



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Precision Pastoral, NT

Category: Australian Government Innovation in Agriculture Land Management Award

Developed by Precision Pastoral in partnership with Ninti One Limited and the Northern Territory Government's Department of Primary Industries, the Precision Pastoral Management Tools (PPMT) allow pastoralists to integrate animal and pasture data, linking livestock performance to environmental conditions for more efficient, productive pastoral management.

Farmers making decisions about stocking rates or land management have used the PPMT to give them a better understanding of groundcover trends and animal condition, as well as to reduce their monitoring costs.

Precision Pastoral's Remote Livestock Management System (RLMS) identifies, weighs and drafts individual animals without on-site labour requirements, with the RLMS installed at animal water points. The RLMS is solar powered and transmits data from a remote location to the end user, creating a detailed herd profile that is then used to inform management decisions.

Once cattle live weight has been collected, data from the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NVDI), measuring pasture yield and weather, is also fed in. Data on liveweight, NVDI and pasture yield can then be extrapolated to make decisions about other land types and cattle classes, thus maximising pasture yield without overgrazing.

Central Australia's Mount Riddock Station, running approximately 11,500 head of cattle across 266,000 hectares, was among the first properties to utilise the RLMS. The RLMS weighed and identified Steve Cadzow's cattle using their National Livestock Identification System tag, and drafted them off when they'd reached their optimal weight.

The farm had been losing around 11 kilograms per beast every muster, but the low-stress stock handling of the RLMS provided an immediate economic benefit, saving around \$9,000 each muster. Since cattle weight was sent to him daily, Steve was also to keep track of feed levels on the paddocks. Consequently native pasture can be managed in advance to prevent overgrazing, while still maximising stock gains.

At a PPMT trial at Newcastle Waters Station, overgrazing on a paddock by adding additional cattle numbers demonstrated how the NVDI could be negatively affected. This resulted in a plateauing of cattle weight gain. By then reducing stock numbers in the same paddock, the NVDI could be stabilised as the feed recovered.

As well as Newcastle Waters, the PPMT team has run field days at Undoolya, also in the Northern Territory, as well as Dalgona and Tarrina in Queensland, and Glenflorrie in Western Australia. Field days have provided an opportunity for Precision Pastoral to share its knowledge with over 250 curious participants and landowners, in addition to the five land managers on the trial properties.

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

Ends

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Web Summary

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The Precision Pastoral Management Tools (PPMT) allows pastoralists to integrate animal and pasture data, linking livestock performance to environmental conditions for more efficient pastoral management. Farmers making decisions about stocking rates or land management have used the PPMT to give them a better understanding of groundcover trends and animal condition, as well as to reduce their monitoring costs. Precision Pastoral's Remote Livestock Management System (RLMS) identifies, weighs and drafts individual animals without on-site labour requirements, with the RLMS installed at animal water points. Solar powered, the RLMS transmits data from a remote location to the end user, creating a detailed herd profile that is then used to inform management decisions.

Pull-out quote:

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