Registrations open for 2016 Pasture Principles program

Program Overview
Pasture management is the fundamental skill that determines the financial performance of pasture based grazing systems. Managers that exhibit a high degree of pasture management skill are far more profitable than those with less developed skills.

The aim of Pasture Principles is to provide farmers with a set of guiding principles that will allow them to manage confidently regardless of the season, situation or system. The program was developed by Basil Doonan B. Ag. Ec., Dip. Appl. Sc. (Hons), Principal Consultant at Macquarie Franklin, in conjunction with valuable input from a range of experienced individuals.

Program Content
The program is suitable for participants involved in the sheep, dairy and beef industries. The key areas covered in the program are:

1. An understanding of the relationship between plant requirements, leaf emergence rates and pasture growth
2. Plant morphology and the relationship with pasture quality, pasture quantity and plant persistence
3. Measuring and predicting pasture growth
4. Allocation of pasture on a dry matter basis
5. Variations in pasture quality throughout the season
6. The relationship between stocking rate and pasture utilisation
7. Animal requirements for maintenance, growth, pregnancy and lactation
8. Feed budgeting
9. Feed planning
10. Marginal cost and marginal revenue decisions associated with feeding pasture

“Our entire team undertook the Pasture Principles program in 2011. From this we implemented a new grazing management plan, only possible with the new skills we obtained from Pasture Principles. We have lifted stocking rates beyond our initial targets and still have more capability to lift them further. Pasture Principles provided us with one of the most critical turning points in our business productivity and profitability in the last decade.”

Frank Archer, Landfall Angus (2011 participant)
**Program Delivery**

The program is offered in a group training environment. Delivery consists of a two day workshop which covers the theory of grazing, understanding the language and key principles.

Following the workshop, participants engage in a 12 month program consisting of six coaching sessions that puts the theory into practice and develops the key skills associated with pasture management. The coaching sessions are aimed at both skill development and the implementation of grazing strategies and management on participants’ farms. They provide an opportunity for participants to discuss issues with each other and the experienced Macquarie Franklin coach, and develop workable solutions.

The program is delivered by Macquarie Franklin’s highly experienced pasture management staff, Basil Doonan and Jason Lynch.

“I’d encourage any livestock producer looking to increase their production to undertake the Pasture Principles course. We’ve moved to a rotational grazing system on the back of the program which has enabled better utilisation of our pastures, especially our irrigated clover. The course has resulted in our operation increasing its stocking rate by 18% and at the same time it’s lifted our weaning weights and brought forward the average finishing date of our prime lambs. The increased awareness of pasture utilisation has made planning in a tough year easier and we are more prepared for feed gaps.”

*Scott Colvin, Nosswick (2015 participant)*

**Pasture Principles in 2016**

During 2016 groups may be run in the North West, Tamar Valley, Northern Midlands, Cressy, Central Midlands, Southern Midlands, Coal Valley and King Island, depending on interest. Eight business are required per group for the course to go ahead. The cost is $2,275 per business for up to three people - additional people from a business will cost $800 per person.

Sheep and beef producers participating in Pasture Principles in 2016 will be subsidised by MLA’s and AWI’s Making More from Sheep and MLA’s More Beef from Pastures, reducing the cost to $1,820 per farm business and $640 per additional person.

Groups for 2016 will be finalised by early January and the theory workshops will be held in February. The first coaching sessions will be held in March, with the remaining five scheduled at key growth/management points during the year.

For more information or to register your interest in Pasture Principles, please contact Macquarie Franklin:

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