

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Pastures are a dynamic system. They include native and introduced species and are subject to grazing, pest and disease attacks, as well as varying inputs, such as rainfall.

The management of pastures to address and prevent dryland salinity means using pastures to increase water use. The choice of pasture must fit the site on-farm taking into account soil type, pH, depth, drainage, degradation or erosion, and enterprise (wool, beef etc).

Seek advice about which option will best suit the different areas on your property.

What can you do?

- Sow pasture species that are suited to the land capability. eg. salt tolerant, acid tolerant.
- Plant pasture species that use more water than annual pasture species, such as lucerne, phalaris, cocksfoot.
- Don't fallow. Recharge is increased if left to long fallow periods.
- Take advantage of extra moisture for opportunity cropping when conditions are appropriate, but make sure the land is able to sustain such activities.
- Use a phase cropping system. Rotate annual crops with perennial pastures for example, after 5-7 years of continuous cropping plant 5-7 years of lucerne.
- Use the alley cropping method. Plant annual crops in alleys among rows of perennial plants that will provide shelter, increase water use and provide other benefits such as fodder and habitat.
- Ensure existing native and introduced pastures are productive and self-sustaining. It is important to have a significant component of perennial pasture.
- Plant and maintain trees, particularly near grazing pastures.
- Fertilise pastures to maximise growth and therefore water use.

Who can help?

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