

CN30 | Carbon Neutral
2030



**Targeting CN30 for
Australian red meat**
On-farm strategy guide

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Getting started

A net zero target for Australian red meat

The Australian red meat industry has set a voluntary target to be carbon neutral by 2030 (CN30). This means that by 2030, Australian beef, lamb and goat production, including lot feeding and meat processing, aim to make no net release of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to the atmosphere. This is supported by strategies that increase carbon sequestered in agricultural soils and vegetation, and lower emissions of raising livestock.

This product catalogue outlines the learning resources and strategies to enable red meat producers to capture win-win benefits for productivity, profitability and sustainability on the journey towards lower emissions.

What does CN30 mean for me?

CN30 on-farm looks very similar to managing for performance. Making small improvements in production efficiency can significantly improve a farm's emissions profile.

Your property may already be operating at a high level of sustainability and efficiency, so set about tracking this with data. There are free tools to get started with estimating your emissions of production. A carbon calculator tool converts the dollars and kilos of production into tonnes of emissions for your farm enterprise. Emissions data is likely to become more important for favourable access to markets and capital in the future.



Unlock the opportunities

There are multiple productivity and profit driven opportunities for demonstrating carbon efficient practices.

Productivity benefits

Improvements in herd efficiency will deliver win-win benefits for farm performance and lowering emissions intensity of production.

Environmental services

Pasture management and strategic tree cover that increases carbon sequestration can also improve water retention, reduce erosion, provide habitat for wildlife and shelter for livestock.

Favourable market access

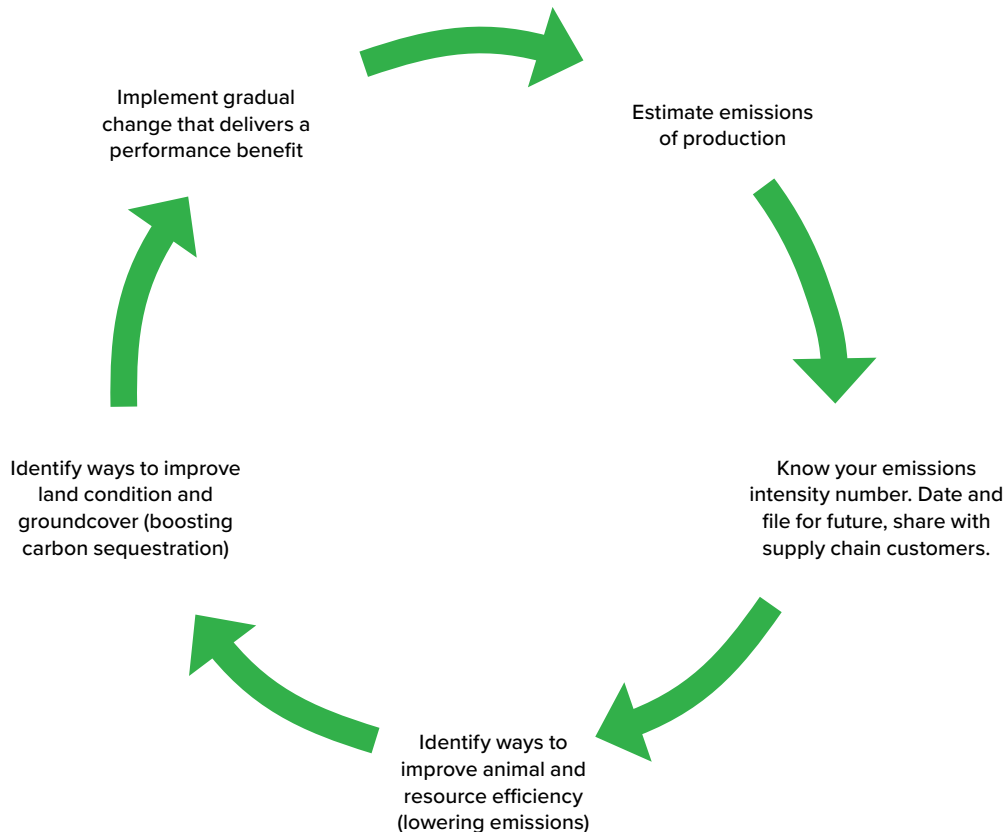
Demonstrating commitment to carbon efficient farming may open up new supply chain opportunities for red meat producers. Keeping reliable farm records related to emissions may be advantageous for market access, favorable insurance or finance terms in future.

Participate in carbon markets

Under audited carbon farming schemes, landholders can select methodologies to generate carbon credits. Landholders may choose to trade credits for revenue or convert them to offsets against their farm's own emissions.

