BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

around the bremer

October 2019

Special points of interest:

Our next Meeting in 2019 is on 17th October

This is our AGM

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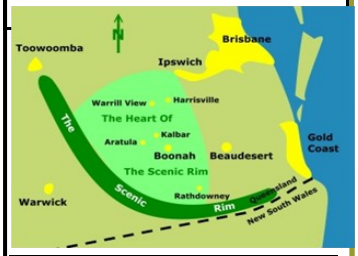

Scenic Rim Region

President's Corner by Mark Edginton

I can't believe it has been nearly a year since our last Annual General Meeting! It has been a great experience and a great honour to be your president since our Annual General Meeting last year. Unfortunately due to work and family commitments, I will not be able to seek re-election as your president this year.

I have learnt so much from all of you, about various aspects of catchment management generally, but especially about Bremer Catchment. While I feel reasonably grounded in my knowledge of the environment generally, but especially botany, many of you have local knowledge of the Bremer Catchment that I, a relative newcomer to this great City of Ipswich, can only dream of. That goes double for the Scenic Rim.

Thank you for teaching me about our beautiful catchment. I also would like to thank the other office bearers who have helped me fulfil my duties in the last year: Vice President Bill Steentsma; Secretary Marianne Steentsma; Treasurer Brian Pepperall and Junior Vice President Darren Close. Thank you too to Jocelyn Clarkson for being our Grants Application Officer. And thank you Jenni Lott for stepping in and acting as our Secretary when Marianne was unable to fulfil the role due to recuperation from a couple of medical operations. We are very happy to see how well Marianne has bounced back.

I hope that you will all continue to remain members of Bremer Catchment, and contribute to our goals in any way you can, such as boots on the ground and hands in the dirt, or your valuable input at meetings, or in so many other ways. Though I will no longer be your president, I too look forward to remaining a member of BCA.

Let us all be on the lookout for new members as well. One of the exciting things about new members joining us is that they can bring new skills to our fold. Christopher Gray has only recently joined us but already he is working on our Facebook page and he is interested in working on our web page.

Take the time to 'Like' the Bremer Catchment Association Facebook page and have a good look at it while you are there. BCA is a long-standing organisation, but it is great that we are learning new tricks to take us into the future. Together, we can make a difference in the management and rehabilitation of the Bremer River catchment.

Carbon neutral meat coming to a supermarket near you

This month we spoke with James Madden, the Managing Director of Flinders + Co. (see Photo above) who is shaping his meat distribution and wholesaler company to respond to changing consumer trends. James will be joining us at evoke[AG.] where we will hear his views on the future of the meat industry and the direction it needs to take to stay on our plates.

With a millennial mindset, James Madden is determined to evolve the red meat industry to ensure the produce remains in the shopping trolleys of his generational peers. Together with his father, David Madden, the duo are rolling out a number of sustainable and ethical projects within their meat distribution Company.

In December 2018, Flinders + Co, became the first meat company in the world to fully offset all carbon emissions from not only their business but every kilogram of meat they sell. This allows their customers predominately high-end restaurant chefs, to list their produce as being Carbon neutral on their menus.

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The project forms part of the Flinders + Co vision which is to cultivate a better food world.

Along with their completed carbon neutral project, James and his father have a number of other projects in the pipeline including going chemical-free wich will see them installing a unique ‘E-Water’ system to remove the need to chemically sanitize and sterilise..

“I’m going to be working in this industry for another30 years and I wanted to make a difference and make a mark. We also want our staff to leave with a sense of fulfilment. We have a big vision, but we understand that it’s the little details that really matter. Consistency reliability and a “get it done” attitude. These projects help make it happen.”

AgriFutures Australia is the trading name for Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC), a statutory authority of the Federal Government established by the Primary Industries Research and Development Act 1989.

New Oakleigh Mine Background—Bill Steentsma

The 14th September, I joined a Land Degradation Field Trip organised by the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. Being a member, I accepted a call from a former DPI colleague.

The highlight was for a study opportunity for Griffith University students of the "Land degradation Catchment Management" faculty. (including their Lecturers). One of the visited areas was the New Oakleigh Coal Mine within the Bremer Catchment. Mr. Brad O'Reilly, a 2004 Griffith University Graduate was the Mining Site Presenter. Among his several expertises, is rehabilitation of mining sites.

New Hope Group purchased the mine in 1999 and commenced open-cut mining at Oakleigh West in 2000 on Mining Leases 4698 and 50175. The Oakleigh West Pit produced approximately 0.5 million tonnes of product coal per annum from the Walloon Coal Measures. The mining sequence consistent of blasting overburden and removal by excavator and trucks to out-of-pit dumps (in-pit dumping occurred during later stages of mining).

To expose the coal seams which were ripped by dozers and removed by loader into haul tricks for transport to the wash plant at Oakleigh East. Product coal was then trucked to the nearby Jeebropilly mine for rail loading and transport to the Port of Brisbane. Coal mined at the New Oakleigh Mine was predominantly sold as export thermal coal.

While owners New Hope will shut the 65-year-old mine down, the company said it was committed to the area and was already working to rehabilitate the mine.

CEO and managing director Rob Neale said the Rosewood operations had become of the most historically important mines in Queensland.

