

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

Aggie Forrester (pictured above) is a pastoralist, together with her husband runs sheep and cattle in Northampton (1.2 million acres) Recently they purchased 200 acres in Capel. She brought a range of applicable skills from the north but wanted to acquire specific local knowledge to assist with implementing their 1, 3, 5-10yr strategy for the Capel property. She attended the Better Hay and Silage workshop in Upper Capel (2023) and the Rumen8-beef workshop in Bunbury (2024).



4. PRE-WORKSHOP/MOTIVATION

Had zero experience in the region. Took time to talk to the neighbours, local agronomist and learn more about the south west's pastures and seasons. Attending the workshops was an ideal opportunity to do a crash course and the programs complemented each other. Had never made silage.

5. KEY LEARNINGS/OUTCOMES

Timing is everything. Need to get it right for fertiliser application, locking up, cutting, tedding, etc. It has a massive impact on quality and volume of feed.

The program gave her a framework and principles to follow that are backed by data and experience, building her confidence. Have done much testing to learn, use as a guideline, discuss with advisors and compare with information in the pack.

Really Enjoyed all of the workshop. The mixture of learning material and time to talk with people was great. The resource pack is really useful and well laid out.

Definitely better placed for the season ahead, especially as its been a bit of green drought. Not doing as much fodder preservation this year.

6. LOOKING AHEAD

Would like refreshers. Maybe a quick social event before the start of season or afterwards.



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