

Grain & Graze 2 is a national research and extension program to boost farm profitability while helping to protect the environment.

Its research focuses on cropping, pastures, livestock, profitability, feedbase management, whole-farm economics, biodiversity, social issues, soil and water.

Northern Victoria is one of seven Grain & Graze 2 regions across Australia, as shown in the map below.



Northern Victoria program

Grain & Graze 2 has invested \$1.9 million into the Northern Victoria program, which started in January 2010 and runs until December 2013.

This investment was secured to increase skills and confidence amongst regional farmers to make major practice change.

One of the program's strengths is the direct involvement of farmers and farming groups in local trials and extension activities.

It will increase water use efficiency and regional profitability, and improve sustainability of mixed farming businesses through better soil cover, reduced erosion and improved non-arable native vegetation.

The results we're working towards are:

- increased water use efficiency (\$/mm rainfall) by 10.7% across 433 participating mixed farms.
- increased regional profitability by \$18 million (\$42,118 per participating farmer).
- improved sustainability of mixed farming businesses through better soil cover, reducing erosion and improving non-arable native vegetation.
- better capacity to make complex whole farm decisions amongst 120 farmers and 17 advisors.

This will be done through the following projects:

Growing biomass

- Native pasture resilience
- Forages for a new climate
- The most efficient ways of converting irrigation water to grain and meat

Utilising biomass

- Containment use and management
- Grazing croplands
- Costs and benefits of livestock in no-till
- Farmer solutions to grazing no-till systems

Where in the landscape

- Innovative solutions to the problem of uneven grazing in large Mallee paddocks
- Opportunity grazing and cropping benefits of perennials on constrained soil types in mixed farming systems in northern Victoria

Adaptive management

- Embedding adaptive management
- Risk management discussion groups
- Role of livestock in whole farm risk management

Transition

- Pasture termination

Who's involved?

The Grain & Graze 2 program builds on the success of the previous Grain & Graze program. It was initiated by the Grains Research Development Corporation (GRDC) and is co-funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

The Northern Victoria program covers the mixed farming areas of the Victorian Mallee, Wimmera, North Central, Goulburn Broken and North East Catchment Management Authority regions.

The program is hosted by the Birchip Cropping Group in collaboration with the following grower groups: Mallee Sustainable Farming Inc., Victorian Irrigated Cropping Council, Riverine Plains Inc., Vic No-Till Farmers Association and Department of Primary Industries (Vic.).

A partnership also exists with CSIRO, the five Catchment Management Authorities, consultants and private industries to deliver research, demonstration and extension activities.

Find out more

For further information about the Northern Victoria Grain & Graze program, including opportunities to get involved, visit www.bcg.org.au or contact BCG on (03) 5492 2787.

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CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY