



# Optimising Fodder Options on Mixed Farming Systems

## Participation Guidelines – Demonstration Sites (8)

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Inc. is an independent community-based organisation involved with natural resource management in the Avon River Basin. The organisation operates from its Northam office and exists as the second largest of the seven NRM regional organisations with responsibility for 12M hectares.

### About the Project:

The Optimising Fodder Options on Mixed Farming Systems Project is supported through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and is designed to increase summer ground cover to:

- fill summer feed gaps, and
- improve soil health.

The project will support mixed farmers in the Wheatbelt NRM region to develop whole farm summer cover plans that consider a range of pasture, summer cropping and forage options, to meet pre-defined livestock production goals.

To enable this, Wheatbelt NRM will partner with farmers, local grower groups, corporate agriculture, and other organisations to establish eight demonstration sites across the region during 2019/2020.

The purpose of the demonstration sites are to provide

a wider audience of mixed farmers with a reference as to how whole farm summer cover plans fit within Wheatbelt mixed farming systems to both improve soil health and meet production objectives.

Demonstration site hosts will be supported by a farm planner/advisor to develop the whole farm summer cover plans. The plans will identify the best mix of feed options for each property to ultimately reduce the reliance on hand feeding and improve ground cover during the summer period. By selection of demonstration farms across different soil types and rainfall zones it is intended that the full spectrum of summer feed alternatives will be considered.

Extension events and wider industry learning will support the demonstration sites. They will include opportunities for industry discussion on the topic, and include the latest information on different fodder options, livestock health and market trends affecting livestock production.

## Partners:

Wheatbelt NRM is calling for expressions of interest from members of the Wheatbelt mixed farming community to partner with us to deliver demonstration sites.

We are looking for partners with a keen interest in one of more of the following:

- Exploring innovative feed options
- Improving livestock health
- Improving production and whole farm profit
- Potentially accessing new livestock markets with different turn-off times
- Exploring fit for purpose landuse options
- Improving soil health by increasing soil carbon and reducing nutrient loss through wind erosion
- Supporting other mixed farmers in the exploration of the topics listed above.

We are seeking mixed farmers who have a keen interest in different summer fodder options, and a genuine commitment to continue building on their summer cover plans beyond the project life.

## Essential Eligibility Criteria:

Demonstration farms will be required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- They are a commercial farming enterprise
- They operate on a minimum stock to cropping ratio of 20:80 (up to 50:50 stock to cropping ratio)
- Hosts are willing to hold field walks and engage in other extension activities with Wheatbelt NRM and other industry partners
- Farm businesses will contribute up to 25% of funding for demonstration site seed and seedling costs, site preparation, as well as fund activities 'normally associated with mixed farming' (costs such as seeding, harvesting, livestock management, crop and pasture nutrition, etc)

## The Benefits of Hosting a Demonstration Site:

Benefits of hosting a demonstration site include:

- Access to support and assistance from a range of advisors in farm planning, feed options, livestock health reproduction, NRM and market information for meat and wool products.

- Wheatbelt NRM staff support to coordinate meetings, field walks and other activities outside of those that would normally be a landholder's responsibility in managing their enterprise.
- A one on one relationship with a leading farm planner/advisor to develop an agreed summer cover plan aimed at maximising summer ground cover and meeting farm production objectives.
- An economist working with you to will assess the cost-benefit of the fodder plan. (consulting value \$5000 per farm)
- Soil testing including nutrients and soil carbon.
- Financial assistance with implementation of parts of whole farm summer cover plans.
- Improving soil health.
- Reducing the reliance on hand feeding.

## What's required of Host Farmers:

The following minimum activities would be required of a demonstration farm host:

- Completion of an Expression of Interest form
- Signing of the project agreement
- Meeting with a farm planner/advisor to develop a whole farm summer cover plan
- Meeting with an economist to develop the cost benefit analysis
- Support Wheatbelt NRM to obtain soil samples at project initiation and completion
- Host two field walks on your property throughout the 4-year project
- Speak about your project at four extension events (including the two field walks)
- Participate in promotional activities would include approving media stories and case studies, allowing you and your property to be photographed and video interviewed
- Facilitating plant survival surveys
- Site preparation and planting
- Managing grazing and recording grazing details
- Completion of a final report and case study approval

## What the project will not fund:

- The following activities will not be funded:
- On ground activities not identified in the whole farm fodder plan
- Infrastructure construction
- Activities or materials that are normally part of a landholder's responsibility for the management of their property such as seeding, harvesting, the purchase or hire of equipment, crop and pasture fertiliser and weed/pest control.

## Assessment of Expression of Interest:

An Expression of Interest process has been developed by Wheatbelt NRM that includes advice from the project Technical Advisory Group.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed on:

- Representation of different soil types and rainfall zones.
- Ability to influence a wider audience.
- Commitment to Natural Resource Management within the context of commercial farming systems.
- Commitment to maximising summer ground cover and meeting production targets.

## Critical dates:

Please submit the application form with associated map to Wheatbelt NRM by 5pm Monday 13 May 2019.

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## For more information:

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their application with one of the following staff prior to submission.

### Jacquie Lucas

Wheatbelt NRM Agriculture Landcare Facilitator

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National  
Landcare  
Program



wheatbelt  
natural resource  
management

This project is supported by Wheatbelt NRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program