

Lucyvale Better Beef Group Newsletter

Project Funded by National Landcare Program



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Contacts: Chips Boucher 49 Perkins Rd. Lucyvale 3691
Belinda Pearce 387 Hellhole Ck Rd. Kergunyah 3691

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Phone: (02) 6077 5200 chips.boucher@bigpond.com
Phone: (02) 6027 5294 abanas@bigpond.com

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MAY MONITORING RESULTS

SITE	ACTIVITY	SPECIES
1	*LOW	<i>Bubas bison</i> *small & large holes
2	LOW	small holes
3	LOW	small holes
4	LOW	<i>Onthophagus australis</i> <i>Onthophagus binodis</i> small & large holes
5	LOW	<i>Onthophagus australis</i> small & large holes
6	LOW	<i>Geotrupes spiniger</i> <i>Onthophagus australis</i> small holes
7	LOW	<i>Onthophagus australis</i> <i>Onthophagus taurus</i> small and large holes
8	LOW	<i>Onthophagus australis</i> small holes
9	LOW	small holes
10	LOW	<i>Euoniticellus fulvus</i> <i>Onthophagus australis</i> <i>Onthophagus binodis</i>

*Small holes indicates activity by small beetles such as: *taurus*, *fulvus*, *binodis*, *australis*. Large holes indicate activity by species such as *spiniger* or *bison*.

* LOW = Less than 10 beetles, averaged over 4 pads.

HIGHLIGHTS & OBSERVATIONS:

- Recovery of the first "next generation" *bison* beetle! (20,000 released May/June 2007)
- May 2007 monitoring revealed no dung beetle activity across the valley.
- *Onthophagus australis* (native beetle) was the most abundant species.
- Of 40 dung pads examined (4 per site), 35 had dung beetle activity, 6 had large holes, 21 had small holes, and none had small and large holes occurring at the same pad.

SPINIGER TENT TRIAL

Chips has set up a shade cloth tent (approx. 6 m²) to monitor *Geotrupes spiniger* activity and to assess the suitability of the species to the area. About 25 pairs were added to the tent in March and regularly fed horse dung. At the end of May, the beetles were still working, and their ability to mix and aerate the soil is quite amazing.

Improvement to soil structure assists pasture growth by reducing compaction (making it easier for plant roots to grow), increasing water infiltration, and by mixing subsoils with top soils. The incorporation of clay particles can improve the chemical properties of the soil which can increase soil fertility (CEC). Aeration also promotes soil microbe and earthworm activity.

Initial results from pasture productivity trials done conducted by the Goulburn Broken Soil Health - Dung Beetle Project indicate that on unimproved pastures, "dung + beetles" resulted in significantly higher production than "dung alone". They really do make a difference!

WHEN WILL IT RAIN?

John Moore's rainfall forecast for June is:

- 4th & 5th Rain
- 18th - 20th Showers tending to rain in higher parts
- 26th & 27th Showers tending to rain in higher parts

Rainfall for June: Average.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING



Friday 13th June
5.00pm – 6.00pm
at the Hall



You're invited to attend a

DUNG BEETLE AND SOIL HEALTH FIELD WALK

to be followed by a

COMMUNITY DINNER

The evening program will include the screening of
"Dung Down Under" (1972 CSIRO production)
& video message from Dr George Bornemissza

We are very pleased to have as our guest speaker

Dr. GRAEME STEVENSON

Graeme has been involved with the distribution of over one million dung beetles across Tasmania, and is passionate about "soil health". He has also entertained Primary school students across the state with his unique production "Dr Splutter Grunt and Sally the Sick Soil".

FRIDAY 13th JUNE
LUCYVALE HALL

You are invited to attend all or part of the program

2.30pm – 3.00pm	Meet at Hall for cuppa
3.00pm – 5.00pm	Field walk
6.00pm – 7.00pm	Bring and share dinner
7.00pm – 7.30pm	Beetle films
7.30pm – 9.00pm	Presentation by Dr Graeme Stevenson

"Please bring a casserole and sweet to share"