BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

around the bremer

December 2023

Special points of interest:

The next Meeting will be on

20th

February

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President's Corner by Keith McCosh

Around The Bremer and Up The Creek

The Management Committee wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Out with The Rabbit and in with The Dragon.

2024 looks like being a very busy year (again) with a full calendar of events where we can showcase the special features of the Bremer Catchment – from the cliffs on Main Range to the tidal section at Karalee and beyond into Moreton Bay.

Our message is simple – we want a "healthier" Bremer – and we want to assist all landowners and other key stakeholders to adopt better land practices. "We speak for the Bremer" is our motto, and all BCA members are out there to talk about how we can make a healthier Bremer. We need lots of skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to present this message to all manner of players. So we are always keen to have new members. Join us on a journey to a healthier Bremer. We don't just talk, of course. We offer a wide range of "services" that can assist the catchment community to understand and act. We operate in two very different communities, requiring two separate skill sets – rural upstream areas and urban downstream areas.

Be safe. See you all next year.

The online tool helping farmers navigate the carbon "confusopoly"

The Australian Farm Institute is helping farmers navigate the complex and rapidly changing carbon farming landscape, with an easy-to-use online tool that steps users through a series of questions to determine which, if any, carbon project suits their business.

Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute (AFI), which developed the resource, Richard Heath, says as options to engage in new carbon markets have grown, a "confusopoly" has developed, with many primary producers unsure if the perceived cost of participation is higher than the return.

"In speaking at a lot of events, and to lots of farmers, the clear message that we get is *confusion about the number of carbon opportunities* being presented and farmers' ability to weigh them up against each other," Mr Heath said.

"That has been complicated by the speed of evolution of policy in this area that can very rapidly make an opportunity more or less attractive, which then affects investment, the requirements of the project and a range of other factors.

"It's just such a fluid environment when they need clear and concise information about what the real opportunities are."

The Carbon Opportunity Decision Support Tool

In response, AFI interviewed stakeholders across the carbon landscape, from banks, academics and regulators to primary producers, farm advisors and peak bodies.

"The primary objective of this project was to create a decision tool to help producers decide what, if any, is the best opportunity for a particular farm business in relation to carbon," Mr Heath said.

The result is the **Carbon Opportunity Decision Support Tool** (CODST), which guides users through a series of questions to identify a project best suited to their business, risk appetite and personality. Along the way there are links to stories about farmers who've put the various methods into practice, contacts for advisors and experts, and helpful resources such as AgriFutures Australia's **"A farmer's handbook to on-farm carbon management".**

"There's a lot of evidence that the success of a business model really depends on the alignment of skills and personality with the business model." We wanted to make sure that the particular path you ended up going down was aligned to those characteristics."

The biggest benefit of carbon farming

One of the most important outcomes for primary producers in carbon farming is not the carbon credits they can create but the productivity gains that can be achieved.

"It's actually the primary benefit and that's what we want to make clear,"

"There's quite a deal of research now that shows very clearly the economic benefit is far greater in terms of productivity improvement than you might make from the potential alternative revenue stream from sequestering carbon.

"It gives a more resilient farming system, better yields, more water retention, all of those agronomic factors that lead to greater productivity and profitability."

AFI plans to continually improve and refresh the CODST to ensure it keeps pace with new technology and the changing regulatory environment and is exploring its potential for use on other emerging opportunities, such as biodiversity credits.

Media enquiries: Matt Wordsworth
0404 029 241
matt.wordsworth@bluehillpr.com.au

PEAK BODY FOR QUEENSLAND AGRITOURISM

Queensland Farmers Federation, QFF is establishing a peak industry body for agritourism in Queensland to launch in May 2024.
The peak body will represent the interests of primary producers who have established agritourism operations as well as those primary producers looking to diversify their farming business with agritourism. In parallel with this project, QFF will be developing an agritourism planning guide for local governments.

