

MEDIA RELEASE

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5 years of research to pay off for wool growers

After five years of conservation monitoring, research and mapping, wool growers in Queensland's Traprock region will soon be able to integrate biodiversity management with increasing levels of production.

The Traprock Woolgrowers Association (TWA), well known for their high quality wool production, has been working with the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) and local Landcare groups since 2001.

"We needed to change the perception of the industry and explore ways of integrating conservation with our production efforts; QMDC and the local Landcare groups have helped us to do that," Andrew Ferrier, Traprock Wool Association's immediate past president, said.

As a result, some key environmental management tools are now being implemented:

- a comprehensive property plan for all 110 participating landholders (including nine different cross-farm, or sub-catchment, plans)
- an interactive, web-based vegetation and biodiversity monitoring and management toolkit (developed by the University of Southern Queensland and funded by Land, Water and Wool)
- an Environmental Management System (EMS) for the region's wool industry.

"The EMS has been incorporated into the Traprock Integrated Management System, or TIMS, which works extremely well with sub-catchment planning," said Mr Ferrier.

"TIMS not only focuses on environmental outcomes, but also addresses issues such as workplace health and safety, chemical use and storage, legislative issues and quality assurance"

"This means that TIMS enables us to monitor and report on all these production issues, demonstrating our commitment to both a high quality product and environmental sustainability," he said.

"By combining TIMS with the web-based management toolkit, we will now be able to set benchmarks for pasture and vegetation management, develop strategies for improving management systems, and, hopefully, develop a good balance between production and conservation," said Mr Ferrier.

These tools will eventually be considered for availability in other industries to help other land managers better integrate conservation with production.

The TIMS program and the web-based management toolkit will be officially launched on Friday 21 April this year by the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

For more information about these monitoring, planning and management tools, please contact QMDC on 07 4637 6201.

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