



### Grain & Graze now officially launched!

The Murrumbidgee Grain & Graze project was officially launched by Cameron Allan (Meat & Livestock Australia), on behalf of the four funding bodies on the 22nd October.

Farmers and representatives of the regional G&G partners and funding bodies (MLA, Australian Wool Innovation, GRDC and Land & Water Australia) attended the launch which was held at the Yerong Creek grazing wheat trial at "Barwon South".

John Pattison, FarmLink Executive member and farmer, and Lee O'Brien, Chair of the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority spoke on behalf of the regional partners.

An inspection of the trial site followed the launch, where Guy McMullen (NSW DPI), Hugh Dove (CSIRO) and Kirrily Condon (FarmLink) presented data from the grazing wheat trials.



Inspecting the grazing wheat trial at the G&G launch

For more information on the Grain & Graze program go to [www.grainandgraze.com.au](http://www.grainandgraze.com.au)

### Focus Farms

Focus Farms are a major component of the Murrumbidgee G&G project, which involves monitoring feed production and sustainability indicators across the enterprise mix of a number of mixed farms in the catchment.

On each of these focus farms, dry matter production, water use, ground cover and biodiversity will be monitored on 4-5 paddocks:

- perennial pasture
- annual pasture (if required)
- native pasture
- grazed/ungrazed wheat

Whole farm fodder budgets will be produced to guide feed management decisions. Farmer friendly sustainability indices will also be developed to help detect NRM constraints in the system.

The focus farms will also be used by 2 other projects for additional demonstration & monitoring purposes:

1. 'Profitable farmers, sustainable systems, healthy landscapes' (Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority, MCMA) - setting up demonstrations to address local NRM issues
2. 'Best management practices for dryland cropping systems' (MCMA, NSW DPI) - monitoring current farming practices and impact on water use efficiency

Lucy Breen (right) has recently been appointed Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator for the 'Profitable farmers...' project, and will co-ordinate the Focus Farm groups on behalf of both the MCMA and G&G projects: (cont. over page)



For further information contact the project co-ordinator: Kirrily Condon (FarmLink) on (02) 6978 0428, [kirrily@farmlink.com.au](mailto:kirrily@farmlink.com.au)

## Focus Farms (cont)

(Lucy Breen): I have previously worked in Horsham with the Victorian wheat breeding program and also in grains extension as a TOPCROP officer. The latter involved working with farmer groups to improve crop management, establish large-scale trials, run local field days and to aid the adoption of research on-farm. I look forward to working with new landholder groups throughout the Murrumbidgee Catchment."

For further information about the 'Profitable farmers...' project, please contact Lucy at the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority, Wagga Wagga.

Ph: 6923 0403 or E-mail: lucy.breen@cma.nsw.gov.au

## Grazing wheat trials

Grazing wheat trials formed the R&D component of the Murrumbidgee G&G project in 2004. Grazing wheats are rapidly increasing in popularity to help fill the late winter feed gap and to give perennial pastures an opportunity to be spelled for faster recovery in spring.

The focus of the grazing wheat trials was to develop feed production curves for varieties of differing maturities, assess their quality and impact on livestock production. (Details of the 3 grazing wheat trials were outlined in the 1st Grain & Graze fact sheet - July 2004).

**Table 1 - sowing dates for grazing wheat trials**

Site	1st sowing	2nd sowing	3rd sowing
Grenfell	19th April (locust damage)	28th May	23rd June
Marrar	13th April (dry)	27th May	8th June
Yerong Creek	13th April	23rd May	8th June

### Following is a trial update from Guy McMullen (DPI):

The grazing wheat trials have progressed well this year despite locusts earlier in the year at Grenfell and the dry finish at all sites. All measurements of crop growth and feed quality have been completed, with only grain yield and quality left to be taken.

