



EDITORIAL

The people of Queensland have spoken. It will remain to be seen if the issues that have been around for more than the past three years will be addressed. You can be sure that the electorate will be harsh next time if things are not rectified. We have seen in Queensland and to a similar degree in Canberra, a great explosion in bureaucracies dealing with essential services. Part of this drift has been the centralisation of decision making sections to centres further south eg. health, water resources, electricity. The list goes on and on.

Ergon Energy is a prime example. Try getting a power installation or upgrade. It takes months to get a reply and then the contract will require the user to contribute up to 50% of the cost as a non refundable up front payment. If you agree and pay up you will be informed it will take up to 3 to 4 months, depending on the size of the job to be completed.

Try calling someone to discuss the installation and if you can find your way through the voice response answering machine maze, you will talk to someone in an entirely different area who tells you they are short staffed and your job has to wait its turn.

Who do you complain to? Ergon and Energex are not answerable to the ombudsman, nor to the ACCC, only the Minister. The Minister's minders keep you at bay with all sorts of reasons.

There is however an internal 'disputes committee' that looks at these things but cannot do anything about them! Only a corporate public entity that has a monopoly can get away with this attitude.

At Southedge Seeds we are seeing a definite shift towards pasture improvement. With the exception of corporate property acquisition activity, there is a definite shift away from property acquisition to property improvement.

Let's hope we have a genuine rainfall pattern this summer so the pressure can come off. I take my hat off to the graziers who have managed their properties in extremely difficult weather situations and who are waiting for that good season to put icing on the cake.

John Rains

ON THE ROAD



After two years in Vietnam

HYBRID SEED JOINS THE SOUTHEDGE SEEDS RANKS

- Ross Newman -

Southedge Seeds has recently joined ranks with Hylan Seeds, to become one of their northern distributors of Hybrid Forage Sorghum, Hybrid Grain Sorghum and Hybrid Maize seed. Their product range is such that

there is a variety to suit most conditions and product requirements. If you require any technical advice on growing any of these crops, please call our office.

SOUTHEDGE SEEDS PRODUCT RANGE EXPANDS

- Ross Newman -

Southedge Seeds is committed to continually expanding its product range to aid producers in their quest to have highly productive pasture systems. Therefore we are pleased to announce that we have added three cultivars to our range this coming season.

The first of these is **Keppel Couch** (*Bothriochloa pertusa*), which is suited to tropical and subtropical zones where rainfall is between 600–900mm. Keppel Couch is a later maturing *pertusa*, often flowering in May under subtropical growing conditions.

Keppel Couch has strong stolon development, providing excellent ground cover to stabilise areas prone to soil wash. Keppel Couch, like many of the other *pertusas*, tends to be more robust, and responds more readily after periods of drought when compared to *insculpta* species such as Bisset and Hatch. Keppel Couch also displays excellent resistance to rust, which commonly affects some *Bothriochloa* cultivars under humid conditions. Seed will soon be available in bare and ENVIROGRO™.

The second of the new cultivars is **Queenslander 11™ Lucerne**, which is a dormancy 10 lucerne (very high winter activity), bred for high dry matter production under subtropical climatic conditions. This lucerne shows excellent resistance to all the commonly known pests and diseases generally experienced with lucerne, ensuring its persistence in either a hay crop or grazing situation. Queensland 11™ is currently under commercial trials to see how it performs against its competitors. Results so far have shown that it can produce an average of 21,000kg/ha/yr dry matter over three years (trials conducted at QDPI & F, Gatton).

Bare seed is currently available, with insecticide treated pelleted seed available early in the new year.

The last but definitely not the least new cultivar to be added to the Southedge range is **Bolton 495 Pinto Peanut**. Southedge Seeds has been working on this cultivar for several years, with this year being its first to produce commercial seed quantities. In evaluation trials, Bolton 495 demonstrated a higher shade tolerance than that of other commercially available pinto peanuts. Couple this with its ability to produce good levels of dry matter, and Bolton 495 is worthy of a look in the coming year.



Freisian-Sahawal cross dairy cows, Philippines

There are many things money can't buy, including what it used to.

SOIL HEALTH: THE CORE ISSUE FOR THE PROFITABLE OPERATION OF OUR ASSETS

- Alf Collins Sr -

All good agricultural businesses are based on responsible soil management and enhancement. I recently spent four days at the State Annual Conference of Landcare. At the conclusion I still had not heard one other person propose or develop the theme of better soils. I heard parroting of the tired political themes and drama queens hunting more funding – no outcomes. At that point I can assure you that the subject was well aired. I considered there was a real need for lifting the level of awareness of enhanced soil

management and said so; after all, it was titled a land-care conference. Change of land use requires change of land management. As we utilise land, and extract production, I'm certain we need to develop additional techniques to compensate for our outtake.

Nature has endowed us with excellent resources; to just milk those resources dry is a recipe for disaster in even a short period of 50 years.

I do not subscribe to the philosophy that all natural resources should be frozen into immobility. That level of dopey stupidity is criminal in its effect on private property. We have a responsibility nationally to develop and harvest from our land; as we have a responsibility to maintain and enhance that land.

Certainly we have resources to develop land, and to harvest a wide range of foods. We also have bureaucracies acting on poorly advised/based legislation from poorly advised politicians, that collectively remove incentive and opportunity from the owners and managers of property.

In contrast, observe the chronic neglect of public lands. The degradation is significant, and production is zilch.

Every single outcome in agriculture is inextricably dependent on soil, its properties, and our knowledge of it. I believe with reasonable inputs, by spelling and renovation, and adding vigorous legumes and companion grasses, we can achieve all our stated aims of production, profit and environmental care.

Soil health is dependent on carbon, air and water backed by a full suite of useful bacterium, fungi and insects, and a complimentary suite of minerals. Soil health is also dependent on a healthy vegetative cover. As we are learning, native plants do not withstand constant grazing pressure; they need to be augmented with innovative grazing management and new species of grasses and legumes that will yield commercial returns, yet still enhance soil health with various root systems. Residual ground cover protects micro-flora

and buffers against heat, wind, rain and animal impact. Carbon accumulation in the soil is mandatory. With the addition of air and water along with the subsequent development of micro-life in the soils, soil health is assured. Economic land renovation will get us there and improved plant species and cattle will help us pay for the investment.

This level of thinking is not new or original. All my life there have been efforts to develop better soils, that have not been widely accepted. P.A. Yeoman, Wallace, Alex Podlinsky, etc have been advocating these practices since the 1940's, and Peter Andrews very publicly on ABC Television's Australian Story last year.

From the mid-fifties I was enthused by the examples locally of my uncle, Harry Collins, and my father's open and encouraging mind. My own involvement in land renovation directly started in 1968. The important thing is to remember to change your cattle grazing management when you change the plant species and soil environment. Rest in the grazing cycle seems important, especially in the wet season, and plant-seeding phase. I do not think there is any downside. At current cattle prices, it makes a lot of sense to invest some of our gains back into our land bank. It is not taxable, and yields extra value every season both directly and environmentally.

Improved grasses and legumes are complimentary to many native grasses and legumes. The equilibrium of nature is awesome. Simply observe and apply.

(from the CBV Newsletter, Issue 5)

About the only thing that can lay down on the job and get results is a hen.



Tropical dairying, Philippines

**FORWARD PLANNING AVOIDS
DISAPPOINTMENT**

As mentioned in previous newsletters, this year seed supplies are going to be relatively short, due to a combination of failed production and an increase in demand for seed - in particular Southedge Seeds' ENVIROGRO™ pelleted seed. With stock levels changing every day, I highly recommend sitting down and working out this summer's requirements and talking with Ross at Southedge Seeds - or one of our rural agents situated around Queensland and the Northern Territory. This will avoid seeing disappointment on your livestock's faces next year!

Many people stop looking for work as soon as they find a job.