Supply a low carbon brand or product

A livestock enterprise does not need a carbon neutral certification to supply a retailer's low carbon or carbon neutral product. For businesses engaged in direct marketing, you will need to explore certification through a verified agency, such as Climate Active or Carbon Reduction Institute, before making claims on pack.



Carbon farming starts in the office

To know where you stand, you need to understand what the 'sources' of emissions are and the sinks of carbon within your business. The best place to start is MLA's Carbon E-Learning where you can use your existing farm data to estimate a carbon account.

Carbon management eLearning modules

Step through self-paced online learning courses to cover the basics of carbon and the process of completing a carbon account for your property. Sign up for a myMLA account and access these for free.

Online carbon calculator for mixed cropping and livestock

Complete a carbon account to discover what areas of your farm contribute most to on-farm emissions and what strategies could be used to reduce them. Save data in your myMLA account to benchmark across seasons and properties.

MLA's digital calculator is built on the Australian sheep and beef greenhouse account framework (SB-GAF) and is ideal for estimating emissions of production. As a universal, free tool, it is accepted by industry as a fair guide for benchmarking.

Intensive carbon accounting training

For those keen to go the extra mile, the Primary Industries Climate Change Centre hosts a two-day training session on carbon neutral science and accounting principles. These are held in-person and online.

Carbon EDGE

The new [Carbon EDGE](#) is a two-day training program for the red meat and livestock industry, providing participants with an understanding of the opportunities for emissions reduction and carbon storage activities in a livestock grazing business.

More information:

Carbon neutral agriculture training:
piccc.org.au/education/carbonneutraltraining



Online training, tools and resources

Visit the eLearning hub – The toolbox – to locate the below modules. You must be logged into myMLA to access these. For help regarding eLearning, visit elearning.mla.com.au/info



Carbon 101

- Familiarise yourself with carbon-related terms and concepts.
- Understand greenhouse gases and how they cycle in a farming system.
- Learn what is meant by carbon farming, carbon neutral and climate neutral.



Measure your own emissions

- Step-by-step videos walk you through using the SB-GAF calculator to estimate your on-farm emissions.



Carbon sense

- Learn about the key actions that can be taken on-farm to reduce emissions.



Carbon in action

- Get up-to-speed on livestock emissions.
- Understand the key concepts of soil carbon sequestration.



Future proof with data

Keeping reliable records related to on-farm emissions could be increasingly valuable as large companies like banks, retailers and processors are required to report their emissions footprint. Relevant records include:

- opening and closing livestock numbers in a 12-month period including:
 - » date
 - » region where most livestock were purchased
 - » average liveweight (kg/head).
- number of livestock sold:
 - » including a date and average liveweight (kg/head)
 - » for sold and purchased cattle, mob averages can be used for weight
 - » national averages are used where business-specific weight data is not available.
- for breeding operations, record:
 - » total number tested pregnant and empty
 - » the month(s) animals are expected to give birth
 - » total number of males and females at weaning.
- number of deaths (estimated as percentage mortality in extensive systems)
- if segmenting partial herd or flock on a high-quality diet, include:
 - » dates
 - » number
 - » stock class.
- inputs including:
 - » fuel (L)
 - » electricity (KwH)
 - » fertiliser/chemical
 - » purchased feed (tonnes).
- any tree planting activities including:
 - » area covered (ha)
 - » species
 - » planting date (if available).
- any improved pasture management e.g. pasture type/treatment history.

Terms

Carbon: Carbon is often used as a broad term for the major greenhouse gases; nitrous oxide, methane and carbon dioxide.

Emissions: Greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere.

Carbon sequestration: Accumulation of measurable carbon in soils and vegetation.

Net emissions: Balance of emissions released (+) with carbon sequestered (-) within the boundary of the farm, business or supply chain being measured. Net emissions can be lowered by reducing emissions of production through herd and resource efficiency, by increasing carbon sequestered in trees and soils, or through the acquiring of offsets.

