



Quality Rural Solutions Training for you www.qualityruralsolutions.com.au

Quality Rural Solutions - Jane Vincent & Associates

Strong focus on Natural Resource Management in 2007

Quality Rural Solutions - Jane Vincent & Associates (QRS-JV) has been busy in 2007 with a focus on Natural Resource Management as an integral part of commercial farming enterprises, delivered to farmers through comprehensive, 6-day, Property Management Planning (PMP) courses. These courses were made possible through generous subsidies to farmers from several Catchment Management Authorities in NSW. Two PMP courses were completed with very positive feedback; one in the Bathurst area subsidised by the Central West Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the other in Braidwood jointly subsidised by both the Southern Rivers CMA and Upper Shoalhaven Landcare Council. A further two PMP courses are near completion in Gunning and Boorowa, both subsidised by the Lachlan CMA.

QRS - JV also completed a project with NSW Dept. Primary Industries, further developing the resources for StockPlan®, an essential Drought Decision Support tool for all graziers.

Animal Health Risk Management also a feature

The introduction of an infectious disease, as shown by the example of Equine Influenza in the horse industry, has the potential to devastate Australia's agricultural industries with serious consequences for long term sustainability and continued market access. QRS-JV has developed a one-day information and skills-training workshop to educate producers in minimising the risk of introducing animal diseases to their farm. A critical element of the workshop is providing farmers with a common-sense template that allows them to develop an infectious disease risk-management plan to meet their specific needs. The workshop caters to farmers and livestock owners, and is extremely relevant, now that an exotic disease incursion has breached Australia's biosecurity boundaries. It is vitally important for all producers to have a plan in place to minimise the risk of diseases entering their property.

Property Management Planning (PMP) to continue in 2008

Several more PMP or Whole Farm Planning courses will be delivered this year across a number of CMA areas. Farmers are finding these most worthwhile with each day of the course providing a wealth of information. The Plan is based on aerial maps of the property from which a series of overlays are developed, from actual resources on the farm to the final vision of how the farmer hopes the farm will be producing into the long-term future. These overlays can be either acetate sheets over a large aerial photo or produced electronically using Concepts Rural Suite software. This computer software includes a specialised computer drafting package to allow planning information to be recorded accurately on the map of the property. It is the integration of mapping and farm recording across each paddock that makes Concepts Rural Suite such a valuable planning tool. Alison Elvin, educator, farmer and environmental consultant with more than 25 years experience in the area conducts these workshops together with Brian Eccles of Concepts Rural Solutions when the software is included (in Central West and Lachlan Catchments where generous subsidies make this possible). For more information on the software see: www.computerconcepts.com.au.

As well as mapping, guest speakers, booklets, web-sites, and field trips are an integral part of the course. This provides farmers with a wide range of ideas, information and contacts, and allows them to in order to discuss many issues first hand on the participants' properties. Some landowners have incorporated ideas on Holistic Management from Allan Savory, while others have based their work on the Peter Andrews Natural Sequence Farming method. This is followed by relevant guest speakers with QRS-JV tapping into expertise within Landcare, NSW DPI, CMAs, CSIRO, BFA and other agencies to present specialised knowledge and experience in areas such as Holistic Management, Property Vegetation Plans, Native Grass Pastures Management, Organic Farming, and soil biology and health.

Many favorable comments from landowners reiterate how informative the course is, and what an honour it is to be facilitating this knowledge exchange: "this course is exceptional value for money, considering the wealth of knowledge of both the trainer and guest speakers. I would have paid the full price, obtaining the subsidy was just a bonus". "A most valuable course for anyone managing rural land at any level". Another participant said, "Each

landholder was able to objectively assess the composite whole of their landholding instead of dealing with just individual aspects on a day-to-day basis".

Many farmers have already used their plans as a basis for applying for funds for proposed works ,and to renegotiate their loans with their bank managers. Several successful grants in the Upper Shoalhaven resulted from completed farm plans, including several works for fencing, direct seeding and windbreak planting to reduce soil erosion, provide stock shelter, increase bio-diversity, improve water quality and assist paddock sub-division for rotational grazing systems.

