



Optimising Fodder Options in Mixed Farming Systems Project 2018-2023

PROJECT CODE: P7B183

Overview of Progress: January 2019 to March 2019

The Wheatbelt NRM Team has been progressing project design and approach. We have established a community of practice, with more than 50 individuals joining.

Expressions of interest called, applications assessed for Project Technical Consultant and the Project Advisory Group

- Technical Advisory Group EOI
- Practice change processes developed
- First project community engagement event held

Project Services

- 8 communication materials published
- 30 potential sites for demonstrations identified
- Event held Merredin 27 March 'Growing Summer Feed Options'
- 10 farmers attending event surveyed
- 1 project planning documents to monitor project success established.



At our recent community engagement event in Merredin we visited Tanya Kilminster who farms with her husband Dean and three children at Bruce Rock on a mixed wheat, barley, canola, lupin and merino sheep farm.

Event attendees were very interested to hear about how salinity, poor soil structure and poor organic matter have presented management challenges. This has led to an ongoing commitment to fit for purpose land use to support the mixed farming operation.

The mixed forage they are using is proving extremely valuable to their systems and is putting an end to the need for mineral supplements. Super Sweet Sudan grass is also proving a success. Despite very low rainfall (13ml since Dec) the crop has supported three grazings and is the only green feed in the district.

Lessons Learnt and Improvements

The project design is proving very attractive to the community with the focus on using established practices better rather than focusing on practices right at the leading edge of the innovation curve.

Feedback from our first event was that farmers respond very well to our new event format that is a half day including both field walk and presentation components.

Also learned how important it is to highlight the relationship between summer ground cover and production goals for wheat and sheep. Participants most interested in improving animal health, growth rates and breeding success rates—how can forage and pastures positively contribute.