

the burnett buzz...

Autumn 2010

Frank is fourth to finish...

Frank Noonan, a Miriam Vale beef producer, is the fourth of 48 landholders to complete their Reef Rescue Grazing projects. Mr Noonan received assistance from the Australian Governments Reef Rescue program, in working towards reducing sediment export to the Reef.

The program is in its second year, with graziers receiving incentives to implement projects such as erosion control, fencing of different landtypes to allow for better grazing management, installation of additional stock water points and revegetation of riparian areas.



Frank Noonan and Leanne Witcher

The Australian Government chipped in \$375 000 in cash incentives for graziers in the Coastal Burnett/Baffle region. This, along with the landholder contributions, will accomplish projects valued at over \$1.1 million.

Frank's project was the implementation of additional water points on his property, 'Forest Vale'. These additional water points will prevent cattle watering in Baffle Creek, which will improve ground cover in the riparian area and aid in bank stability. During a rainfall event, which has been quite frequent of late, this improvement in groundcover along the creek bank will reduce the amount of sediment loss from his property.

Mr Noonan, along with other coastal graziers, have received excellent rainfall over the summer period, with 'Forest Vale' receiving over 1200mm since Christmas 2009. To have his project completed during this wet period, well before the

31th May deadline, is quite an achievement! Good on you Frank!

About Reef Rescue: Reef Rescue is a Caring for our Country initiative of the Australian Government. The Burnett Mary Reef Partnership has been providing incentives to farmers and graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve farm management practices, mainly to keep their fertiliser, soil and chemicals on farm. The Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) is involved in delivering the grazing component of Reef Rescue for the Burnett Mary Regional Group.



GLMers to converge on Gayndah

It has been a while since the Qld Primary Industries & Fisheries ran their Grazing Land Management (GLM) Workshops in the Burnett.

The last being held a year ago, the first held approximately 7 years ago. All up QPI&F have ran 10 workshops in the Burnett, from Monto down to Kingaroy, out to Durong and Gayndah and Mundubbera in the middle.

One aspect highlighted in the workshop is the importance of reviewing activities and determining how successful they have been in achieving a desired goal.

With this in mind QPI&F are holding a GLM Group Forum on Tuesday 13th April, starting at 9am at the Shire Hall in

Gayndah for all past participants of the Burnett GLM workshops.

This will be an opportunity for participants to catch up with members from their own and other GLM workshop groups. This represents an opportunity for GLM members to review GLM plans and discuss current issues and future direction on their properties.

The format for the day will allow participants to give an overview of management successes and issues they have faced and to seek technical information from peers and service providers, such as Grazing Extension Officer, Bill Schulke (pictured right). It will provide an opportunity to further develop local networks.

As an added incentive for GLM members to come along, BCCA

will be providing attendees with the opportunity to win copies of the computer property mapping program "Phoenix" to help with property management planning.

If you are a past GLM participant and would like to attend please RSVP by **8 April 2010** by contacting BCCA on **4166 3898**.



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Highlights

- Reef Rescue Graziers finish projects despite the rain
- Better Catchments in the inland Burnett in 2010
- GLM forum for Gayndah
- Nest protection underway for threatened freshwater turtle
- Compost Tea workshop a hit

Better Catchments action in the Burnett

BCCA is powering on with the Better Catchments program in 2010.

Better Catchments is an innovative of BMRG and is funded by the Australian Governments Caring for Our Country program.

This year, Better Catchments is targeting improving soil management practices and BCCA have been running workshops and providing small incentives to achieve this target.

To date BCCA have held a number of workshops including:

- Stocktake workshop, Kingaroy (November 2009)
- Sown Pasture Establishment in the Burnett workshop, Monto (November 2009)

- Grains BMP, Kingaroy & Monto (December 2009 - February 2010)
- Compost Tea Workshop, Mundubbera (February 2010)

These workshops have been very well received with great attendance at each. Small incentives have been available for participants of these workshops, to aid them in implementing improved soil management practices.

Some of these incentives include soil testing vouchers, assistance with pasture monitoring, computer mapping programs to enhance property management plans, free use of BCCA's compost tea equipment as well as small cash rebates.

Through Better Catchments, BCCA are also assisting other training events

including:

- GLM Forum, Gayndah (April 2010)
- South East Burnett Landcare Hillslope Erosion Seminar, Boobyjan (April 2010)
- Phoenix Computer Mapping and Cropping Systems workshops, Monto (April 2010).

