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## EDGE NETWORK – GRAZING LAND MANAGEMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

*EDGEnetwork* is the education arm of Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA). EDGE currently provides a number of courses and workshops for people in the pastoral industry. EDGE now provide courses applicable to northern pastoralists, with the Grazing Land Management (GLM) course further specialised to suit local regional areas. Packages have been developed in four regions, Katherine, Burdekin, Burnett and Queensland Mitchell Grass.

GLM consists of seven modules that have been developed to build on the participant's knowledge of maintaining natural resource sustainability while improving business profitability. GLM provides tools and knowledge to consider both the economic and environmental effects of grazing management options.

### COURSE BACKGROUND

After a range of separate government agencies (QDPI and DPIF), funding bodies (MLA) and Tropical Savannas CRC identified the need for collating current research about grazing management knowledge, the development of the GLM package began in 1999. It was believed this needed to be undertaken in a manner that would produce better extension and education material for producers and industry support staff throughout northern Australia.

At the same time it was separately identified by producers they required better information about grazing management.

All identified it was important that information was region specific and would be delivered by local experts. The course has been developed to ensure that research data were combined and presented in a way that allowed pastoralists to both learn theory and be able to apply it in practical ways.

### COURSE CONTENT

GLM course topics were developed as a result of a major survey of northern Australia producers. Their main interest areas then provided the module subjects which are as follows:

- Understanding the Grazing System.
- Managing Grazing.
- Managing Fire.
- Understanding Tree-Grass Balance.
- Managing Sown Pastures.
- Managing Weeds.
- Planning for Grazing Management.

Key topic areas within these modules include how to maintain and improve land condition, managing pasture species composition, calculating carrying capacities and understanding different land types.

The regional approach has meant there is flexibility to focus more closely on topic areas in certain regions, for example, the fire module of the Katherine version is much more extensive than it is for the Burnett version.

The course has an informal style that is based around activities and discussion to promote information sharing between producers and encourage learning through participation and practise. There is a strong focus on providing practical tools that producers can use in their grazing management planning when they return home.

Undertaking the planning module helps relate the theory learned to how producers are going to apply their ideas to their home property. It is designed so they complete the course with the beginnings of their property grazing management plan.

#### **WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?**

The first Katherine workshop was held in March and producers gave very positive feedback as to the usefulness of the course to their grazing management. Other regions have received similar feedback.

There are now another four regions in Queensland and the NT who have started to develop their own region specific course. It would be expected that as the courses become available in more areas the content of the GLM course will continue to evolve in conjunction with improved land management practises and new grazing management research.