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Getting back to grassroots at pasture day

Leo Neill-Ballantine believes well-managed pastures are the key to keeping animals in good condition and achieving a healthier bottom line.

The Neill-Ballantine family recently hosted a successful Pasture Field Day for more than 50 landholders at their 35,000 acre beef grazing property 'Galloway Plains', near Calliope.

"We hosted the field day to learn and help gauge whether what we are doing is right," he said.

The event was organised by the Boyne Calliope Sub Region (BCSR) of the Fitzroy Basin Association Inc to give land managers in the Gladstone area the chance to get practical and expert advice about the role of pastures in sustainable production.

"It might sometimes go against the grain, but I think it's important to learn from experience as well as new ideas. Field days like this give us a chance to learn from seeing and then doing," Mr Neill-Ballantine said.

Mr Neill-Ballantine is a member of the BCSR committee and has completed on-ground projects with the group including land type fencing and pasture development to better manage stock access to sensitive areas and improve ground cover.

He says he has benefited from working with BCSR and is currently developing another project, with a view to undertaking even more in the future.

"I am interested in finding better ways to manage our land. BCSR and FBA can provide us with funding and put us in touch with people that can help improve our country, improve our bottom line and maybe even make us a bit wiser as a producer," he said.

BCSR Coordinator Kristy Dalton said the Pasture Field Day at Galloway Plains gave landholders a thorough overview, and featured local experts on pasture species, aerial seeding, and pasture budgeting.

"We also visited some established pasture sites to see what other landholders are achieving and learn more about what steps they took," Ms Dalton said.

She said BCSR staff had also shared information about incentive funding available through the Fitzroy Basin Association for on-ground property improvement projects.

"We work with landholders through voluntary partnerships to support infrastructure improvements like fencing and watering points that enable better environmental management," Ms Dalton said.

"Based on a 50% co-contribution, landholders in the past have been able to access average amounts of \$10,000 per project, which has boosted their capacity to implement changes quickly."

Landholders interested in learning more about voluntary partnerships with Fitzroy Basin Association should contact the Boyne Calliope Sub Region on 4975 6555, or e-mail admin.bcsr@fba.org.au.

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