Keep an eye on our website for more information and future workshops in your area!

www.betterburnett.com



Compost tea a hot topic

There was a good turnout from across the Burnett in Mundubbera in February for a Compost Tea workshop hosted by BCCA.

Fertiliser prices are continuing to rise and so producers from a range of grazing and horticulture industries as well as home gardening have shown their interest in the alternatives. One alternative is using compost mixed with microbe foods such as fish emulsion and molasses to improve the microscopic life within the soil. Naturally, microbes are able to undertake every function that a modern day fertiliser product can do and in a sustainable way. However, often long term use of these synthetic products destroys the existing microbes in the soil for a quick – and consequently short – spurt of productivity.

The workshop was run as part of the BMRG funded program 'Better Catchments', which targets activities that will result in an improvement in soil management practices.

Participants learnt of the science behind soil and compost, from Mundubbera producer David Rolfe, and then watched as a compost tea 'brew' was put together and shared many other tips on making the technique as easy and successful as possible.

It is already well known that compost and organic matter are must-haves in a healthy and productive garden, and now more and more producers are taking advantage in new technologies and products that make

it easier to make use of compost on a larger scale.

Several people have expressed interest in attending a similar workshop. Details on this to come. If you're interested in learning more about this workshop or compost teas, contact us on 4166 3898.



What's on in the Burnett

- Apr 7** Phoenix Mapping training, Monto
- Apr 8** Phoenix Cropping training, Monto
- Apr 13** GLM Forum, Gayndah
- Apr 17** Native Bee workshop, North Burnett Landcare, Monto
- Apr** Volunteering opportunity to help with protecting *Elsie's* nests
- Apr** *Elsie* Information Workshops, East Burnett
- Apr - May** Wild dog and fox baiting for turtle nest protection, East Burnett
- April 2-5** Easter break
- May 31** Project deadline for Reef Rescue & Better Catchments projects

From Elsie's Diary



This is a very exciting time for Elsie. April is generally the start of the nesting season, which will run until about August. Nesting is generally triggered by rains, however even after March's high falls, nesting has not yet started. The recent rains have been good for softening the ground at the popular nesting sites along the Burnett River just west of Bundaberg, however water has submerged some of the nesting areas.

Two of the best nesting areas, identified by the EPA, are to be the first to be fenced as a defense against cattle stamping on the eggs underground and an attempt at keeping wild dogs and foxes from destroying the nests. Baiting for dogs and pigs is being encouraged amongst the local landholders.

A team from the National Green Jobs Corps based in Bundaberg will be out on site over the next week or so starting on the electrical fencing that will be run by a solar energizer. One of the tricks with erecting this fence will be to make it easy to rescue from rising flood waters in the future. The nearby landholders have been very cooperative so far in helping BCCA and team to get this project underway.

Grains Growers fine-tune with Grains BMP

A group of North Burnett grain growers recently completed a workshop that focused on cost effective management practices, improving the efficiency of production and increasing farm viability.

The workshop was delivered by BCCA and Queensland Primary Industries & Fisheries as part of the Better Catchments program.

The workshop was held at the Monto BCCA office, allowing grain growers the opportunity to meet BCCA staff, along with 100% of the participants signing up as BCCA members!

The Grains BMP program was a result of joint collaboration between QPI&F, AgForce and Fitzroy Basin Association. The Grains BMP program is comprised of five modules, delivered over two days,

and earlier this month, 9 local grain growers completed the workshop in Monto.

The workshop was delivered as part of the Better Catchments program, which aims at providing training and assistance



A planter being modified to no till by a South Burnett grower

for landholders in the Burnett to improve their soil management practices.

Participants in the workshop were entitled to apply for a \$2500 grant that kick-started them on the track of improved water use efficiency, improving fertility, and reducing compaction, all leading to enhanced productivity for their farming enterprise.

One grower has put the funding toward modifying their planting equipment to become zero till operators and another to upgrade their GPS system that will facilitate more accurate controlled traffic.

The same workshop series was run in December 2009 in Kingaroy with great success.

Baiting for conservation of 'Elsie' the *Elseya*

To bait, or not to bait, that is the question.

