



Grazing management practice changes

Changes to grazing management practices are the key to reducing erosion in the Herbert River catchment. Terrain NRM has been working with graziers, focusing on improving the land and productivity while also reducing fine sediment loads flowing to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon. This has been a large component of the Herbert Gully and Grazing Project. The goal is to reduce sheet, stream bank and gully erosion.

WORKSHOPS

Forty workshops were provided for graziers. Thirty landholders have directly benefitted and, collectively, there have been more than 300 attendees. The focus is on natural grazing methods targeting stock rotation patterns, soil health and pasture management.

Terrain brought Grazing Naturally's Dick Richardson to the region for introductory and advanced workshops, and he has built strong relationships with graziers. Soil specialists and a finance specialist

have also led workshops. The financial workshop was on decision-making for optimum business and landscape outcomes.

Responses have been very positive. Some graziers went to up to 20 of the workshops on offer, others came to at least 10 of them. Terrain has since worked directly with landholders on three large Upper Herbert properties to bring about grazing management practice changes. And anecdotal reports suggest up to seven other properties are undergoing changes.

"We are trialling denser stocking rates in smaller paddocks for shorter periods. We do this with 260 head of cattle in five 20ha paddocks near the homestead. On this small scale, we've already seen improvements in our pastures. The grass roots are growing deeper, and the grass is getting a lot stronger."

– Curtis Archer, Glen Ruth Station

"We are already seeing different grasses come up in new areas of our property and the use of cattle to rotationally graze paddocks is helping to improve existing grasses."

– Pete Waddell, Woodleigh Station

HERBERT GULLY & GRAZING PROJECT



FIELD DAYS

Events have been held on cattle stations in the Herbert River catchment and also outside the region. A four-day trip to the Burdekin gave graziers a 'look into their future' with visits to properties where grazing naturally practices are well-established.

"We saw quite intense grazing involving more management of the cattle - but it does seem to be paying off. Rather than stocking more lightly, these graziers are creating grasslands through denser stocking for shorter periods. If we can slowly improve our country through working cattle a bit more intensely it's a win-win." – **Curtis Archer, Glen Ruth Station**

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

Grazing Naturally's Dick Richardson has been working individually with graziers, largely online, since face-to-face workshops. Terrain NRM's grazing specialist Ian Little has also been providing ongoing support and guidance to graziers - observing pastures, undertaking paddock mapping and discussing potential grazing management strategies, including stock rotational changes.

WHAT CHANGES ARE BEING MADE?

Graziers are moving to smaller paddocks and denser stocking for shorter periods. Cattle are being moved in one mob through up to seven paddocks. Each paddock gets a one-year spell. In addition, waterways are being fenced off and alternative water sources provided through the project.



"Grazing should be more intense for a shorter duration - after that it's a matter of keeping some of the country in a shorter, more productive state with repetitive grazes during the growing season while other parts get the opportunity for a long-term spell. It's a bit like preparing a lawn – mow it, water it, feed it, mow it again and repeat. In no time you'll end up with a lush thick carpet of grass."

"People are realising livestock can be used as a tool. By managing the feed differently, we are building more soil structure and, in doing so, the land can capture more water, reducing run-off and, in the long-term, erosion." – **Dick Richardson, Grazing Naturally**

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING

The educational aspect of this project has been key in delivering long-term results that reduce erosion in the Herbert catchment.

"Education and extension have worked in really well with on-ground

remediation activities. Providing graziers with information, and with access to specialists to help them to adopt practice change, has been crucial to this project's success.

– **Terrain NRM's Jen Mackenzie**

ABOUT THE HERBERT GULLY & GRAZING PROJECT

Terrain NRM is helping Wet Tropics landholders in the Herbert River catchment with erosion control and grazing management practice changes. This five-year program is funded through the Australian Government's Reef Trust IV program. It combines engineered erosion solutions with fencing, off-stream watering alternatives and learning opportunities.

For more information contact Terrain NRM at **(07) 4043 8000**, email info@terrain.org.au or visit www.terrain.org.au