

**Queensland Government
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation**

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Swing to leucaena gains momentum across south

WALKING through rows of established and thriving leucaena pastures in the Dulacca, Wallumbilla and Dalby districts was positive proof that this tropical leguminous browse tree can be successfully grown in southern Queensland.

More than 40 cattle producers took the opportunity to inspect leucaena at three mid-May field days coordinated by Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation senior pasture agronomist Stuart Buck in conjunction with the University of Queensland and The Leucaena Network.

Mr Buck, who leads the DEEDI-funded state-wide “Accelerated adoption of leucaena” project, said many of the producers attending this month’s leucaena information days said they were keen to sow leucaena as a permanent land use change to improve enterprise profitability.

“The swing to leucaena planting across the Maranoa and the Darling Downs has been triggered by the marginal returns from annual grain and forage cropping, a sentiment expressed by many of the 120 producers who attended similar leucaena field days held at Millmerran, Hannaford and Chinchilla last December,” Mr Buck said.

“The field day hosts are all graduates of The Leucaena Network’s Leucaena for Profit and Sustainability courses and they openly discussed their successes and failures on the road to establishing and managing leucaena – grass pastures.

“Their key messages were don’t cut corners; successful establishment is dependent on effective seedbed preparation; have good soil moisture at planting and practice early in-crop weed control.”

The Leucaena Network’s vice-president, Bryant Ussher, Lingi, Chinchilla, discussed his leucaena – grass management approach where he uses a rotation system to ensure the grazing pressure on both the tree and grass components maintains good utilisation while preserving a healthy grass cover.

Mr Buck said other experienced producers spoke of the need for astute property paddock planning to make cattle handling and mustering more efficient. Pre-planning for row spacing, row direction, laneways and watering points outside the leucaena paddock were vital management considerations.

Intending leucaena growers were also urged to follow the industry-supported Code of Conduct promoted by The Leucaena Network to ensure leucaena does not become an environmental weed.

Positive feedback from attending producers indicated they had gained a great deal of knowledge and confidence to progress leucaena pasture programs with one landholder planning to grow 1215ha of leucaena in the near future.

Media contact: Russ Boadle, Rockhampton Ph 4936 0320 Mobile 0418 789 939



Caption:

At the Dalby district leucaena information field day were from left, Steve Williams, Yathong, Dalby, who hosted the event; Bryant Ussher, Lingi, Chinchilla, vice-president of The Leucaena Network; and John Murphy, a Dalby district grazier.