Technograzing™ in a drought - is it still successful?

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INTRODUCTION

- SARDI's Struan Research Centre has developed 192 ha of dryland phalaris-based pasture into an intensive rotational grazing system using Technograzing™ hardware and principles (Figure 1).
- The commercial aim of the setup is to achieve 1000 kg liveweight gain/ha.
- In 2006 only 266mm of rain was recorded in the Naracoorte area vs the long term average of 532mm. This resulted in significantly reduced pasture production compared to previous years (Figure 2).

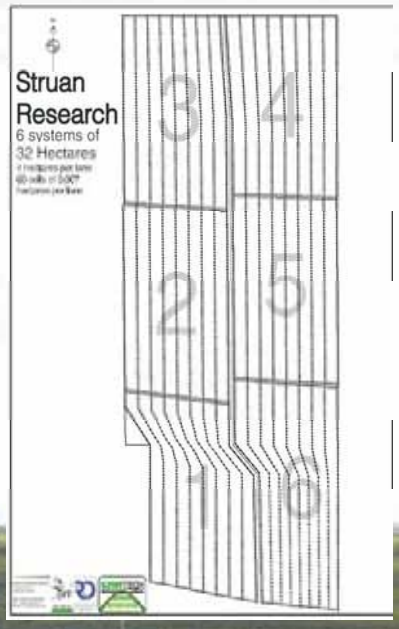

Figure 1. Layout of the Struan Technograzing™ systems.

METHOD

- The area is divided into 6 X 32ha 'systems', each of which is divided into 8 X 4 ha 'lanes'. Lanes can then be further divided into up to 60 cells using temporary electric fencing (Figure 1).
- Friesian bulls were managed on a strict two day grazing policy, with the number of cells allocated depending on pasture growth rate and feed on offer.

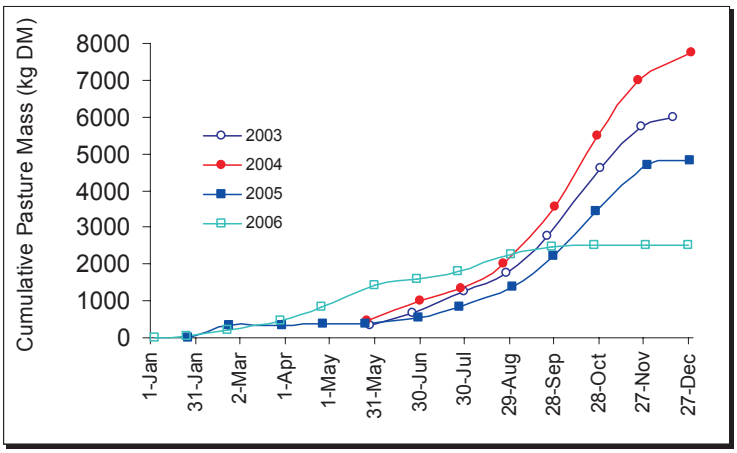

Figure 2. CSIRO "Pastures from Space" cumulative pasture yields in the Naracoorte/Lucindale District Council Area for 2003 – 2006.

2006 PRODUCTION DATA

- Bulls grazed on the Technograzing™ systems achieved liveweight gains ranging from 480 to 686 kg/ha.
- Bulls grazed under set stocked conditions on an adjacent area of similar phalaris-based pasture achieved liveweight gains of 292kg/ha.
- Bulls grazed on the Technograzing™ systems for between 95 and 142 days compared to 73 days in the set stocked area.

	Stocking Rate (bulls/ha)	Start Wt (kg)	Total Weight Gain (kg/ha)	Total Grazing Days
System 1	4.8	247	686	125
System 2	4.5	256	540	127
System 3	4.4	307	495	104
System 4	5.8	209	479	95
System 5	3.8	346	507	130
System 6	4.1	291	625	142
Set Stocked	2.8	332	291	73

Table 1. Summary of 2006 Friesian Bull Productivity.

CONCLUSIONS

- The production difference between grazing strategies demonstrates the role that intensive rotational grazing systems can have in increasing pasture productivity and utilisation.
- It also demonstrates that intensive rotational grazing can still be successfully undertaken in years of low pasture growth.

Government of South Australia

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