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## COMBINING “BESTPRAC” AND “PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLANNING”

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“Bestprac” is a initiative for rangeland woolgrowers to improve their productivity and financial efficiency. Property Management Planning or ‘PMP’ is a nation wide campaign designed to assist participating landholders to better manage natural resources and improve profitability through facilitating a more strategic approach to business management.

As the goals of these two programs are so similar it is illogical and an inefficient use of funds for them to compete for graziers precious time. Subsequently the Louth Rd Bestprac Group (near Cobar NSW), formed in early 1999, has undertaken a combined program rather than the norm of undertaking “PMP” and then “Bestprac”.

The local “PMP” facilitator and the local “Bestprac” facilitator work together to present an integrated rather than concurrent program that utilises the resources and achieves the goals of both without unwanted duplication.

### INTRODUCTION

“Bestprac” is a initiative of the ‘Woolmark Company’ for rangeland woolgrowers to improve their productivity and financial efficiency. Bestprac aims to develop a positive attitude to ongoing change and to provide pastoralists with the skills to drive and manage this process (Wilson *et al.* 1999). The Bestprac approach was described by Clark *et al.* (1998) and is based on a four stage cyclical continual learning process of *planning, action, observation and reflection*.

In practice there are five phases that bestprac groups work through. These are:

1. Benchmarking;
2. Problem and opportunity identification;
3. On property action;
4. Evaluation;
5. Achieving further benefits;

Farming For the Future or ‘FFF’ is the NSW ‘brand’ name for the nation wide campaign Property Management Planning. Property Management Planning is a designed to assist participating landholders to better manage natural resources and improve profitability through facilitating a more strategic approach to business management and to improve pastoralists’ management planning abilities (Sachse and Bennett, 1996).

Farming For the Future is based on a series of eight workshops. These are as follows;

1. Setting Direction
2. Physical Property Planning
3. Human Resources
4. Physical Property Planning, Natural Resouces
5. Financial Realities
6. Enterprise Evaluation
7. Enterprise Planning
8. Business Plan Review

## **METHOD**

The Louth Rd 'Bestprac' group was formed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 1999 to undertake a combined 'Bestprac' and 'FFF' program.

The two facilitators worked together to provide a composite program to achieve the benefits of both programs without duplication and in a logical progression. This required tailoring some aspects of the 'FFF' workshops and having some meetings between workshops to build upon the concepts developed and to complete detailed benchmarking.

The first 'FFF' workshop, identifying goals and doing a SWOT analysis of the business, not only enabled group members to consider 'where they were heading' but it provided an excellent grounding for the second phase of the bestprac process. The issues discussed and resolutions made on that day were revisited after completing the benchmarking stage of 'Bestprac'.

During the second stage the group works with specialists to identify and prioritise opportunities for improvement. The sixth, seventh and last 'FFF' workshop all contributed to this phase.

The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth 'FFF' workshop all contributed to the benchmarking stage of 'Bestprac'. During this phase the group describes and documents current local best management practices as well as physical and financial indicators of performance.

## **DISCUSSION**

Although the group was one of the most recently formed 'Bestprac' groups in NSW, it is progressing the most rapidly. The group members are pleased with the rapid progression and their growing sense of 'getting somewhere' and also the reinforcing nature of the combined program.

## **REFERENCES**

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