

grain & graze

Grain & Graze is a holistic, systems approach to practical research on mixed farms in the wheat and sheep belt. It combines the knowledge and expertise of the four national Research and Development Corporation (RDC) partners with new on-farm research creating a unique, Australian whole-farm approach. Grain & Graze became the largest research and extension program of its type to help Australia's mixed farmers increase their profitability, while better managing natural resources including water, soil and biodiversity.

Between 2003 and 2008, more than 4,000 producers across Australia were involved in the Grain & Graze program, with hands-on engagement, in a wide variety of mixed-farming research and extension activities conducted on approximately 240 sites. Many thousands more took interest in the activities by seeking information about Grain & Graze results. Along with the four partner RDCs that comprise Grain & Graze, more than 65 organisations and agencies support the program and its participating producers.

CLIENT

Grain & Graze was run by a consortium of RDCs including Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovation Limited, Land & Water Australia and the Grains Research and Development Corporation. The national program was managed by Dr Richard Price of Kiri-ganai Research.

TIME FRAME

2003-2008

COMMUNICATION GOALS

The program aimed to raise awareness among 15,000 farmers and directly influence 6,800 producers to change their mixed farming practices to deliver:

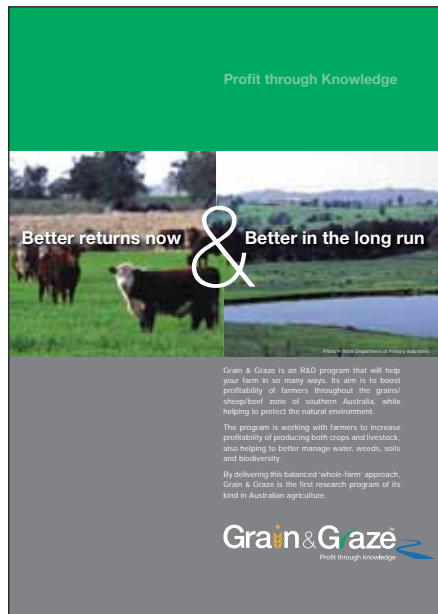
- A 10% increase in mixed farm profitability driven by a 5% increase in grain yields and a 10% increase in livestock production.
- Improved, or at least stable, conditions for the natural resources on mixed farms in line with regional or catchment targets.

- Confident and knowledgeable mixed farmers making decisions and using management tools which sustain production and promote biodiversity.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Producers in the nine Grain & Graze regions (mixed and single enterprise)
- Program participants
- Farm consultants
- State Departments of Agriculture, NRM bodies etc.
- Relevant industry stakeholders.





OUTCOMES

- Promotion of regional forums and networking events
- Promotion of the Grain & Graze final national forum
- Partner engagement of the contributing organisations through provision of tailored case studies and information
- Entry of Biodiversity in Grain & Graze (BiGG) program to the Banksia Awards
- Facilitated regional sharing/adoption forums
- Provided materials for uploading to Grain & Graze website and e-newsletter.

MAIN OUTPUTS

- Communication strategy information and instruction kit developed for each region.
- Double the required number of media materials (average six per month), with significant follow up from Sefton & Associates to ensure successful publishing.
- Grain & Graze stories published in all partner newsletters.
- Booklet Insights into mixed farming in Australia [26 case studies] distributed to target audiences.
- BiGG won the biodiversity category of the Banksia Awards.
- Booklet Thinking BiGG – mixed farming families tell their stories of biodiversity [18 case studies] and audio CD Talking BiGG – stories from the Biodiversity in Grain & Graze (BiGG) Farmer Forum distributed to target audiences.
- Fact sheets on Grain & Graze research findings distributed to target audiences.

KEY OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 4000 producers were actively engaged in Grain & Graze activities and nearly 2000 are now using Grain & Graze recommended practices on their farms. Participating producers increased their profit by an average of nine per cent. This was achieved during a period of severe drought in all nine regions.

The awareness targets for Grain & Graze were all achieved earlier than targeted and were higher than targeted. Grain & Graze set a target of 8,000 producers becoming aware of the program by June 2005 and 24,000 by June 2008. The program achieved an awareness level of more than 18,000 producers by December 2005 and 24,500 by November 2006.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

I have worked with Sefton & Associates since April 2004 and over this period Sefton & Associates has undertaken a range of communication activities for the national Grain & Graze program.

The work completed by Sefton & Associates has exceeded all expectations. Grain & Graze set a target of 8,000 producers becoming aware of the program by June 2005 and 24,000 by June 2008. Agscan surveys, undertaken by Solutions Marketing, showed that the program had achieved an awareness level of over 18,000 producers across Australia by December 2005 and 24,500 by November 2006. I can only attribute this phenomenal achievement to the communication campaign run by Sefton & Associates.

DR RICHARD PRICE, NATIONAL MANAGER,
GRAIN & GRAZE