Grass Recognition Plus

QRS-JV also held successful workshops in Grass Recognition Plus; in 2006 these were in Leeton and Bredbo, in 2007 the course was in Bathurst with mainly Weeds Officers from surrounding Central West shires attending. These courses are held in spring when many grasses are flowering. In 2007 the season was excellent for this and we ended up with over 30 grass samples to identify. Some of these were collected by us and some brought in from further North (always a challenge for trainers from the Southern Tablelands). After going through the key identification points for grasses, the CD of AusGrass was used to show how to identify grasses. Then Peter Simpson gave his insightful and amusing talk on management of native grass pastures for agriculture and conservation. His many years of research into native grass pastures for NSW DPI at both at Bathurst and Goulburn are a unique chance for everyone to gain knowledge on this topic.

Forthcoming Climate Change, Carbon Farming & Trading Seminar

Climate Change has arrived in South-Eastern Australia. To be successful farmers need to adjust to the new climate reality. The situation poses difficulties but also commercial opportunities through payments for carbon sequestration.

A one-day seminar on Climate Change Carbon Farming and Trading organised by the Yass Area Network of Landcare groups is to be held at the Yass Soldiers Club on Wednesday 9th April. This seminar will address Climate change, causes and consequences, responding to Climate Change through carbon sequestration and trading. It will consider the costs, benefits and risks for rural landholders and land managers of engaging in carbon trading schemes.

Local ABC Rural Reporter Sarina Locke will be MC for the day and a full day program of top line of speakers has been secured. The eight distinguished speakers are:

1. Prof Will Steffan Director Fenner Research School ANU.
2. Dr. David Freudenberger Director Science & Projects Greening Australia
3. Mr. Don Gunasekera Chief Economist ABARE.
4. Mr. David Pearce Chief Economist Centre International Economics
5. Mr. Mike Kiely Practising Carbon Farmer & President Carbon Alliance
6. Mr. John Lawrie Manager Soils Team Central West CMA
7. Mr. Mick Keogh Executive Director Australian Farm Institute
8. Dr Mark Howden Senior Principal Research Scientist CSIRO

The cost of the day is just \$25 per person including lunch and refreshments but you need to prepay your tickets.

For further information contact: Rebecca Glasgow, Community Support Officer, Murrumbidgee CMA.

Phone: 6118 6014. Mobile: 0429153 522. Email: Rebecca.glasgow@cma.nsw.gov.au.

For more details see the new YAN website www.yan.org.au – you can register directly on there.

Soil Biology Testing an ongoing issue for progressive farmers

Many of you will have heard Dr. Maarten Stapper speak on the fascinating topic of Soil Health at our PMP workshops or at local Natural Sequence Farming events. Maarten, formerly of CSIRO, is now a Farming Systems Agronomist with his own company *BioLogic AgFood*. He is passionate about discovering and using the power of nature in food production systems – and the connections between soil biology, soil health and the overall functioning of agro-ecosystems. He sees many opportunities for Australian agriculture to reverse soil degradation and regenerate its soils, and thus restoring vibrant health to the entire food chain, including us humans.

Maarten maintains that one of the fundamental keys to soil fertility is the healthy maintenance of biological activity in the soil. Further to his insights many producers are keen to test the health of their soil. This can be done by sending fresh soil samples to Perry, SWEP, or the Soil Biology Institute. For further details see www.apal.com.au , www.swep.com.au and <http://www.soilfoodweb.com.au>.

You can find out about the prominent Australian soil biologist, Elaine Ingham's work in her Soil Biology Primer book: http://soils.usda.gov/sqi/concepts/soil_biology/soil_food_web.html

Carbon Cocky Wins

Some farming regions are more advanced than others in responding to, and taking advantage, of Climate Change. The Carbon Cocky awards are the brainchild of Carbon Coalition coordinators, Michael and Louisa Kiely and John Lawrie from the Central West CMA. At a recent Carbon Farming Expo and conference at Mudgee, Michael Inwood of "Toulon" Bathurst, won Carbon Cocky of the Central Tablelands. Michael explained a combination of pasture cropping/advanced sowing and controlled grazing was giving him good results. His Whole Farm Plan calls for his property to start immediately reducing its carbon emissions. In an innovative and radical step, he has converted an electric vehicle for all on-farm work, including pulling the low tillage implement.

