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

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.

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.

“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 Toovey, woolgrower

Can managing hill country be more profitable?

Central Victorian woolgrowers 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% by 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.

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How to be a top dog in hill management

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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 farm’s operations just as soil and water. It should be just as much part of good management practice as other farming activities.

Barking up the right tree

“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

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.

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 $31 per DSE per year in the long run.

Barking up the right tree

“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.

Increasing shelter & profits

How to increase shelter & profits?

With compliments from

Helping woolgrowers take the lead in better land management

Nick Clemann, ARI.

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

- no history of pasture renovation
- no history of super application
- less area of improved pastures
- no time to lose

No time to lose

The message is clear: it is advisable to retain old paddock trees to facilitate natural regeneration by up to 55% over 30 years.