

BETTER HAY AND SILAGE CASE STUDY

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Rainfall in Western Australia (WA) South West Land Division occurs predominantly between Autumn and Spring, dictating pasture supply. More than 50% of pasture growth occurs in spring. Due to typical dry/hot summers, dry-land livestock producers rely heavily on preserving spring surplus (hay/silage) to support stock productivity/welfare and environmental outcomes over summer and autumn.

Increased frequency of late breaks and lower rainfall has resulted in a higher demand for both quantity and quality preserved fodder. Science based capacity building fodder conservation training has not been delivered to stakeholders in WA for over 20 years. Western Beef supported by several local and national organisations secured a Future Drought Fund grant to address these issues.

2. ACTIVITIES

- Train the trainer workshops on fodder preservation, storage and allocation were offered to WA educators and livestock advisors.
- Better Hay and Silage workshops were delivered in 21 locations around southern WA to beef and sheep producers and service providers.
- Rumen8-Beef workshops were delivered in 13 locations to teach beef producers and advisors how to use this freely available computer software to make more efficient hay/silage allocation.
- Education webinars and videos covering hay/silage related best practice were produced and are available from the Western Beef website

3. PARTICIPANT

Mark Bailey (pictured above) has enjoyed farming since 1996 in Narrikup on 300 picturesque undulating acres. Mark manages a cow herd operation focusing on Galloway, Angus and Shorthorn cattle.

He produces most of the preserved fodder he utilises and attended two Better Hay and Silage and two Rumen8-Beef workshops run in the South Coast region between 2023 and 2025.



4. PRE-WORKSHOP/MOTIVATION

Has made considerable time and financial investment to improve grazing management and renovate pastures. He preserves all fodder used during the feed gap so wanted to ensure it could make the best fodder possible.

5. KEY LEARNINGS / OUTCOMES

improve timing to maximise quality of hay and silage

- budget for extra help
- Implement feed budgeting
- Only buy fodder with feed test results.

Skills and knowledge learnt are increasing business tolerance to drought and climate change and includes feed budgeting, understanding feed quality and learning best fodder preservation methods. He is feeling more confident to make early decisions.

6. LOOKING AHEAD

Looking forward to more programs to increase knowledge.

With regards to Rumen8, it is a great tool to use, once obtaining feed test and matching to class of cattle. Without regular use it can be hard to remember how to use so a cheat sheet would be a handy tool.



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