Michael recently completed the QRS -JV property planning course at Bathurst. He already had a comprehensive farm Plan, but was able to use the Concepts Rural software package to draw a beautiful plan on his laptop, complete with elevations. He also picked up plenty of new ideas from Alison. The group had a fascinating field trip to "Toulon" where Michael explained his extensive plans for Riparian management of the Winburndale Rivulet.

Another farmer associated with our PMP course also won an award. Martin Royds of Braidwood shared the award for Carbon Cocky East of the Divide. Martin was a guest speaker at our Braidwood course and his speech incorporated many aspects of farming; Holistic Management, Natural Sequence Farming, Biodynamic farming and extensive use of Native Pastures. Next time he has a field day at "Jillamatong", I can highly recommend the visit if you live in the area, as he has so many forward-thinking ideas.

QUALITY RURAL SOLUTIONS PROGRAMS

Semester 1, 2008

Whole Farm Planning

Construct a dynamic plan for your farm with both short and long-term goals. This series of 6 workshops, spread out over 4 months (on dates to suit clients), assists in developing property management plans which will contribute to improved water and soil quality, improved livestock health, increased drought resistance, biodiversity conservation, reduced soil damage, effective weed control, and consequently increased and sustainable productivity. All courses are subsidised by a CMA - Southern Rivers, Hawkesbury-Nepean, Lachlan and Central West CMAs. The actual cost to the farmer varies with the subsidy provided by their CMA. Courses in Central West CMA also include the software from CA\$Hmanager Rural and Concepts Rural Suite (RRP \$1205.60). Trainers: Alison Elvin, Jane Vincent, Brian Eccles

Date/s

- Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA: Goulburn – commencing 17 Feb
- Central West CMA: Bathurst – commencing 14 & 15 March (8 day course, includes CA\$Hmanager Rural and Concepts Rural Suite)
- Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA: South Coast/Illawarra – 7 March
- Southern Rivers CMA: South Coast/Illawarra – 7 March
- Southern Rivers CMA: Upper Snowy – 6 April

Price: varies with CMA (generally \$350).

8 day course: \$575

GST free

Water on Your Land

A one day workshop providing insights into how to manage your surface water for maximum quality and biodiversity – and at very little cost. The better your water quality, the better your stock health, the less you spend on drenches and vet treatments, and the better neighbor you become in your catchment. Learn which plants keep you dam/wetland/creek/river water clean and healthy, and how to grow them. Learn how to generally assess your water quality by the insects and other animals living in your water. Learn how to hold your run-off surface water for longer in your dams and in your soil. Then visit a farm nearby to see how others are practicing these ideas. Extensive notes, contacts and resource leads will be provided on the day. Landcare groups could apply for relevant subsidies. Trainer: Alison Elvin

Date/s; to be negotiated with interested Landcare groups (weekdays or weekends)

Price per person: \$132 (GST incl).

Introduction to Animal Health Risk Management

A one day workshop to assist participants to develop and implement a disease risk management plan for their farm or enterprise. The aim is to help participants develop a better understanding of disease risk management and implement on-farm Biosecurity. Trainers: Jane Vincent, David Allan, Judith Nettleingham

Date/s

- 29 February
- 4 April
- 13 June
- 8 August
- 10 October
- 12 December

Price: \$230 (GST free)

FarmBis subsidy pending

FURTHER PROGRAMS MAY BE DELIVERED IN 2008

To register your **Company's /Department's/Landcare Group's** expression of interest in the following programs please contact QRS-JV. These programs are available across Southern NSW. For further details see the website:

- **Weed movement, machinery inspection and cleaning**
- **Identification & management of native grass pastures for agriculture and conservation – delivered by Peter Simpson**
- **PROGRAZE™ abridged**
- **Weeds – not always the enemy.** The land management story that weeds tell us, their Identification, potential usefulness and non-chemical control methods
- **Introduction to successful biological farming**

Quality Rural Solutions - Jane Vincent & Associates
"Gollion", 93 Westmead Lane, Sutton NSW 2620
Phone: 02 62303584 Fax: 02 6230 3586 Mobile: 0438 910679
Email: jane@qualityruralsolutions.com.au
www.qualityruralsolutions.com.au