

Introducing sustainable grazing systems at Merriwa

The challenge:

Improve groundcover, plant biodiversity and soil health and change grazing and pasture establishment practices on a 825 ha mixed farming property.

Work undertaken:

- Development of a fencing plan to enable rotational grazing benefits and protection of natural gully lines and seasonal creeks
- Install fences to sub-divide larger paddocks into 30ha parcels
- Install water troughs to all subdivided paddocks
- Introduce rotational grazing
- Improve pasture establishment

Benefits:

- Reduced the potential for soil erosion, through better grass cover watering

- Achieved sustainable management through new subdivision fencing, stock watering systems and rotational grazing regime
- Improved pasture composition and diversity
- Increased herbage retention and organic matter
- Improved soil structure and health
- Fences located according to land capability and soil types to improve sustainability of grazing
- Potential improvements to profitability

Overview:

Landholder Martin Nixon was seeking to secure a future for his enterprise by implementing sustainable grazing practices on his 825 ha mixed farming property.

'Merriwa Park' runs 250 Angus breeders which are calved out in winter with the progeny finished over spring. Steers are turned off the fodder crops direct to feedlots and heifers are grass-finished for the JBS Great Southern market.

With technical advice and funding support through the Hunter Local Land Services Grants Program, Martin was able to undertake a project on his property involving new subdivision fencing, stock watering systems and a sustainable management regime.

"Our aim across the farm was to improve pasture composition and diversity, increase herbage retention and organic matter, and reduce the potential for soil erosion through better grass cover, and improved soil structure and health," Mr Nixon said.

Grant program:

Land Management-Sustainable Grazing
(Grants up to \$50 000)

"We are now on our way to achieving sustainable grazing outcomes through rotational grazing and staggered pasture establishment. We're also taking stock pressure of natural gully lines and seasonal creeks,"
- Martin Nixon, property owner.

