

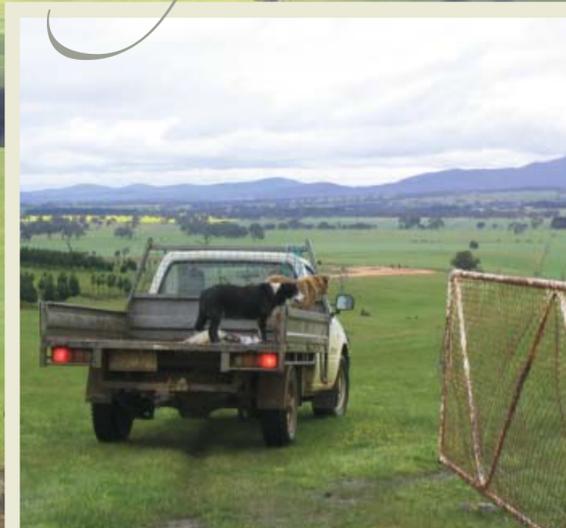
# How to be a **top dog** in hill management

Can managing hill country be made more profitable?

Central Victorian wool growers with hill country can improve stocking rates and avoid bare hills in summer by adopting deferred grazing. Farm profits can be conservatively increased by between 10% to 30%, from up to 50% higher stocking rates on hill country. This can happen within 3 years while also improving the condition of native pasture and vegetation on hill country.

Resting hill country during summer months (deferred grazing) along with paddock sub-division and more watering points, encourage sheep to graze hills more evenly and reduce the effects of overgrazing areas such as hill-tops. This also reduces problems with bare hills and capeweed, and encourages more perennial pasture varieties.

Extra stock can eventually be carried as a result of extra fencing and extra pasture growth. The extra wool income outweighs the extra costs of fencing, watering points and supplementary feeding.



*"you need to look at different ways of doing things, not just sit back and keep doing what you've always done. This project is providing us with some new information to take on board."*

Violet Town woolgrower

# Take the **lead** in farm management



*"the farm has to be sustainable in every sense of the word. ... hopefully if the next generation wants to keep farming, it is available as a truly sustainable enterprise."*

Byawatha/Springhurst woolgrower



Strategically manage your property using a whole farm plan. A 34% return on investment can be gained by identifying the best paddocks to correct soil nutrient deficiencies on, or undertake intensive rotational grazing.

These strategies can more than offset the costs from improving the condition of native pastures and vegetation on the "marginal" parts of the farm.



**Profits can be increased by over 10% from improving stocking rates by correcting soil nutrient deficiencies.**

A strategic fertiliser program based on regular soil testing and analysis, enables pasture growth to be improved and sheep carrying capacity to be lifted on the most productive paddocks. Considerable care is needed when selecting appropriate paddocks to target, as research also shows that fertiliser application can lead to the loss of native species.

Costs involved can be minimal and often fit within the existing fertiliser budget, especially if only a couple of well-selected paddocks are targeted for improvement each year. On wool growing properties assessed across central Victoria, on average stocking rates could be conservatively lifted by 17% by targeting soil nutrient deficiencies.

**Increase stocking rates and biodiversity with intensive rotational grazing**

Results from the Broadford grazing trials (Woolmark Company, Pivot Agriculture and Victorian Government) have shown an increase in carrying capacity of 35% over 4 years on paddocks with introduced pastures and low soil phosphorous (P) levels, and 37% on high soil P areas.

The added advantage of intensive rotational grazing is its likely positive effect on native perennial pasture cover and persistence.

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The Victorian-based *Farm businesses, wool production and biodiversity* project has identified productive, practical solutions for managing native vegetation and farm profits.

The project is funded by Land Water and Wool, which is a joint investment between Australian Wool Innovation Limited, the wool industry's peak research and development body, and Land and Water Australia.

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Special thanks to Kel the kelpie!!

For further information please visit the website below or contact your local Elders or Landmark Branch, or DSE/DPI office.

[www.landwaterwool.gov.au](http://www.landwaterwool.gov.au)

*"we look after the trees and the trees help look after us.... Working in harmony with the environment is the key. We have to be responsible as the soils here are quite fragile."*

Maryborough woolgrower

## Barking up the **right** tree

Where is the best place on the farm to improve the quality of native vegetation and pastures?

Most native vegetation and pastures are located on marginal and low stocking rate areas of the farm such as hill country, adjacent to waterways and within existing bush areas. These are the best places to target the improvement of native vegetation.



Fencing and managing native vegetation in these areas can improve:

- shelter for lambing and shornies
- out of season feed
- farm appearance and land value
- erosion and salinity management
- drought fodder

### **Biodiversity has got tongues wagging**

A healthy, well functioning farming system has a greater ability to resist change or damage. A diversity of native plants and animals is necessary to support and improve the natural and the human environment. This diversity is often referred to as biodiversity.

Biodiversity is a part of a farms operations just the same as soil and water. It should be just as much part of good management practice as other farming activities.



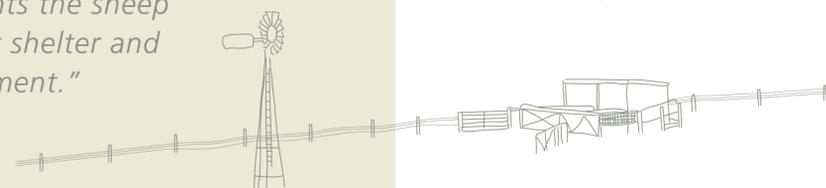
## How to **increase** shelter & profits?



Having more shelter on a property reduces lamb and off-shears deaths by up to 5% per year. The combined effect of these benefits is expected to generate on average an extra \$1 per DSE per year in the long run.

*"native vegetation complements the sheep enterprise, providing excellent shelter and a favourable lambing environment."*

North Central Victorian woolgrower



- Old paddock trees can provide a free source of future trees through natural regeneration.
- Establishing shelter trees on hill country can help to lower the water-table and as a result can increase pasture production on lower slopes and flats.

Natural regeneration does not mean planting new trees, but rather encouraging young trees to grow from seed or suckers. This may require weed control and exclusion of grazing until young trees establish.

Research shows that natural regeneration happens more often on wool properties with:

- old trees nearby
- intermittent or no sheep grazing
- no history of pasture renovation
- low history super application
- less area of improved pastures

### **No time to lose**

The clearing and ageing of old paddock trees reduces the potential for natural regeneration by up to 55% over 30 years.



With compliments from  
**LandWater & Wool**



Helping woolgrowers take the lead in better land management

