REEF CATCHMENTS

Australian Government

Queensland Government

CASE STUDY

"WE ARE FOCUSED ON HIGH QUALITY, CHEMICAL FREE PRODUCTION, ULTIMATELY TO SUPPLY RESTAURANTS."

BACKGROUND

Rodney and Sharon Dallas' 204 hectare grazing property at Yalboroo is skirted by the boundary of Eungella National Park and sits within the Blackrock Creek catchment. The land type is predominately coastal eucalypt forests and woodlands, with areas of eucalypt hills and ranges and coastal rainforest. 60 % of the property has been selectively cleared for grazing.

RODNEY AND SHARON DALLAS are graziers in Yalboroo (approximately 70km north of Mackay). Through Australian Government Reef Programme 2013-16 Water Quality Grants, Reef Catchments is working with the Dallas' to fund on–ground activities across the property to improve water quality.

FOCUS ON

▶ **RIPARIAN FENCING**

▶ **OFF-STREAM WATERING POINTS**

▶ **GULLY MANAGEMENT**

▶ **IMPROVING PASTURE COVERAGE**

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

During the 2012-2013 Australian Government Reef Programme funding round, the Dallas' attended a DAFF run Stocktake pasture monitoring course. They also received incentive funding to complete 3 soil tests, 1 km of riparian fencing, 3 off stream watering points, and 6 hectares of gully management. These works were instrumental in improving groundcover and runoff water quality.

In 2013-2014 Rodney and Sharon approached Reef Catchments with a proposal to improve pasture coverage, including the implementation of keyline agriculture using a yeoman plough to improve soil fertility (particularly organic matter levels). Queensland State Government co-funding was provided to assist in implementation of a 9.5 hectare trial including keyline ploughing with a yeoman plough, strategic fencing, sowing of legumes and planting of fodder trees (Mulberry and Kurrajong trees). Two other comparison sites were established, including a control paddock (where previous rotational grazing practice will continue) and another paddock (where the entire paddock was yeoman ploughed and sown with legumes). The Dallas' are continuing to monitor the progress of the trial in relation to economic and environmental sustainability.

"The riparian fencing and off-stream watering points have been very effective and we are now able to control grazing in these areas," Sharon said.

"The most important thing we have learned so far is that change takes patience and time! Learning about the role that microbes play in a healthy soil has probably been the most influential factor in our change of management practices.

"What Reef Programme provides is the opportunity to learn new skills and be supported to try new things."

THE DALLAS' RUN 110 BREEDERS ON MOSTLY PANGOLA AND SIGNAL GRASS PASTURES. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND FOR THE LAST 6 YEARS HAVE NOT APPLIED ANY CHEMICALS TO THEIR PROPERTY EXCEPT LIMITED SPRAYING OF HERBICIDE ALONG FENCELINES.

The Dallas' bought their property in 2006 and run 110 breeders on mostly Pangola and Signal grass pastures. Rodney and Sharon are committed to organic production and ultimately aim to produce grass fed bullocks for the restaurant trade.

"Our ultimate aim is to have our entire operation biodynamic, to supply biodynamic grass-fed beef to restaurants - demand is really rising for that kind of high-quality, high-nutrition product," Sharon said.

"We'd prefer to focus on running a smaller herd, up to 300 ideally, with the focus on high quality, chemical free production for an emerging market.

KEY POINTS

▸ 204 hectare grazing property

WORKS COMPLETED INCLUDE:

▸ 3 soil tests

▸ 1 km of riparian fencing

▸ 3 off-stream watering points

▸ 6 hectares of gully management

▸ 9.5 hectare trial including keyline ploughing with a yeoman plough

OTHER

▸ The Dallas' have completed a DAFF run Stocktake pasture monitoring course

▸ They are committed to chemical-free production methods, ultimately to supply the biodynamic, grass-fed restaurant market

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