South West NRM

On-Ground Project Fact Sheet

IVANHOE DOWNS - REJUVENATING QUEENSLAND BLUEGRASS

Landholder Name: Crichton Pastoral Co

Property Location & Lot on Plan: "Ivanhoe Downs" Morven - L2/O538 L3/O538 L9/O5375

(Property & project location maps attached at the end of the document).

Property Outline:

(E.g. Property description, size in hectares, enterprise, annual rainfall, and current management practice)

Ivanhoe Downs is situated 8 kilometres N of Morven, a 7326 ha property, consisting of two-thirds black soil country & the remainder red country. We purchased *Ivanhoe Downs* in 1973 in a family partnership that has been on the land for 3 generations. We have been able to implement structured improvements, i.e. fencing, watering , & land development. These improvements have enabled us to spell paddocks, resulting in good pasture improvement. We wish to be able to continue this type of development to enable our son Stuart, the opportunity to continue in this operation as a 4th generation family member.

Our individual interests in the grazing industry have inspired us with the motivation and enthusiasm to consider purchasing other property, if the opportunity arises.

Ivanhoe Downs has an annual rainfall of 450 – 500 mm, however is unreliable and unpredictable! Having been a mixed enterprise of breeding sheep and cattle, the focus has changed to a feeder steer operation. This is mainly due to the fact that this property is hard to manage with wet stock, in times of prolonged drought.

We have been able to agist some females in safer drought country, enabling us to spell our open downs country. The benefits of this are already evident, not only due to an excellent season, but because of strategic spelling. With the type of operation we run, our stocking rates have gradually increased, but are extremely variable, dependant on season and market opportunities.

We keep an open mind to innovative ideas to include in the business, and believe we must keep abreast of new ideas that are applicable & beneficial to the running & development of the whole enterprise. We also believe the younger generation needs the opportunity & encouragement to embrace appropriate information & technology, to help them become more informed & equipped to manage this valuable resource.

This project is supported by South West NRM through funding from the Queensland Government's Q2 Coasts and Country and Australian Government's Caring for Our Country.

Project Description

Stage 1 - Control erosion on major property waterway & around dam by-washes by fencing 3 km section adjacent the waterway. 3 additional water points need to be established external to the waterway to allow access to water for stock. A trough currently located within the waterway will be required to be relocated out of the waterway. Some earth works will be required (i.e. drains) to assist the stabilisation and drainage of the area.

Stage 2 - Rehabilitation of QLD Bluegrass pastures by controlled stocking rates on downs country through additional fencing, establishing new & strategically located watering points.

Stage 3 - Expand areas of QLD Bluegrass pastures by controlled stocking rates on downs country through additional fencing, establishing new & strategic watering points.

Project Aim

Stage 1 - Reduce and control erosion within the waterway, maintain/re-establish groundcover in eroded areas, reduce sedimentation, actively manage the stocking rate in the whole project area, encourage 3P grasses and reduce the financial requirements by doing the job now rather than when greater erosion and siltation occurs.

Stage 2 - Manage stocking rates on Ivanhoe Downs under a rotational grazing system to reduce grazing pressure, enhancing seeding and regrowth of a QLD Bluegrass community.

Stage 3 - Enhance stocking rates on Ivanhoe Downs via rotational grazing to reduce grazing pressure, enhance seeding and regrowth of QLD Bluegrass community.

Project Outcomes

Stage 1 - Through relocation of stock access & waters, erosion will be reduced, water quality will be improved as sedimentation is reduced and pastures rejuvenated. Expand and enhance the creation of wildlife habitat (e.g. wet areas where currently water birds visit on an opportunistic basis), and maintain quality of downstream flows into areas of Threatened Ecological Communities.

Stage 2 & 3 - Native QLD Bluegrass pasture community rejuvenation and re-establishment complimenting 3P species through rotational grazing and spelling of paddocks.

Outputs

CB1.1 Events; 1 field day in conjunction with South West NRM, expected approx. 20 persons. **OG3.4 Enhanced terrestrial vegetation**; **Stage 1**- 38.3 ha direct enhancement; **Stage 2 & 3** - project will influence 7326 ha under property mgt through enhancing water quality of a major watercourse. **OG 14.5 Groundcover mgt**; **Stage 1** - 38.3 ha enhancement of groundcover management; project will influence 7326 ha under mgt via enhanced water quality & grass cover; 3 property managers & influencing up to another 20 through the field day. **Stage 2 & 3** - Influence 7326 ha under mgt via enhanced QLD Bluegrass cover.

Project Monitoring:

Objectives:	Monitor ground cover response, presence of pasture species and biodiversity, and production benefits in response to redevelopment of the grassed waterway and reduction in paddock size enhancing rotational grazing practices.
Indicators & Methodology:	**Indicators:** 3P pasture species, percentage groundcover, pasture quantity, rainfall, grazing days, and land condition. **Methodology:** Transects and photo points, standing dry mass, use of grazing charts, *Stocktake* monitoring.
Monitoring Schedule:	Establish baseline data prior to the commencement of the project. To assist project collaboration and holistic data analysis under the project, the initial collection and onforwarding to South West NRM, of rainfall and ongoing production monitoring data (e.g. grazing days / location etc. incorporating actual rest periopds for each paddock, yields: stock days / ha, stocking rate), will be the responsibility of the landholder. Biophysical monitoring every six months in which South West NRM will be responsible for collecting, collating, interpreting and reporting data. Two pasture monitoring transects considering pasture species and ground cover established within the project area representative of the major land types. Two photo monitoring sites within the project area representative of the major land types. One pasture monitoring transect and one photo monitoring site located upon the property, external to the project site, as a comparison site. Analysis: Return on Investment. Develop a case study comparing return on investment of rotational grazing systems as developed under this project, and comparing the economic return on investment to the project comparison site.