

La Grange Agriculture and Water Opportunities

PLANNING THE FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE IN
THE LA GRANGE REGION, WEST KIMBERLEY

Issue 5

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From the Editor

Inside this issue:

From the editor 1

Land tenure 2

Monitoring and
evaluation 2

Meet the
region 3

Resource
assessment 3

Social media 4

What's on in
La Grange 4

The New Year is in full swing and the Kimberley is enjoying a big Wet season.



Since our last edition, the La Grange project has entered the world of social media. Our Facebook page is live so if you use Facebook we welcome you to www.facebook.com/dafwalagrang and to like our page.

DAFWA's new website is also up and running which includes a La Grange webpage. www.agric.wa.gov.au

In this edition we raise the topic of land tenure. The La Grange DAFWA team is working to develop a rangeland tenure tool as part of the project that will make it easier for everyone to work out the best ways to achieve agriculture development.

We also introduce the monitoring and evaluation team, BRM Economics, who are independently observing the project to make sure we do what we set out to do, we do it well and have a lasting positive impact.

Our Meet the Region this month introduces the Karajarri Rangers who are very active in the region looking after native plants, animals and cultural sites.

Rain gauges and data loggers have been strategically placed throughout the La Grange region as part of the resource assessment and the bore water results are complete and being distributed to property owners.

La Grange project participants are invited to the annual regional workshop set for April 9th and 10th so lock in the dates and stay tuned for more information. Happy New Year everyone. Cheers,

Felicity Brown



Photograph:
marine plain
Roebuck Station



Supporting your success

Land tenure

Getting the land tenure right for irrigated agriculture and horticulture development is really important. If we get the tenure right then we have a solid basis for capital investment.

People need to be aware of the best tenure option for their development and the pathways, time and costs to achieve that option. The clearer this is the better off everyone will be; private developers, Native Title Holders and government staff supporting development applications.



For modest development a Pastoral Permit is an option for existing pastoral leaseholders. For major developments a new form of lease or freeholding the land will be needed. The pathways to achieve these options need to honour Native Title rights and comply with National Competition Policy.

The La Grange project team, through Chris Ham and Rod Safstrom from DAFWA with Lorraine Fitzpatrick Department of Lands and Lynnette O'Reilly from Department of Regional Development are working to develop a Rangeland Tenure Tool that will be applicable in the La Grange area and across the rangelands. We hope that this tool will make it easier for developers and government to appreciate the best ways to achieve irrigated agriculture development.

For more information please contact:
Rod Safstrom on 9368 3169, or 0402 287 811,
or email rodney.safstrom@agric.wa.gov.au.

Monitoring and evaluation

We have just reached the one year milestone of providing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support for the La Grange project and thought we would share a bit of what M&E is all about.



M&E provides ongoing independent and objective observation in order to ensure a project does what it set out to do, does it well and has a lasting positive impact. By doing this as the project happens, we can capture important learning from the project to improve what is happening now and inform planning for future projects.

This ongoing process of doing, learning and improving involves gathering opinions and information from many different people and groups of people involved in the project and the value of our work depends very much on how well we can do this.

Over the past year, we found that the most useful information was gathered informally from participants at the Eco Beach and project team workshops. However, gathering information on an infrequent basis means that

a lot of your thoughts and experiences are missed. So this year we propose to gather more information more frequently from you. While we won't take up your time with long formal questionnaires, we are hoping to make use of the DAFWALaGrange Facebook page to gather quick comments and feedback from you during the course of the year.

It is unusual for an evaluation team to be involved at the same time as the project is being undertaken. Typically evaluation comes after the work has been done – when it is too late to make a contribution to a project! So the way that DAFWA has designed this evaluation process gives us a chance to do something really special. We are looking forward to the work of the coming year, and hope that we can make a meaningful contribution as the project is implemented and to the planning of future projects.

Brian Martin,
Doug McGhie and
Jennifer Chaplyn for
BRM Economics



Meet the region

Karajarri rangers - caring for country

The Karajarri Rangers are continuing on the work of the old people, using the traditional knowledge they have to learn how to look after country.

The rangers look after and protect native plants, animals and cultural sites from humans, fire, weeds, cattle and pests.

They carry out turtle monitoring, fence around old wells and look after burial sites. They also make presentations for the local school.



Lately, the Karajarri Rangers have been working on reducing the number of access roads nearby the Bidyadanga Community. They achieve this by installing bollard fencing to prevent traffic entry and signage to notify people of the changed road conditions. This work will help maintain healthy vegetation and prevent soil loss from erosion. The rangers will also be closing some of the roads that access the beach which will help the beach plants to stabilise the dunes, reducing effects of coastal erosion.



Resource assessment

Rain gauges with data loggers were deployed in the La Grange area in November, to measure rainfall and collect rainfall samples. The rain gauges use tipping buckets and each gauge uses 2 data loggers to record data (if one fails the second data logger will still contain the data). The rain gauges are located away from the coast to compare rainfall between the coastal and inland areas.

We also deployed 25 data loggers to measure water levels in the area. The data loggers measure water pressure on a sensor every hour.

The loggers are located from Mandora to Roebuck Plains, mainly close to the Great Northern Highway. It is hoped the water level data loggers will give good data over the wet season so we can observe the effects of the rainfall on water levels in the Broome Sandstone. The rainfall data loggers are planned to be downloaded in early April 2014.

Rain on the Plains



Anna Plains Station, 2014 Wet season

Social media



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The La Grange project Facebook site launched in December 2013 with 77 people following the page to date. The idea for the interactive site came from our first regional workshop held in May 2013. We are proud to deliver this workshop outcome and proud to launch the first Facebook page within the Department of Agriculture and Food WA. If you are a Facebook user and would like to follow the project we welcome you to visit www.facebook.com/dafwalaqrance.com and to like the page.

Project participants are invited to submit any photographs, notices, etc for inclusion on the page to felicity.brown@agric.wa.gov.au

Wet season 2014



Roebuck Plains station driveway



Happy cattle on Anna Plains

What's on in La Grange

La Grange Regional workshop

The annual La Grange Agriculture and Water Opportunities regional workshop for project participants and stakeholders is set.

Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th April 2014 at Eco Beach.

Project participants are encouraged to put the date in your diary and forward session suggestions for the two day event to felicity.brown@agric.wa.gov.au Invitation and details will be forwarded direct.



Karajarri Country Fire Planning & IPA meeting

Karajarri rangers invite La Grange traditional owners, community members, neighbouring pastoralists and businesses to a fire planning meeting and to learn about Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's).

Wednesday 19th February, 2014 at Bidyadanga

For more information contact Rhys Swain (Ranger Coordinator)
0448 066 781

**Regional
Workshop**

**Fire
Planning**