

National Landcare program Small Smart Farm Grants

South Myall Catchment Landcare Group Inc

Project Title

“Improve soil health and organic matter on 435 hectares of old cropping country to improve production , and increase management skills of 40 farmers with a field day.”

\$49,575 has been allocated by the Federal Government for the Landcare Group and four landholders to implement the following project at Quinalow, Boodua, Highgrove and Narko. On average landholders contribute \$4 for every one dollar of subsidy received from the Federal Government.

Landholders will use management change to improve the soil health, nutrition, organic matter, and nitrogen in the soil, on 435 hectares by planting legume based pastures , applying slow release black urea (21% carbon) and controlled rotational grazing to old run down cultivation country. This will enable farmers to better manage ground cover and reduce erosion.

- 435 hectares of old cropping country will have soil health and productivity improved when landholders implement time controlled rotational grazing on 200 ha, plant legume based pastures on 135 ha, and apply carbon coated urea to 100 ha.
- This will increase dry matter, productivity provide better quality feed, spell grasses and extend pasture life of better species.
- The pasture consultant will visit the 3 landholders planting pasture and recommend pasture and legumes suitable for soil types.
- A field day with a pasture consultant will be held to promote the increased productivity. This hands on practical experience at the field day will enable 40 farmers to improve their skills, adopt sustainable practices to improve soil health, increase water retention & ground cover.
- A portable water monitor will demonstrate improved water infiltration.
- Testing of leaf matter will occur six months after pasture is established, and GIS monitoring will occur monthly for monitoring.

Water retention will be increased at on farm level due to increased ground coverage from productive grasses and legume based pasture, additional productivity and quality from black urea and controlled rotational grazing. Turbidity from soil erosion will be reduced, improving water quality in waterways that feed into the Murray Darling Basin.

Forty farmers who attend the field day with an expert pasture consultant will receive practical experience to assess ground cover and improve their knowledge and enable them

to adopt techniques which improve soil health & nutrition. They will see improved productivity from legume based pasture, the sustainability of grasses for various soil types, and better management of pasture through controlled rotational grazing which improves their skills in managing ground cover.

This project will increase productivity and profitability on 435 hectares of old cropping country in South Myall Catchment. • Dry matter will be increased, better quality grass achieved and soil organic matter and microbes improved. With the implementation of time controlled rotational grazing, erosion will be reduced, water quality in creeks which feed into the waterways of the Murray Darling Basin will be improved and the longevity of existing pasture increased which will place farmers in a better position to deal with future droughts. • This project will improve the ability of Landcare groups and farmers in decision making and adoption of better management practices. It will increase the knowledge, awareness skills and capacity of forty farmers who attend the field day with the expert pasture consultant and give them the opportunity for a hands on experience of practical skills to improve soil health and increase ground cover. This will enable farmers to use management change for better decision making for on farm implementation using rotational grazing and legume based pasture on old cropping country .

- At the field day we will demonstrate the increased infiltration of water on paddocks where new management practices have occurred by trialling a portable water monitor. • GIS imagery will be monitored on a monthly basis to view the establishment and improvement on each property as more sustainable practices are adopted. .

MP John McVeigh with launch of project at Graham Shultz property May 2019

