

Predicting spring pasture growth

Enhanced Producer Demonstration Site

Demonstration goal: Use soil moisture data and modelling to predict spring pasture growth, assisting producers to make early decisions and prepare for increasingly variable springs.

Site location: Dartmoor, Pigeon Ponds and Baynton

Producer group: Glenelg BestWool/BestLamb, Macarthur BetterBeef, Central Ranges Grassland Society of Southern Australia

Group coordinators: Andrew Kennedy, Andrew Speirs, John McMaster

Agriculture Victoria coordinator: Jane Court

Duration: 2018–2021



Measuring spring growth near the soil moisture probe



Cuts are taken to estimate pasture growth

What are we aiming to achieve and why?

This demonstration aims to determine whether soil moisture probes can be used with modelling to make early predictions of spring pasture growth.

Climate projections indicate an increase in the variability – and general shortening – of spring, so reliable pasture predictions could assist producers to make decisions on how best to prepare for the season.

ASKBill and MLA’s rainfall-to-pasture tool are two examples of tools that aim to do this, but they need to be validated and discussed by producers to determine the value and accuracy at a local level.

Method

- Modelling predictions of pasture curves for each site by Brendan Cullen at Melbourne University. This includes long-term average annual monthly growth estimates, variability and predictions (e.g. from October) using soil moisture data from the probes.
- Validation of the modelled predictions through monthly cuts to measure pasture growth.
- Discussion with the producer groups involved about the predictions, localised pasture growth and how to use the information to make useful on-farm decisions.

Partners: This demonstration is conducted with Agriculture Victoria and co-funded by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA).

Contact

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More information

agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/on-farm-demonstrations

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