"We will always remember Oakleigh and the overall West Moreton operations, it has a special part in the history of Queensland".

The mine has been a longstanding feature of this community and the region for many decades, but the mine has simply run out of coal reserves on this lease area and as a result this operation has now reached the end of the its productive life. However, Mr. Neale emphasised the work remaining to be done to rehabilitate the site. New Hope's work here isn't done yet.
Rehabilitation has been ongoing here for a number of years already and this work will continue for some years to come".

"Rehabilitation has been ongoing here for a number of years already and this work will continue for some years to come.

Brad, Oakleigh Mining Site Presenter, on pasture rehabilitates mine area talking to the audience.

Big dry here to stay as summer edges closer

AustralianFarmers, 26 September 2019

Australia's mother of all droughts shows no signs of abating, with forecasters predicting a less than hopeful chance of average rain moving into summer.

Earlier this month, the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) reported that Australia's total rainfall during the 2018-19 financial year was 351.4mm, 24 per cent below average, and the driest financial year in nearly half a century.

The lack of rain contributed to an extension of severe drought conditions in many parts of eastern Australia, with Northern Territory experiencing its driest financial year since 1964.

If you're looking for help managing drought, browse assistance options at Farm-Hub.

A prolonged spell of drier-than-usual weather has seen some areas of eastern Australia fall more than one metre behind their usual rainfall totals during the last three years.

The Impact

The prolonged spell of drier-than-usual weather has contributed to the catchment for Australia's largest river system amassing multi-year rainfall deficiencies not seen in the last 120 years.

According to the BOM's most recent drought statement, the 32-month period from January 2017 to August 2019 was the driest such period on record for the Murray Darling Basin and NSW.

During this time, rainfall was 40% below the long-term average for the northern Murray-Darling Basin and 34% below average in the southern basin.

A prolonged spell of drier-than-usual weather has seen some areas of eastern Australia fall more than one metre behind their usual rainfall totals during the last three years.

The drought across much of Eastern Australia continues to set new records with no end in sight.— From the AustralianFarmers, it is an online community powered by the National Farmers' Federation.

Fertilised pasture holds back drought for local beef producer

A spring fertiliser program has saved one farmer from destocking over summer and autumn while south east Queensland endures ongoing drought conditions.

John Carmichael runs beef cattle on his 600 acre property at Willowbank. On advice from his agronomist, John had soil tests taken on his paddocks a couple of years ago, with the results showing very low levels of soil nitrogen. That spring John applied 100kg/ha urea as an easy way to introduce nitrogen to the crop cycle for quick results. The pasture, predominantly Rhodes grass with a mix of native grasses, responded well.

"The results were very positive just from that one application," John said, "so I continued with a spring application of nitrogen the following year."

In the spring of 2018 the same paddocks were top-dressed with seconds of an ammonium sulphate fertiliser (20.5%N) as an economical source of nitrogen. Adding nitrogen to the soil helped establish pasture growth before the severe dry of summer hit.

John noticed improved pasture growth during the summer season despite the dry conditions and is happy with the results of his investment.

"Having that extra feed over summer means I haven't had to destock until mid-July," he said. "I've also noticed that after rain the areas I've fertilised on the farm recover much faster than other paddocks in our area."

John's agronomist, Donald McMurrich from Farmcraft in Kalbar, believes that's a pretty good outcome.

"It's an incredible result considering most farms in the area began reducing livestock numbers months ago, with some now totally destocked," he said.

Donald added that he had conducted a large number of soil tests in the Boonah/Fassifern area over the past three years and the results have consistently shown a very low level of soil nitrogen.

Nitrogen fertiliser is a compound added to the soil to stimulate plant growth, stimulating chloroplasts which are responsible for the process of photosynthesis. Plants without sufficient nitrogen will turn yellow and then perish from lack of food.

Applying a nitrogen fertiliser such as urea before rainfall in spring can increase grass volume and grass seed production, as well as improving grass quality for cattle.

"As well as being beneficial to pasture, a spring application of nitrogen can also increase competition for weeds," said Donald, "especially fireweed, which doesn't compete well with an increased volume of desirable grass species."

If you think you might have a nutrition issue the best way to assess the problem is with soil testing.

"It is an incredible result considering most farms in the area began reducing livestock numbers months ago, with some now totally destocked," he said.

His client, Brian Shields from Tarome, had suspected a lack of nutrition was an issue and was happy with the recommendation.

"I did some soil analysis last year for a client and the results showed virtually no nitrogen in the soil," said Donald. "I recommended 100kg/ha of urea in spring to correct the deficiency on his pasture and the same after grazing of forage oats during winter."

His client, Brian Shields from Tarome, had suspected a lack of nutrition was an issue and was happy with the recommendation.

"I expected a response but was very impressed with what happened," he said. "The crop growth of oats in winter and pastures in the spring after application was exceptional."

If nitrogen application could benefit your pastures this spring, contact your local Farmcraft rural store and consider soil testing this season.

Urea treated block on right hand side of fence after two years of fertiliser applications with a similar stocking rate to the left unfertilised side.

For further information contact: Donald McMurrich,

Farmcraft, 0448 029 023

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