Queensland Pastures e-newsletter increases beef industry engagement

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Introduction

In 2023, the 5-year Queensland Pasture Resilience Program (QPRP) was launched to address livestock industry threats such as land condition decline, pasture rundown, and pasture dieback through a state-wide integrated research, development and extension (RD&E) program. QPRP is delivered by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI) through a partnership between Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the DPI and the Australian Government through the MLA Donor Company. The aim of the QPRP is to increase adoption of improved pasture management practices across Queensland. The extension component engages with producers and industry personnel through awareness raising activities, face-to-face and online. Email newsletters (e-newsletters) are regularly used to communicate with an agricultural industry audience, however none were specifically targeted to people interested in pastures across Queensland. In 2024, the *Queensland Pastures* e-newsletter was created to provide timely management advice, industry updates and research findings from the QPRP. This paper reports the development and progress of the first six issues of *Queensland Pastures*.

Methods

The subscriber list was initially generated by advertising in existing e-newsletters, at events, and on social media. The Vision6™ platform was used to manage subscriptions and create and deliver the newsletter. Four issues were published each year, featuring updates from all QPRP teams across the state. Each issue included a three-month activity summary, photo gallery, new articles and resources, and a list of upcoming events, all hosted on the FutureBeef website and linked from the newsletter. Subscriber numbers, open rates (number of subscribers who open the newsletter), and click rates (number of times newsletter links are clicked) were recorded.

Results

In six issues, subscriber numbers have increased from 291 at Issue 1 in March 2024, to 582 just prior to the release of Issue 7 in September 2025. The average open rate was 73.8%. A total of 39 articles have been published and 10 new resources launched including factsheets, guides, podcasts and videos. The article with the highest click numbers was about planting new legume trial sites across Queensland, published in Issue 5. The photo gallery of staff undertaking RD&E activities was consistently in the top five clicked links in every issue.

Discussion and conclusion

The growing subscriber list and consistently high open rates, well above similar industry e-newsletters (MailChimp 2019), has demonstrated a need for an e-newsletter for people interested in timely information about pastures in Queensland. As there has been limited promotion of the newsletter its subscriber numbers have grown organically through word of mouth. Quarterly issues were regular enough to allow contributors to produce a range of scientific and human-interest articles and downloadable resources that were seasonally relevant for readers, but not too regular to feel like spam. Using the newsletter to launch new resources and publish industry announcements has created a 'see it here first' feeling by establishing a direct line of contact between the DPI and readers. Using the FutureBeef website as the host for articles and resources has not only leveraged the trust of the FutureBeef brand but further widened the audience for *Queensland Pastures* content.

References

Mailchimp (2019) Average email marketing campaign stats of Mailchimp customers by industry. https://mailchimp.com/resources/email-marketing-benchmarks/

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