

Practice Guide Overview



# Grazing for Soil and Landscape Regeneration



Access  
the **complete**  
guide here

Regenerative grazing approaches aim to meet livestock needs through practices that build soil health, improve landscape function and support personal and business goals.

# What's in the guide



Common regenerative grazing principles

## 1. Planning animal moves

Mobbing up

Planning livestock moves

Feed budgeting

## 2. Monitoring and adapting to changing conditions

Common monitoring

Using monitoring results

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Upgrading water systems

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## 4. Rethinking livestock management

Working with animal instincts






Selecting animals for your goals

Regenerative practices to boost animal health

## 5. Increasing diversity and adjusting enterprise design

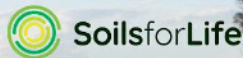
Strategies for increasing diversity

# Why consider regenerative grazing?

-  **Improve soil and landscape health** by using animals as tools to decrease bare ground and increase water infiltration rates and soil water storage capacity
-  **Boost productivity** by ensuring pasture recovery and improving pasture diversity and resilience
-  **Improve animal health** including through more nutritious feed on offer
-  **Enhance personal wellbeing** through improved control and decision making
-  **Improve profitability** through increased productivity, reduced costs, improved control and responsiveness to market and seasonal conditions and, at times, access to price premiums



'You are reacting to the markets rather than waiting until you have no grass at all and being forced to sell or forced to buy feed. Having plants that are able to capture and utilise every rainfall event, and being able to carry more animals also improves the financial results.' – **David Read, East Gippsland, VIC**



**Grazing** for soil and landscape regeneration

An introduction, with Nick Austin TD




# Planning animal moves

A grazing plan outlines where and when livestock will be moved. This plan is a starting point only and is revisited based on changing conditions. Generally grazing plans are updated at least twice a year before and after each growing season.

## Planning grazing can:

- Prevent overgrazing and undergrazing
- Create shorter periods of beneficial animal impact
- Provide longer rest periods for desirable plants to recover after grazes
- Support better decision making by revealing the impact of different choices.



'If you start moving cattle faster than you expected, it is a tap on the shoulder to make a change.' – **Nick Austin, Mundarlo, NSW**



### No recipes, adapt to your context

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Understanding your unique context and getting clear on your individual goals is a critical part of the planning process.

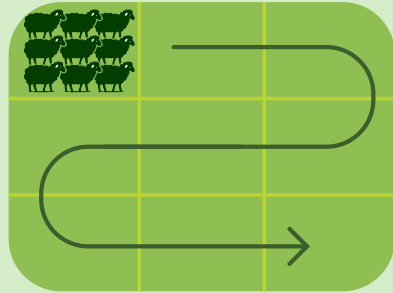
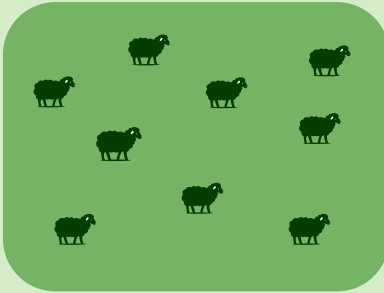
'Once you write it down and make decisions towards it, it becomes very powerful. If you don't have that context you're really just making decisions to suit other people.' – **Nick Austin, Mundarlo, NSW**

## Key elements of grazing planning

- **Mobbing up** – Reducing the number of mobs, making it easier to implement more frequent moves and longer recovery periods.
- **Feed budgeting** – Estimating feed availability and quality, to inform planning and match feed supply with animal demand, and stocking rate with carrying capacity.
- **Planning** – Planning livestock moves to meet livestock needs and other business goals, while achieving beneficial animal impact and allowing time between grazes for plant recovery.

### Stock density and grazing time

Animal impact from grazing can be either beneficial or harmful depending on how it is managed. When well-planned, short duration grazing at high stock density can actively accelerate land improvement, but if the conditions aren't right or the approach is poorly executed, it risks causing damage instead.



*Same stocking rate, different stocking density.  
(Adapted from Judi Earl, AIMS)*

**Find out more** about commonly used tools to support grazing planning.



**Check out the** grazing planning rules of thumb used by graziers in this guide.



# Monitoring and adapting to changing conditions

Grazing plans are just a starting point. Regenerative grazing involves regular monitoring and using this information to adjust plans in response to changing conditions.

## It's common to **monitor**:

- Feed on offer, feed utilisation and plant recovery
- Soil surface, ground cover and compaction
- Animal behaviour, gut fill and manure.

## **Adjust** your plan by:

- Changing timing of grazing and rest periods
- Adjusting stocking rate up or down to match carrying capacity
- Changing paddock sizing with temporary wire to adjust livestock density
- Adjusting desired goals and pasture residuals from upcoming grazes
- Changing animal classes in the mob.





# Grazing *for soil and landscape regeneration*

Monitoring and adapting through the season, with Nick Austin



'Every year is different in terms of the grazing and rainfall and what happens with the season, so we have to be adaptive.' – **Ruth Read, East Gippsland, VIC**



'We are aware of drought early, we can take action early and safeguard our money, land and relationships.' – **Katrina Butler, Perenjori, WA**



# Redesigning infrastructure

## Water access and infrastructure

- Larger mob sizes require higher flow rates.
- Different grazing patterns and landscape goals can require changes to the location and number of water points.
- Moveable troughs can provide low cost flexibility of water locations.
- Changed grazing patterns can increase ground cover and improve water quality but also reduce runoff into dams.



