

Stimulating the adoption of AussieGRASS in the Northern Territory

July 2006 – May 2007



Location: Katherine, Alice Springs and Brisbane

Principal investigator

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The need

This project aims to be a catalyst for the future involvement of the Northern Territory (NT) in AussieGRASS by demonstrating the value of AussieGRASS products to the NT pastoral industry, to NT land administrators and to the NT Government.

NT DPIFM was a partner in the initial AussieGRASS project, and contributed significantly to the development of datasets used to calibrate the AussieGRASS model for the NT. However, NT DPIFM has not subsequently subscribed to AussieGRASS and there has been no opportunity for policy developers, industry personnel and natural resource managers to use this valuable resource to guide decision making.

The participation of the NT in AussieGRASS will allow it to be further calibrated and developed for the NT, providing benefits for national seasonal condition assessments.

How this project fits with MCV objectives

This project is aligned with the MCV goal of increasing adoption of climate risk management by farmers.

Project objectives

1. Increase the adoption of AussieGRASS in the NT as a tool for pasture management and policy development
2. Evaluate the reliability and relevance of AussieGRASS outputs in the NT
3. Evaluate timing and skill of AussieGRASS forecasts in the NT
4. Assess the need for additional AussieGRASS products tailored to the NT
5. Assess the usefulness of integrating data from long term rangeland monitoring sites into AussieGRASS

Methods

- Subscribe to AussieGRASS for one year as a seeding project for the longer term participation of the NT
- Prepare materials to promote and explain the AussieGRASS concepts
- Incorporate AussieGRASS products into extension courses and seasonal condition reports for natural resource users and policy developers
- Evaluate AussieGRASS use and application in the NT
- Prepare submission to the NT Government for ongoing subscription to AussieGRASS



Desired outcomes

- › Improved understanding by land managers, advisers and policy officers of applications of AussieGRASS products to sustainable management of rangelands in the NT
- › Commitment by the NT Government to fund three subsequent years of AussieGRASS participation

AussieGRASS end users include:

- › NT pastoralists (private individuals and pastoral companies)
- › Landcare and natural resource management groups and pastoral industry associations
- › NT Pastoral Land Board
- › NT government departments

Access to AussieGRASS products will facilitate sustainable land management in the NT through better management of natural resources in a variable climate, such as:

- › forage budgeting over large scales
- › regional condition reporting and assessment
- › drought and exceptional circumstances assessment and policy development
- › fire management and planning

NT government agencies must be considered major targets if the aim of getting the NT to subscribe to AussieGRASS in subsequent years is to be realised. However, their interest will depend on the amount of interest expressed by pastoralists and land management groups. The Pastoral Land Board is also a potential major user and their funding also comes from the NT Government.

There may be a view among producers that AussieGRASS products are primarily suited for land administration and are of no practical use in station management. To address this, it is important to incorporate AussieGRASS products into successful extension networks.

Achievements to date

The project will start in July 2006.

What is left to do?

The project will start in July 2006.

MCV is a collaborative program between the Grains, Rural Industries and Sugar Research and Development Corporations; the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Dairy Australia; Meat & Livestock Australia; and Land & Water Australia. The National Farmers Federation and Australian Wool Innovation Limited are associate partners.

For more information on MCV, visit <http://www.managingclimate.gov.au>
Land & Water Australia is the managing agent for MCV.
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