

## South East Local Land Services Grazing Management Project

On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015, Mid Lachlan Landcare facilitated a Grazing Management Field Day at David and Mary Marsh's property "Allendale" with guest speaker, renowned grazing management educator Terry McCosker. The field day was the second to be held in the region and is part of South East Local Land Service's Grazing Management Project that aims to engage graziers to learn about, and implement sustainable and regenerative grazing practices.

The field day was well supported with almost 70 people attending from Boorowa, Crookwell, Yass and Bookham, as well as a number of landholders attending from nearby regions. Property owner David Marsh spoke passionately about changing his management practices towards regenerative agriculture in order to improve on-farm ecosystem health that supports a profitable business and maintains a healthy, stress-free lifestyle. Fundamental to this has been a process of managing holistically which ensures that all decisions are simultaneously socially, economically and environmentally sound. David has further developed his farming techniques over many years by constantly questioning conventional farming practices through observation, critical thinking, and reading widely.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Terry McCosker is an internationally acclaimed teacher and has worked in research, extension and property management. Terry co-founded RCS 30 years ago and is responsible for the introduction of the GrazingforProfit™ school into Australia. Terry kicked off his talk by asking the audience what they would like to gain from the field day. Major topics raised included:

- Landscape biology
- Carbon in soils
- Understanding growth phases of grasses
- Rest periods
- Native grasses and other pasture species
- Planning, monitoring and re-planning
- Animal diversity

Terry addressed all of the raised topics but also stressed how each of them relate to back to the importance of understanding and implementing Grazing Management Principles:

1. Planning, monitoring and managing
  - Rest periods, matching stocking rate to carrying capacity, livestock moves, landscape issues, grazing charts, people and your business
2. Plants need adequate rest
  - The importance of understanding the three phases of pasture growth and the timing of grazing and re-grazing
3. Matching stocking rate to carrying capacity
  - Critical for maximising ecology and profitability, and building quality grass reserves
4. Managing livestock effectively
  - Livestock nutrition, reproduction, water quality and low stress stock handling

Before landholders adopt Principle 5 – Maximum livestock density minimum time, and Principle 6 – Managing biodiversity, it is extremely important to make sure that Principles 1 to 4 are being implemented effectively otherwise major issues can arise.

Both Terry and David stressed the importance of planning and in particular the use of grazing charts. Grazing charts provide a management tool that assist landholders to make good decisions, remain in control, maintain profitability and manage livestock and ecology.

The group also heard from both Terry and David during a paddock walk on “Allendale”. Topics discussed were grazing planning and different plant species in the paddock, soil health, importance of water quality and quantity, livestock management and indicators of grass quality in livestock dung.

Thanks to the Marsh’s for hosting the field day, and to David for sharing his experiences. Thanks also to Dr. Terry McCosker for providing an interesting and enjoyable morning. If you would like more information please contact Scott Hickman on 0427 450 416 or email [oatleigh@westnet.com.au](mailto:oatleigh@westnet.com.au)



Dr. Terry McCosker lists topics from the audience



It’s important to understand the different phases of grass growth



MLL’s Scott Hickman, Dr. Terry McCosker and David Marsh



Almost 70 people attended the field day