



# Mid Lachlan Landcare Grazing Dung Beetle Field Day



Mid Lachlan Landcare Grazing is pleased to announce that it's recent Dung Beetle Field Day was a great success with 50 landholders from as far as Crookwell attending the day which was hosted by the McLaren family at their farm 'Liscombe Pools' in Canowindra.

John Feehan, a renowned dung beetle expert, was our special guest speaker who provided an array of information on how to best manage these amazingly efficient recyclers. With an estimated 28 million cattle in Australia and the average cow dropping 18kg of dung per day, dung beetles can provide remarkable benefits to both productivity and the environment by removing and recycling the dung.

Dung beetles improve soil aeration and water infiltration by tunnelling up to 300mm into the soil profile, they also recycle nutrients, particularly phosphorus, back into the soil making it readily available to plants, they control bush fly and parasitic worm by removing dung from the surface and therefore breeding sites, prevent dung from entering and contaminating waterways and provide cost savings by eliminating harrowing.

There is potential for dung beetles to be active all year round on grazing properties in the Central West of NSW. Two new varieties of beetle expected to be released next year are active during spring, filling the current gap between the winter and summer active species already known to be working in the area. Most beetles work on cow dung but a recently released winter active species is showing promising results on sheep dung. While some species of dung beetle are native, the majority of species in Australia have been introduced and it is hoped that future research on beetles from South America will help contribute to recycling sheep dung in Australia.

Also discussed were the detrimental effects of livestock drenches on dung beetles. While there are safe products available, some drenches can wipe out dung beetle colonies. They are particularly susceptible at stages in their lifecycle when young are emerging and when females are breeding. Ben Kidd from Virbac was also on hand to provide advice about chemicals so that landholders can make an informed decision when choosing chemicals.

Overall, the day was highly informative and productive. Following a quick survey, all respondents indicated that they thought the quality of information was high, they all learned something new and they enjoyed the venue and presenters.

If anyone would like to purchase dung beetles from John or would like more information on how to find, collect and prepare beetles for John to identify free of charge, contact Scott Hickman at [otleigh@westnet.com.au](mailto:otleigh@westnet.com.au) or on 0427450416.

