

# INNOVATION PROFILE



## BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

### OWNERS

Kevin, Robyn and Bryan Ingram

### PROPERTY NAME

Aston Station

### PROPERTY LOCATION

33km North West of Pooncarie,  
NSW

### SIZE OF PROPERTY

25,000 hectares

### BRIEF ENTERPRISE DESCRIPTION

Merino breeders with occasional agistment or sheep and cattle trading when the season permits.

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORKING IN THE BUSINESS

3 people working in the business  
(1.5 full time equivalents)

### AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL

240mm

### WHY THIS IS A PASTORAL ZONE INNOVATION

Fencing is a significant cost on a pastoral property. Vineyard posts sourced within a reasonable distance to the property offer a cheaper alternative to steel posts.



## Second Hand Vineyard Posts

Aston Station moved to rotational grazing 15 years ago. This process involved decreasing paddock size and installing a significant amount of additional fencing.

The innovation profile outlines how recycled wooden vineyard posts have been sourced and used for fencing the rotational grazing system at Aston Station.

### WHAT WAS THE MOTIVATION TO CHANGE?

Good quality, cheap fence posts that suited the purpose of the developments were required.

Kevin, Robyn and Bryan opportunistically purchased a large quantity of second-hand vineyard posts that were advertised in the Stock Journal.

The second-hand vineyard posts were a cheaper option to steel posts and could be sourced within a reasonable distance of the property.

### HOW DOES THE INNOVATION WORK?

The recycled vineyard posts were simply used instead of star droppers when installing new fences and repairing current fence lines.

To allow the fences to be electrified, poly insulators were threaded onto the wire and fixed to the timber posts with staples.

Figure 1: Second-hand vineyard posts on Aston Station.



Figure 2: Second-hand vineyard posts used as fence posts.



Figure 3: A close-up of the poly insulators installed.

## KEY FEATURES

The key features of the innovation and what sets it apart from the rest are:

- Wooden posts allow for the fence to be electrified, unlike metal star droppers.
- The posts are treated with creosote (also known as 'black' posts), which is harder than the common 'green' treated pine also used in vineyards.

## KEY BENEFITS

The key benefits of the innovation are:

- The change to rotational grazing by dividing paddocks, has allowed the pastures to be better utilised.
- Environmentally, second-hand wood is a sustainable choice.
- The ability to electrify the fences.
- Cost savings were made compared with star droppers.

Figure 4: Aston Station.



## KEY MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR THE INNOVATION

The materials used for this innovation were creosote (black) timber vineyard posts, placed 10m apart. Other materials used to complete the project were wire, staples and poly insulators.

The resources used for this innovation were:

- Contractor with a tractor, auger and water pump
- Farm personnel

## POTENTIAL CAUTION AND RISK

Cautions and risks that the Ingrams would convey to anyone wanting to implement a similar approach.

- Initially, some of the vineyard posts were cracked when they put them in. In hindsight they should have been discarded. They realise now that they should have been more focused on quality at the time of purchasing.
- The posts have the potential to break if emus, kangaroos or cattle hit them.
- The posts will burn in the event of a bushfire.

## THE FINAL WORD

When using recycled posts it is important to choose good quality posts that aren't fractured to ensure fences are structurally sound.

Bestprac acknowledges the contribution of Kevin, Robyn and Bryan Ingram 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)

## WHAT COULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?

The main lesson learnt whilst implementing the innovation was to be wary of the post quality.

The quality of the posts varied, and the business has now learnt to ensure posts are structurally sound and not fractured at the time of purchase.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to source 6ft creosote fence posts. As a substitute, the farm has also sourced 7 to 8ft posts.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The property plans to continue using creosote posts as the preferred choice of fence posts.

## COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Star droppers cost approximately \$5 to \$6 each and have minimal installation cost. The wooden posts are \$2 and cost around \$2 to install.

The benefit of using timber posts mean that the posts can be electrified.