This year we measured crop growth rates of up to 120 kg DM/ha/day during the grazing period (early August) for the 1st sowing time at Yerong Creek (Fig. 1). This compares to growth rates of less than 30 kg DM/ha/day (Prograze™) for perennial pastures during the same period. Growth rates of some wheat varieties were up to 280kg DM/ha/day by October.

The varieties that performed particularly well this year in terms of early dry matter production were Whistler, Wedgetail and Lorikeet. The late start to the season disadvantaged the longer maturing varieties Mackellar and Marombi that would be expected to perform better when there is an opportunity for early sowing.

There was little difference in feed quality between the varieties, with digestibility and crude protein being very high (up to 89% digestibility and 33% crude protein in early August). These levels were not limiting to animal production during the grazing period.

This year we found that the varieties were able to recover rapidly after being heavily grazed to 500 kg DM/ha/day, although growth rates were slower when compared to the ungrazed treatment. This reduction in growth rate reduced water-use and 'spared' soil moisture until later in the season\*.

Harvest of the trials will be carried out soon and grain quality determined. This data will allow us to do economic comparisons of the value of grazing and grain recovery.

\*A description of water movement under grazed and ungrazed Wedgetail can be found at:

[www.fest1.clw.csiro.au/fenceline/projects/Farmlink/Takada/](http://www.fest1.clw.csiro.au/fenceline/projects/Farmlink/Takada/)

Fig. 1

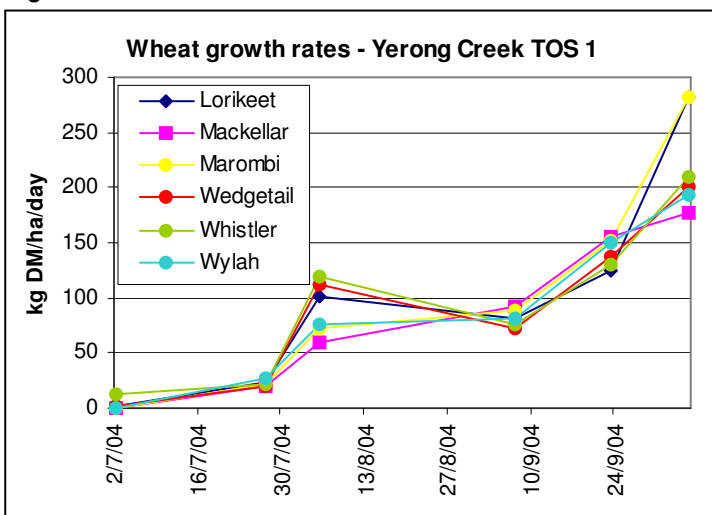
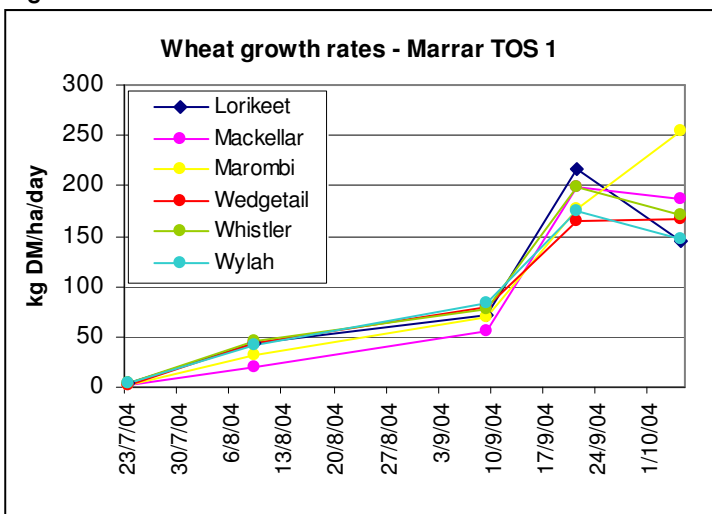


Fig. 2



(1st sowing time at Grenfell damaged by locusts)

**Results of all trials will be available in early 2005 following analysis.**