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

QFF is currently seeking expressions of interest from industry stakeholders for ongoing input into the development of the peak body and from primary producers who may be interested in membership once established.

I AM AN INTERESTED INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER

I AM AN INTERESTED PRIMARY PRODUCER

Agritourism helps to maintain the viability of active farms and rural communities.

Queensland's primary producers recognise that agritourism allows them to diversify and generate additional income through on-farm activities and that agritourism enterprises support and promote agricultural resources, traditions and culture.

There is currently no representative body to advocate for and provide advice to primary producers with agritourism operations.

The establishment of a peak body to represent the sector is critical, as agritourism and policy creation for linking tourism and agricultural development are essential to leveraging key opportunities for the sector and creating a united voice.

Agritourism offers opportunities for farmers to:

- Create brand, establish provenance, and build reputation by sharing their farming story in the context of their people, place and produce
- Innovate and diversify through value-added products and services
- Increase income through agritourism revenue streams
- Smooth volatility of cashflow
- Monetise underutilised assets such as farm buildings and natural aesthetic

Connect with locals and visitors to the area.

Drones – A Commercial Reality for Cropping Systems

Air Born Insight - Nat Parker, Agricultural Scientist, B. Sc. Crops and Rangelands

Drones used in Agriculture

In the last 5 years there has been great advances in drone platforms, the sensors/cameras drones carry, and data analytics. This provides an opportunity for advanced decision making and better crop management for many crops at the commercial scale. Airborne Insight has been using drones for 8 years to inform crop research programs, and worked with innovative commercial farmers to advance their use of drones for day-to-day decision making. Despite the huge capability of drone data to inform crop management there are several barriers that most commercial operators have encountered, which means the reality is very few farmers are using drones to their potential.

These barriers include:

 The false idea that it can be done effortlessly. When it turns out to be complex to get useful data, people wrongly assume it will be too costly or hard to get the information they need.
 The purchase of sensors that do not provide the information required for actionable data
 Not knowing who to partner with to get a drone program established that has useful outputs
 The delivery of data through platforms that are difficult to access and/or interpret

However, if the right drone and sensors are purchased, with an established workflow, collecting meaningful data is far more efficient than current farming data collection practices. Drones provide amazingly rich information on crop size, numbers and crop health at a scale that is not possible with in field measurements. AirBorn Insight currently works with commercial farms using crop counting, crop size distribution maps and biomass assessments for a variety of crops. This helps better inform crop harvest timing and location, product application and market forecasting.

Key thoughts from working with farm managers over the last 8 years:

- Drones taking a few colour photos or providing pretty health maps without application provide limited benefit to farmers for crop management. Unfortunately, this is often where people have started & finished their drone journey as the data did not support farm operations.
- • The workflow to produce actionable data is a critical consideration, in my option this the most important aspect to drone farm operations. This needs to be outsourced by farmers to services providers as it is the most complex part of the process.
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Once you have done some basic training, flights and imagery collection is relatively simple. From your imagery, Airborne Insight will provide you with the data you need when you need it. Overall, the use of drones in agriculture enhances efficiency, sustainability, and productivity, and is a key tool to the advancement of modern farming practices. Get into it now!

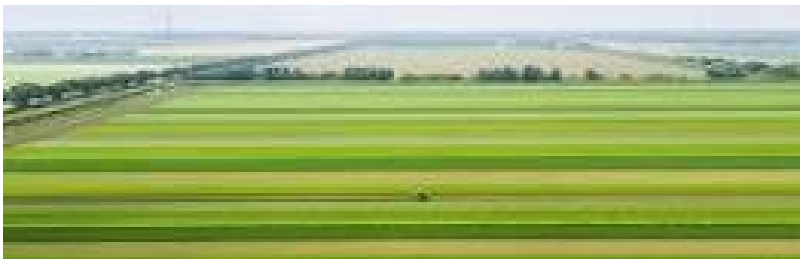
See more on our website https://airborninsight.com.au/drone-based-phenotyping/
Contact Nat on 0490 325 261 or at **nat@airborninsight.com.au**

Erosion Control with Concrete Mats

At the recent Harrisville Agriculture Expo, Bill met many people, each very devoted to their business or Landcare Organisation. Agriculture/horticulture/grazing/eco-tourism for the Bremer Catchment have been close to my interest for many years.

