essential to her endeavours, providing the practical, first-hand knowledge and experience that under-pins applied research. She has worked with foresters, grain growers, graziers, country meat processors, sugar milling staff, and most recently, cane growers.



PAUL TIPPETT | Territory Manager Heritage Seeds

New pasture varieties

After completing his education, Paul managed several grazing properties on the Central highlands of New South Wales. From there he moved to Mackay and was employed in the fertiliser industry as a Territory Manager, before moving into retail as Manager of Primac Merchandise in Mackay. When Primac was sold, Paul purchased a dairy at Eungella which he operated for several years. In 2005, Paul started work with Heritage seeds as Territory Manager for North Australia. With many years spent immersed in agriculture, Paul has accumulated a wealth of experience across diverse facets of the supply chain, including production, property management, retail and marketing.



SPEAKERS | SUSTAINABLE GRAZING FORUM | MACKAY 2015

AMANDA BLAND |

Grazing
Reef Catchments Limited

Reef Programme grazing success

Amanda Bland has completed a degree in landscape management with a sub major in systems agriculture and has a wide range of experience in natural resource management programs.

As a Reef Programme Grazing planning officer, Amanda works with eligible landholders to plan, prioritise and develop water quality grant project proposals in the Mackay Whitsunday catchments.



MISKO IVEZICH |

Alluvium Consulting

Design & Planning for erosion remediation

Misko is an environmental engineer who works for Alluvium Consulting providing advice on river processes and erosion control works. Following widespread flooding in Queensland in recent years Misko has led efforts to understand and manage river erosion for water authorities, local councils and natural resource management groups. Misko has a keen interest in advancing river restoration science having authored or co-authored multiple conference papers in recent years. He also regularly delivers training courses in fluvial geomorphology and river restoration science to government staff and natural resource management groups.



KIM KLEIDON |

Event MC

Well recognised and much-loved around the region, Kim Kleidon is Breakfast Presenter for ABC Tropical North in Mackay. As a guru in all things communication-related, Kim also facilitates and runs her own workshops and sessions. Kim's nose for story and vocal talents are in much demand, but in spite of a busy schedule, she manages to regularly find time to support a wide range of community events and initiatives.

