There are approximately 2,000 woolgrowers in Australia’s pastoral zone managing properties ranging from a few thousand to several hundred thousand hectares.

The industry is currently recognising and responding to a wide range of issues including land degradation (it is estimated that 16 per cent of pastoral land is degraded to some degree), animal welfare, uncontrolled pests and weeds and the negative impact of these issues on native plants and animals.

The Managing Pastoral Country Sub-Program is working with woolgrowers to identify how pastoral country can be better managed to address these key environmental issues while maintaining productivity.

Managing Pastoral Country is the most recent addition to the Land, Water & Wool Sub-Programs. It will utilise woolgrower experience to develop, test and extend management approaches that deliver enhanced profitability, productivity and positive environmental outcomes.

Encouragingly, adoption of management practices to improve natural resources among woolgrowers is already high with 88 per cent saying they have undertaken practices to manage their land profitably and sustainably.*

In addition, 61 per cent of woolgrowers in the pastoral zone said they were interested in receiving assistance to develop a whole farm plan to incorporate NRM into their daily farm management.*

In 2004, five projects were approved in locations across Australia’s pastoral zone, which is also the focus for the Managing Climate Variability Sub-Program:

- Informing the decisions of pastoral woolgrowers for country and profit (Western Australia)
- Wool producers with remote control: new tools for whole of property management (Northern South Australia)
- Delivering a land condition framework for grazing land management education (Queensland)
- Stocking rate decision tools for rangeland pastoralists (Western Division, New South Wales)
- Mitchell grass death in Queensland: extent, economic impact and potential for recovery

*Land, Water & Wool Best Practice Survey 2003
National Research Projects

Informing the decisions of pastoral woolgrowers for country and profit, (Western Australia)

With the economic performance of the pastoral sheep industry under pressure and with environmental aspects more prominent, improved use of natural resources is essential to preserve future land use options and ensure optimum sheep productivity. Informing the decisions of pastoral woolgrowers for country and profit aims to ‘get stocking rates right’ in terms of impact on both environment and production.

Wool producers with remote control: new tools for whole of property management (Northern South Australia)

Management of natural resources on rangeland wool-producing properties requires knowledge of the condition of the resources, the rate of use of those resources by stock and prediction about future climatic conditions. Wool producers with remote control: new tools for whole of property management is developing products from remote-sensed satellite sources that show ground cover in a format useful to producers.

Delivering a land condition framework for grazing land management education (Queensland)

This project aims to enable sheep producers in the mulga zone and Mitchell grasslands of Western Queensland to be able to implement and monitor strategies for improved environmental management. Delivering a land condition framework for grazing land management seeks to achieve this through the adaptation and delivery of proven management tools that have been developed for the Queensland beef industry.

Stocking rate decision tools for rangeland pastoralists (Western Division, New South Wales)

Stocking rate decisions are fundamental to pastoral management. While graziers factor in many environmental issues into their stocking rate decisions, few effectively incorporate all of the information that is either routinely collected on properties or could be easily acquired. Stocking rate decision tools for rangeland pastoralists aims to make this information more readily useable to assist graziers with the difficult decisions that are fundamental to their economic and ecological success.

Mitchell grass death in Queensland: extent, economic impact and potential for recovery

Queensland’s Mitchell grasslands represent 19 per cent of the State’s native pasture area supporting in excess of 10 per cent of the cattle herd and more than 40 per cent of the Merino sheep flock in Queensland. During the 2001-2004 drought large areas of Mitchell grass tussocks died. The project, Mitchell grass death in Queensland, run in conjunction with Meat & Livestock Australia, seeks to estimate the geographic extent of poor pasture condition, assess the impact of dieback on the profitability of enterprises, encourage and assist graziers to restore pastures to good condition and begin to understand how to improve management during future droughts.

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Managing Pastoral Country - stay informed
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