

# INNOVATION PROFILE



## BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

### OWNERS

David and Genevieve Counsell

### PROPERTY NAME

Dunblane

### PROPERTY LOCATION

Barcaldine, QLD

### SIZE OF PROPERTY

15,000 hectares

### BRIEF ENTERPRISE DESCRIPTION

Wool production, some sheep agistment and/or cattle trading.

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORKING IN THE BUSINESS

2 people working in the business (1 full time equivalent)

### AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL

495mm

### WHY THIS IS A PASTORAL ZONE INNOVATION

Mustering with a large team over great distances in the scrub can be a safety issue for pastoral businesses. Flash jackets improve visibility and job safety.



## Flash Jackets Worn While Mustering

On Dunblane, the average paddock size is 900ha, the countryside is seemingly featureless and typically rolling Mitchell Grass Downs country.

Mustering sheep can be a complex task due to the large distances and scale of paddocks. Often workers have to operate independently of each other but they need to regularly know where each other is or has been when looking for or moving sheep.

On Dunblane when mustering sheep on motorbikes, all workers carry UHF radios and ride with the headlight of the motorbike turned on for safety.

This innovation outlines how wearing flash jackets (high visibility vests) when mustering improves visibility of all motorbike riders. It also outlines how mustering efficiency has been improved on Dunblane as a result.

Figure 1: David Counsell wearing a flash jacket next to someone who isn't wearing one.



## WHAT WAS THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE?

On Dunblane, David says that problems occur when people lose each other. Problems such as sheep being missed during mustering can increase the time it takes to effectively complete the task.

Often workers can find it difficult to describe their location when mustering a paddock. It is made more difficult to spot each other due to the nature of the clothing worn on the bike, and David found that time was being wasted looking for each other.

Another motivation was worker safety and this innovation was one aspect to the Work, Health and Safety protocols implemented on the property.

Therefore expected outcomes of the change included:

- Improved mustering efficiency.
- Improved the safe work environment on Dunblane.
- Reduced time looking for people in the paddock when mustering.
- Ensured staff realised that the property is serious about good mustering techniques and working as a team.
- Made it safer in the event of an accident; the flash jacket makes it easier to find someone if they are lying in the grass injured.

*Figure 3: David Counsell wearing a flash jacket, increasing visibility of all workers on Dunblane.*



## HOW DOES THE INNOVATION WORK?

When mustering or moving stock by motorbike, all staff are required to wear a cheap bright orange flash jacket. This flash jacket is allocated to all staff as personal protective equipment (PPE).

### KEY FEATURES

The key features of this innovation are straight-forward; they are:

- Cheap brightly coloured vests.
- Easy to implement and enforce.
- Improves visibility of the musterer, making them easier to spot in the paddock.

### WHAT ARE THE KEY BENEFITS OF THE INNOVATION, AND THE IMPACT IT HAS MADE?

The key benefits of the innovation experienced by the Counsell's include:

- Improved mustering efficiency.
- Reduced time looking for people in the paddock when mustering.
- Improved farm safety; if someone gets knocked off their bike and is unable to stand up, it increases the chance of finding them in the long grass.
- Demonstrated to day-workers that David and Genevieve are serious about mustering techniques and working as a team.
- Allowing children who are mustering to be found easily.
- Increased visibility to motorists when crossing the highway with stock.

### THE FINAL WORD

By wearing a flash jacket, workers understand that the business is serious about farm safety, working as a team in the paddock and sticking to the mustering plan.

Bestprac acknowledges the contribution of David and Genevieve Counsell in the development of this innovation profile.

To view more innovation profiles, business cases and videos of innovations in the pastoral zone, visit the Bestprac website [www.bestprac.info](http://www.bestprac.info)

## LOOKING FORWARD

David plans to implement further safety initiatives on his property in the future. With the improvements to global positioning systems (GPS) he plans to issue workers with new technology that will allow people to locate each other on an interactive LCD screen.

### COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Flash jackets (high-visibility jackets) are low cost at approximately \$20 each and are easily purchased from a wide variety of outlets. By wearing these at mustering and when moving stock, it can save time looking for each other, increasing efficiency and improving safety.



*Figure 2: Merino sheep on Dunblane.*