Every year we are challenged to come with better/improved land management. This will also be for 2024 and many years after.

Most importantly, is looking after the soils and keep them "nailed" on the farms. Many methods to do so have to be frequently investigated and improved, i. e . Starting at the farm.



Using Strip cropping to hold the soil

Industrial Development Drainage Channels – Bundamba Q – Stage 1 – 0214

Rural, private landowners and the agribusiness market sector experience many similar problems to the civil and environmental markets. The Concrete Mats method works on a small and large scale.

Protection and prevention of erosion

Soil erosion can lead to surface water run-off and siltation of water courses; erosion prevention techniques are important to overcome this. Additionally, effective and reliable channeling works are needed for irrigation or land drainage purposes.

Concrete Mats are also suitable for storage, stabilisation and filtering solutions. These concrete mats are used to construct roads, dams and ponds, drainage channels and livestock traffic tracks. Concrete Mats are an easy to use and ideal solution for landowners and managers.

Bill is looking forward to the next Expo.—Well done, Harrisville!

Pasture planting techniques

There are four methods of establishing a pasture. These are:

- Complete seed bed preparation
- Minimal seedbed preparation
- Aerial seeding
- Sod seeding

Complete seedbed preparation

Grass seed is small and often lacks seedling vigour.

Grass seed is small and often lacks seedling vigour. Therefore seedbed preparation is very important, if a grass is included in the pasture mixture.

The primary aim of pasture planting is to kill all existing vegetation by cultivation and to allow sufficient time before planting for subsequent germinations of weeds to be killed, either by machinery or by chemicals.

A firm, fine seedbed is required, but light soids should not be overworked into a fluffy seedbed. Old cultivations are especially prone to overworking.

Seed is broadcast either by machine or by hand and then lightly covered by one of the following methods:

- A light chain harrow.
- A rubber tiered roller good for none-crushed soils because allows best soil-seed contact for rapid establishment.
- Dragging a bush behind a tractor (brush harrow)-good for crusted soils.

Note: avoid burying grass seed more than 5 mm below the soilsurface, otherwise it may establish poorly.

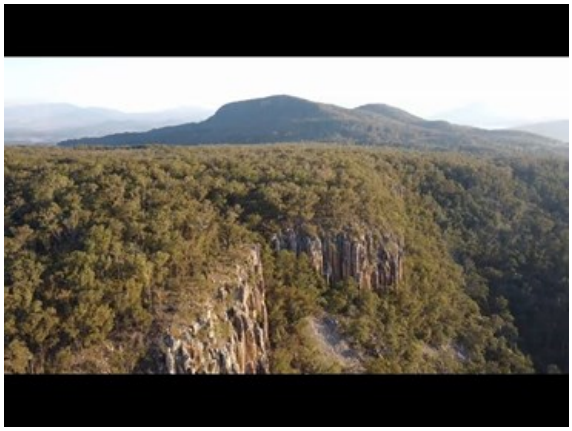
Regenerating poor-performing pastures

For more information consult: Pastures and fodder crops, DPI

Information Page

Mt French in Moogerah Peaks National Park

Mt French is an extremely interesting mountain and a notable peak of the Moogerah region. It is possible Queensland's most popular rock climbing area and its cliffs display dramatic vertical fissuring. In addition some of the foothills are covered in a form of dry rainforest of great interest to botanists.



Approximately 10 km from Boonah the lookout is well worth a visit.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2024

The Editor

Editor's Contact details:

Email: msteent@ngvemail.com

Mobile: 0414 381 664

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