

Enhance farm profitability, cattle health and waterway health

What can I do?

Keeping stock out of waterways, wetlands and boggy areas is a great first step you can take to improve waterway health and stock drinking water quality:

- Provide off stream water to livestock
- Fence and revegetate along waterways and wetlands
- Establish in paddock shade and shelter for stock to minimise stock camps along waterways.



Did you know?

- Studies show that clean water increases weight gain of cattle.
- Stock can lose up to ½ kg/day when drinking muddy water
- Even without planting, fencing off riparian zones can reduce faecal coliforms by 35% in streams. Vegetated riparian buffers of 4 metres can achieve up to a 95% reduction in faecal bacteria inputs.
- Wetlands are like the kidneys of the landscape; they clean our water, slow the flow of water and reduce flood peaks.
- On a 27° day, unsheltered dairy cows have up to 26% less milk production than shaded stock.

Planned grazing reaps rewards for productivity and water quality

Planning the movement of livestock involves assessing the amount of pasture and allowing a sufficient rest period between grazing events. It improves animal production and soil structure.

- Aim for 100% groundcover, 100% of the time
- Allow sufficient time between grazing events for the plants to regenerate leaf area and root biomass
- Leave a residual pasture height of at least 5cm at the end of a grazing period to optimise regrowth and maintain plant root systems
- Design paddocks to suit the topography of the land



A farm map or aerial photo is a good starting point to assist with the management of your property. This can then be used to guide management including grazing rotations, fertiliser regime, and stock watering systems.

Fertiliser practices that match inputs to outputs retain nutrients for optimal pasture growth

1. Soil test regularly to assist you to maintain nutrient levels like phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium and sulphur in the optimum range.
2. When using nitrogen based fertilisers, apply the day you move stock out of the paddock
3. Base fertilizer application rates on pasture needs and growing seasons
4. Know the nutrient content of poultry litter; it's not always the same.
5. Apply fertiliser with at least 5-10 cm stubble to help hold it in place for plant usage.
6. Use split applications: little and more regularly rather than single large applications
7. Leave a grassed area where fertiliser isn't applied between waterways, seeps and swampy areas
8. Avoid application when there is a risk of runoff and when soils are saturated with water.
9. Store fertiliser away from river flats and drainage lines.

Did you know?

- Nitrogen not taken up by the plant 0-14 days after application is lost to the environment and to your 'back pocket'
- Nutrients applied in excess of plant needs, achieves minimal additional pasture yield
- Planned grazing improves animal production per hectare, whilst improving soil structure and infiltration rates of rainfall.
- In a 10 year study of 5 catchments, it was found that *With increasing intensification of farming, where best management practices were used (stock exclusion from waterways, planned grazing and nutrient/fertiliser budgeting) less nutrients leached into waterways.*