In this situation it's about the White Throated Snapping Turtle, or *Elseya albagula*, and their important nesting areas along the Burnett River near Pine Creek. Baiting along this stretch of the River and surrounds will help keep feral predators like foxes, dogs and pigs from destroying the nests of this threatened species.

In March, Bundaberg Regional Council held a public meeting to discuss waterweeds being managed in the Burnett River and Louise Newman from the Burnett Catchment Care Association

was there to chat with people interested in how the weeds and other pests affect the native turtle species.

There are rules about where you can and can't place baits, which means that for some of the smaller blocks around the area, more than just one landholder has to be happy to have baits set. Understandably there are concerns for pets and working dogs, so it is important to raise the issue with your neighbours if you're interested in getting on board to bait to help protect the nesting of this turtle species.

BCCA is offering landholders in the Pine Creek region, west of Bundaberg, free

baits through Bundaberg Regional Council in an attempt to conserve the nests of this freshwater turtle species. Contact Louise on 4165 3551 to be involved.



Fox baits

Staff Profile—Louise Newman

BCCA's Mundubbera office has seen many changes over its short 2 and a bit years lifespan with staff changes and building renovations, but one thing that hasn't changed is that it has been the office base to extension officer Louise Newman.

Louise started with BCCA with the onset of Better Burnett back in 2007 and has been involved with the variety of Better Bush projects, Healthy Habitats projects and more recently Better Catchments and Reef Rescue projects.

Before returning to her hometown of Mundubbera, Louise worked as a contractor to a Brisbane based fauna consultancy and did plenty of hard yards in the fruit picking world during university.

Louise attended the University of Queensland, Gatton Campus, and completed her Bachelor of Environmental Management, majoring in natural systems and wildlife in 2006.

Louise has enjoyed her time with BCCA, especially meeting so many people and

seeing some of our regions beautiful back roads on the way to meet them.



Louise checking out soil microbes on a microscope



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We're on the web!
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Who are we?
BCCA is a community organisation working on the philosophy of integrated catchment management. Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) is a philosophy that encourages a coordinated approach to the management of natural resources in Queensland. Its overall purpose is to integrate the management of land, water and related biological resources in order to achieve their sustainable and balanced use.
ICM involves the voluntary actions of stakeholders including government, rural landholders, industry, fisheries and urban dwellers that incorporate the goals of achieving and maintaining a healthy catchment for future generations.
BCCA is a member run organisation. If you'd like to become a member please complete the slip below!

Last word...

What an awesome wet start to 2010, with some of our coastal members receiving over 1200mm of rainfall since Christmas! Whilst we haven't received that amount of rainfall in the inland, we have, nonetheless, had a wonderful wet season and it's great to see plenty of feed in the paddocks as we head into the winter months.

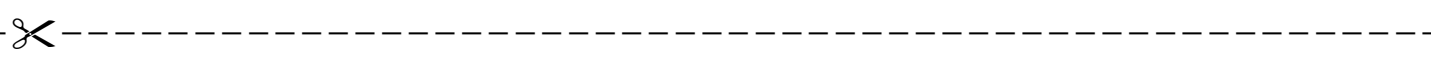
Since our last newsletter, our team has been out and about within the Burnett, organising workshops as part of the

Better Catchments program and providing support to the Reef Rescue program participants.

The Grains BMP two day workshops held in Kingaroy and Monto were very well received with participants keen to start implementing activities identified in their action plan to improve soil management practices. Our compost tea workshop held in Mundubbera in February has caused a great amount of interest in the central Burnett and beyond.

As the BCCA team effectively work towards delivering the Better Catchments and Reef Rescue programs by June 2010, we are, in conjunction with BMRG, working to secure funding in the next round of the Australian Governments, 'Caring for our Country' program. Once again, the targets for this year's Caring for our Country business plan are quite specific and we hope to address these targets in our bid for future funding.

Katie Muller



Become a BCCA member or renew your membership for only \$1 and keep up to date with BCCA activities

New member Renewing membership

Industry: Beef Cane Horticulture Irrigated Cropping Dryland Cropping Dairy Conservation Goats
 Lucerne Hobby Agricultural business NRM group Other:

Name:
Postal Address:
Property Address:
Phone: Fax:
Mobile: Email:

Please return with \$1 (postage stamps acceptable) to: BCCA PO Box 8, Monto Q 4630