

Precision tools aid sustainable grazing in rangelands

Three Australian cattle stations have been chosen to pioneer a remote livestock management system that could revolutionise the way livestock are managed in rangelands around the world.



Credit: Ninti One

Ninti One and the CRC for Remote Economic Participation have announced that the three stations – in outback Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia – will be testing their Precision Pastoral Management System (PPMS) under commercial grazing conditions over the coming two years.

The chosen properties are the Hobbs family's 'Tarrina' near Tambo, Qld, the Consolidated Pastoral Company's Newcastle Waters Station on the NT's Barkly Tablelands and the Grey Family's Glenflorrie Station in the WA Pilbara region, Sally Leigo, the Research Leader, of the CRC-REP Precision Pastoral Management Tools Project said.

The PPMS remotely monitors and analyses the performance and condition of individual cattle and the pasture they are grazing on.

Technologies include a Remote Livestock Management System (RLMS), which enables rangelands beef producers to monitor individual cattle across huge areas of land, whenever they come to water, and to carry out management actions like mustering, drafting, monitoring calving rates and cow fertility, controlling access to feed supplements and tracking animal growth rates to determine the best time to market them.

The RLMS was developed by Ninti One and is being commercialised by Precision Pastoral Pty Ltd.

'The RLMS provides a daily objective measurement of livestock production which can be used for precision management decisions such as marketing and animal production,' says Tim Driver, the Managing Director of Precision Pastoral.

According to Sally Leigo, ‘The PPMS system is all about putting the sort of precision that has long been available in the intensive livestock industries into the hands of beef producers in the extensive pastoral industry – to help cut costs and improve the sustainability of their livestock management by better matching animal numbers to the available feed.

‘We believe this remote management technology could eventually revolutionise the way cattle animals are grazed in the rangelands worldwide.

‘Grazing takes place on a large part of the world’s rangelands – and we believe this technology will prove a major game changer, both for Australia and for other countries.’

Brad McDonnell, Manager at Newcastle Waters Station says: ‘We were particularly keen to be involved in this project at Newcastle Waters because we believe there are improvements that can be made, purely from having hard data on how our cattle are performing rather than relying on visual estimates and manually collected data as we do now.

‘This is going to be especially valuable in reducing the influence of personal opinion of how the cattle or country should be looking by backing it up with science.’

Source: Ninti One/CRC for Remote Economic Participation

From ECOS online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC13280>