'Go with bigger water pipes than what you think you need, you will use it later.' – **Ben Simpson, Aramac, QLD**



'Don't mob up until you get the water right first.' – **Nick Austin, Mundarlo, NSW**

## Fencing and paddock layout

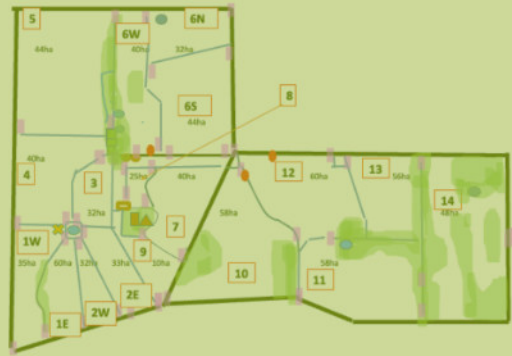
- Changing fencing to increase the number of paddocks per mob provides greater control.
- Greater control allows shorter, more intense grazing periods, longer recovery times and more flexibility to adapt.
- Initial improvements can generally be made without new fencing through mobbing up.

There is no single way to design paddocks that will work everywhere. Consider soil types, land capability, existing fences and type of livestock under management.



Property plans showing different approaches to water and fencing infrastructure on the case study farms.

Find out more about redesigning infrastructure



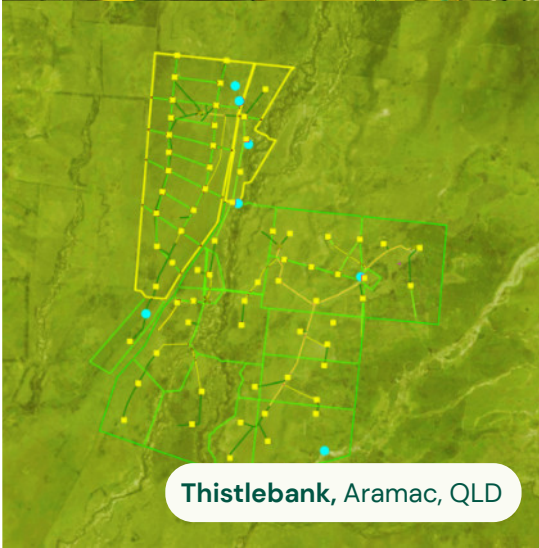
Gimlet Ridge, Perenjori, WA



Bellevue, Millmerran, QLD



Mundarlo, NSW



Thistlebank, Aramac, QLD



Woodcote, East Gippsland, VIC

# Rethinking livestock management

## Working with animal behaviour

Working with natural animal instincts can reduce the labour burden, facilitate easier moves and reduce animal stress.



'The animals know what you are doing, they know when you will move them.' – **Rod Butler, Perenjori, WA**



### Using natural animal instincts

Consider using water placement to encourage animals to move themselves or create impact where it's needed, integrating new livestock with the existing herd so they learn how the system works, and finding ways to build animals' trust so they know what to expect.

**Find out more** about training programs focused on working with natural animal instincts.



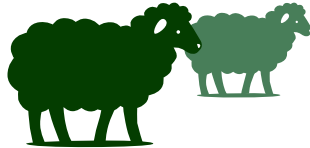


## Animal selection and breeding

Breeding and selecting animals that are fertile, hardy, efficient and suited to your local climate can make them more suitable for a lower input, diverse pasture system.



'We always say the bottom 5% of the sheep cause 100% of the problems, so as a stud we need to remove those sheep that are poor doers.' – **David Curtis, Millmerran, QLD**



## Animal health and nutrition

Increased pasture diversity and more frequent moves can lead to improved animal health and nutrition.



'Having fewer mobs and being out moving them more regularly means that you are observing the stock a lot more, seeing if they are sick, seeing how content they are.' – **Nick Austin, Mundarlo, NSW**



### Regenerative strategies for animal health

Longer recoveries between grazing can help break parasite cycles, reducing the need for drenching. As pasture diversity increases, it is worth monitoring animal health closely and adjusting feeding and supplementation accordingly.

# Increasing diversity and adjusting enterprise design

There are many strategies to increase diversity and ecological function, which can build 'natural capital' and support soil and landscape goals.

## Strategies to increase diversity

Check out the guide for info on:

- Increasing diversity of plants
- Increasing diversity of livestock species
- Integration of trees and other vegetation
- Landscape rehydration.



'Multispecies pastures get a lot of plants to work in unison...who have different functions in the soil...the plants are working as a team. Our sheep get a winter smorgasbord.' – **David Curtis, Millmerran, QLD**

**Find out more** about pasture diversity in our *Multispecies Cropping Practice Guide*.



**Find out more** about landscape rehydration.







# Getting started with regenerative grazing



Tips from the farmers profiled in this guide

- **Seek out information and support** – Scan the code below.
- **Clarify your vision and goals** – Be clear on what you're trying to achieve for yourself, your family, your business and the land; this will help you to make better decisions.
- **Try things in a 'safe to fail' way** – Run small trials and observe results before rolling things out more widely.
- **Keep it simple and low cost** – Consider starting by mobbing up and ensuring adequate water, then consider low-cost subdivisions, introducing low-cost additional pasture species and easing off costly inputs.
- **Build from a solid base** – Get started in a good season when there's an adequate feed base.



'Keep in mind your vision for the landscape you want to create. Then monitor each paddock after grazing and ask: is this taking me towards where I want my land to be or not, and adjust as you go into the next paddock.' – **Katrina Butler, Perenjori, WA**

**Explore further resources**, including resources and training programs recommended by the farmers in this guide.





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