

Australian Grassland Association – Livestock Productivity from Pastures 2016

Introduction

The productivity of pasture and grassland underpins the dairy, beef, sheep meat and wool industries in Australia. The Australian Grassland Association Inc. facilitates the ongoing improvement and development of the pasture industry. We do this through providing a forum which brings together a wide range of industry stakeholders in order to;

- Facilitate interaction, exchange of ideas and provide an opportunity for research to be presented and published;
- Provide an opportunity for all interested stakeholders to review and contribute to the cost effective advancement of pasture based industries through applied science;
- Consider and discuss the state of the pasture based industries and appraise the research needed to meet challenges and capture emerging markets.

The third Australian Grassland Association symposium had the theme of “*Livestock Productivity from Pastures*” recognising the vital role that pasture, and grassland have in grazing-based livestock production systems. This symposium focussed on the interactions between pasture and grazing animals, including sessions on pasture and grazing management, nutritive value, dual purpose species and agricultural economics. Key reports from the symposium held at the University of New England in 2016 are presented in this special issue of *Crop and Pasture Science*. The specific papers in this issue present new information on seasonal variability, grazing management, the impact of extreme weather and technological advances at the pasture-livestock interface.

In addition, the symposium poster session enabled researchers from across the nation to present early research findings to their peers. And a visit to the innovative ‘SmartFARM’ of the University of New England was the highlight of a field tour. A relaxed but highly informative afternoon there provided ample opportunity to engage with the researchers in the field and demonstrate the impressive, emerging, digital technologies that will deliver efficiencies in both pasture and livestock management in the near future.

As with all such events, it takes a team of dedicated, passionate professionals to develop and manage a successful symposium. I would particularly like to acknowledge the ongoing and enthusiastic efforts of Carol Harris, Dr Mark Norton and Dr Kevin Reed.

I also wish to thank Dairy Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, ICT International, PGG Wrightson Seeds, the Grassland Society of New South Wales and the Grassland Society of Southern Australia for their financial support of the symposium. Plus, I wish to recognize the NSW Department of Primary Industries for providing significant in-kind support through the provision of multiple speakers and the attendance of numerous staff.

I trust you enjoy this special edition of *Crop and Pasture Science* and will find it informative. We look forward to seeing you at the next Australian Grassland Association event.

Stuart Kemp
President
Australian Grassland Association Inc.