

Steer Liveweight Gains On Progardes™ Desmanthus/Buffel Pastures In Queensland

Chris Gardiner and Anthony Parker

School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, James Cook University, Townsville, Qld. 4811



Introduction: The utilization of tropical dry season grasses is constrained by their low digestibility. The introduction of pasture legumes can increase production not only through an increase in total edible dry matter but by acting as a supplement to promote the utilization of the lower quality component of the pasture (Lowry et al 1993). Much of northern Australia's semi arid clay soil regions have no sown pasture legume. Surveys of abandoned trials across the region have identified the legume genus *Desmanthus* as a long term survivor in such environments (Gardiner et al 2004). Breeding of these survivors has resulted in the development of Progardes™ *Desmanthus*.

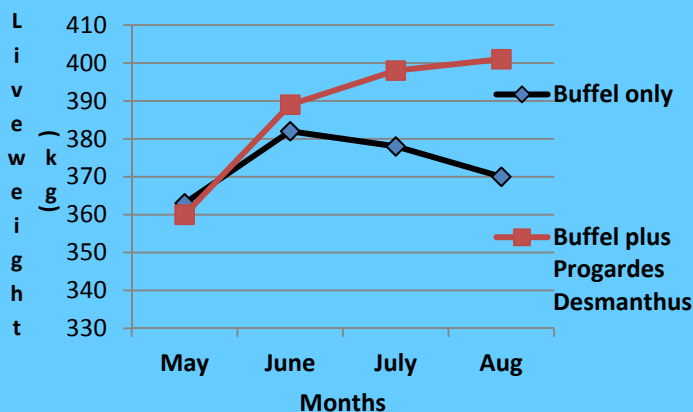


A Progardes™ *Desmanthus* plant

A paddock study: In Central Queensland's Brigalow region Progardes™ *Desmanthus* seed was broadcast on to 250 ha of a ploughed out "run down" buffel grass pasture in December 2010 and locked up until late May 2011 when 130 young composite steers were introduced to the regrown buffel grass established Progardes™ *Desmanthus* mixed pasture. An equivalent draft of 130 steers were placed on an adjacent spelled but un-renovated buffel grass only pasture at the same stocking rate. Steer liveweights from both paddocks were recorded monthly over a dry frosty 90 day winter period (Figure 1).

Results and discussion

Fig.1 Ninety (90) day winter liveweight changes of steers grazing Buffel only v Buffel plus Progardes™ *Desmanthus* pastures



A Progardes™ and buffel grass pasture

Buffel grass "run down" is a problem for the grazing community and DAFF and MLA (2010) suggest that renovation /cultivation of buffel soils can temporarily alleviate the problem however they promote the use of legumes as a sustainable solution. The results (Figure 1) in our study strongly suggest that Progardes™ *Desmanthus* is a legume that is adapted to the region and can promote liveweight gains in buffel grass. Longer term studies will elucidate Progardes™ *Desmanthus* affect on buffel "run down".

References

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Email: christopher.gardiner@jcu.edu.au

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