

Property planning boosts production

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Property planning techniques have helped graziers in the Capricornia region to sustain production without land and pasture degradation. The techniques match management practices with land resources. Productivity is boosted as the full land potential is required.

QDPI officers at Rockhampton have developed a system to develop property plans using the landholder's knowledge of the property and ideas on management.

QDPI staff have found that although landholders often begin by making enquiries on a single topic, that issue may be related to other factors on the property. For example, on one district property it was found that an erosion problem was the result of pasture degradation caused by overgrazing. For this reason, staff often encourage graziers to use a property plan and management package.

The photomosaic plans drawn up by Soil Conservation Services Branch are based on the most recent aerial photography available. Existing features such as creeks and ridges, timbered areas, dams and buildings are easy to identify. Access tracks and fences are highlighted on the plan. Areas of different soils or landscape features are shown and an accompanying legend records recommended land use and land management options.

Property development and management are considered with the landholder's aspirations and the capacity of the land resources. The plan then becomes a catalyst for increased production, as property potential is tapped.

The next logical step in planning is the 'whole property plan' approach. Graziers may decide to use the plan to help make management decisions. The

plan is augmented by officers in other QDPI branches.

The whole property plan is a information package that consists of a photomosaic property plan, a report and specific extension pamphlets. The report is based on the property plan and landholder resources, and contains:

- a property description
- erosion statement – timber, regrowth and weed control information
- pasture and herd management advice – fencing and water recommendations
- other land use and land management advice
- cash flow budgeting (if required)
- a programme listing the priority of development works.

The other part of the package is the excellent range of prepared farmnotes or central Queensland agnotes that are produced by QDPI officers. These notes relate to property needs and complement the plan and report. For example, a Mornish grazier was provided with agnotes on the establishment of stylos and wynn cassia on his granite country.

By the time the report is finalised, a lot of the recommendations are being put into practice.

The advantages of the planning approach

The advantages of this approach are:

- property development and management are matched to the landholder and to the land resource
- cash flow budgeting based on the resources and possible enterprise options comes up with the best fit

- the grazier gains a greater insight into the potential of property resources
- contact is established with extension officers and continuing contact is encouraged
- a blueprint for future development is provided that allows the property to be used to its potential within the sustained capability of the land resources.

Landholder interest

Rockhampton QDPI staff are finding graziers show a keen interest in this new extension approach. It allows a flexible response to individual needs. Some landholders want only a detailed property plan from which they can identify land types, while others request a development plan which includes a cash flow budget. The complete package comprises a property plan, enterprise budgets and technical management information. It is particularly suitable for the new landholder who has made a recent purchase of property in the area and is seeking local knowledge.

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