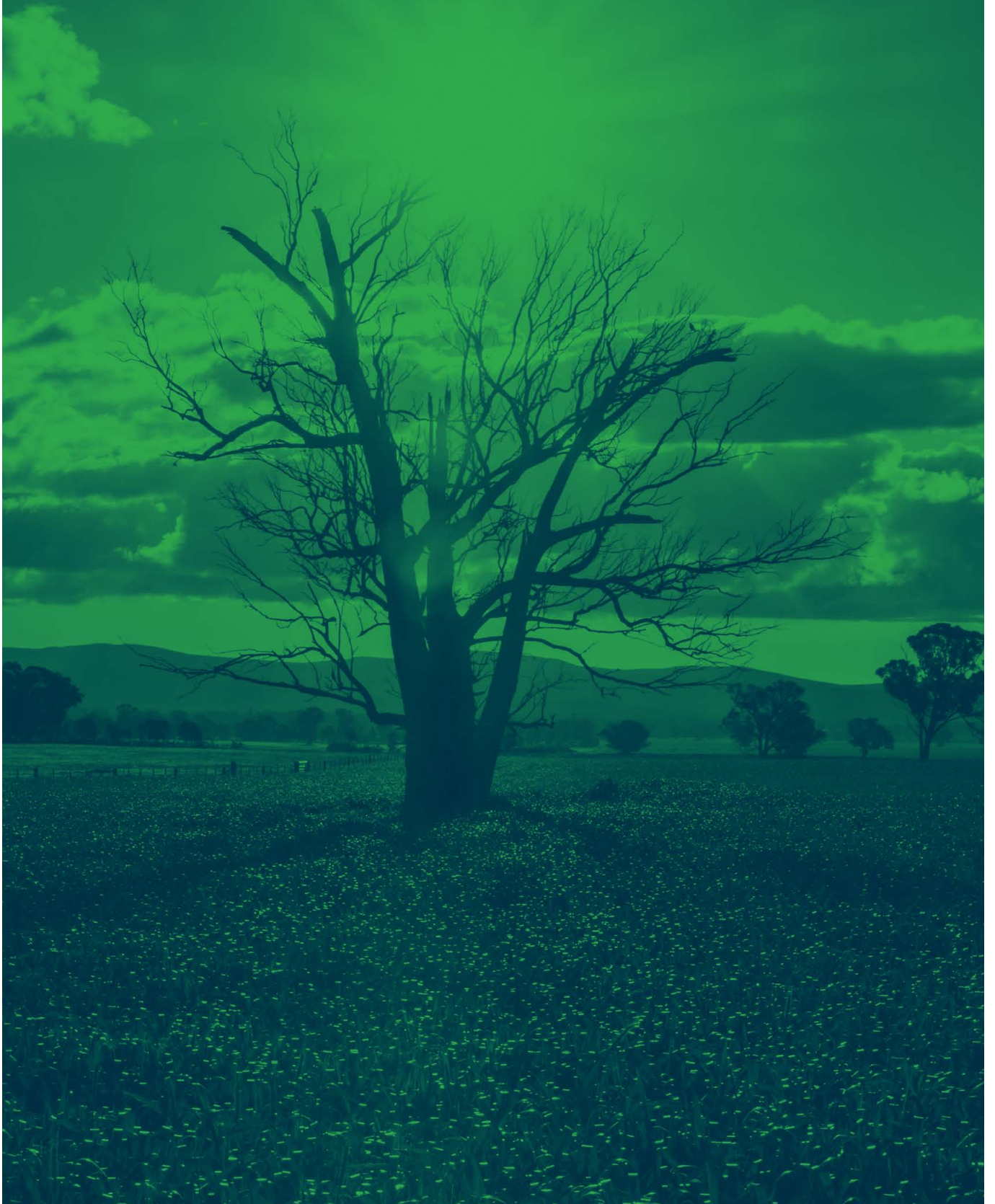
Emissions intensity: Emissions per kilogram of liveweight produced. A lower emissions intensity value represents a more efficient business.

Carbon dioxide equivalent: A common metric to measure all the greenhouse gases collectively on the basis of their global warming potential over 100 year time frame. Presented as tonnes CO₂e.

Carbon footprint: The amount of greenhouse gases emitted by an organisation through all its activities.

Net zero/carbon neutrality: The position where net greenhouse gas emissions are equal to or less than zero. Note: Some schemes define these terms differently based on the amount of abatement achieved through purchased offsets.

CN30 direct action



Pastures

Certain pastures have properties that increase soil carbon storage, which in turn supports feedbase production. Others have natural anti-methanogenic properties and lower methane production in the rumen, directly. Legume pastures also provide palatable, digestible, high protein feed for livestock and can deliver productivity improvements in the right settings. In this regard, pastures play both a direct and indirect role in lowering net emissions of production.

Consider incorporating mixed species pastures of deep-rooted grasses and legumes suitable to your region.



Leucaena

Benefits: As a feedbase, Leucaena improves liveweight gain in cattle and can reduce methane emissions by 5–20%. Soil benefits include increased nitrogen fixation and an increase in organic matter.

Climatic zones: Tropical to sub-tropical.

Minimum rainfall: 600–800mm annual average.

Soil conditions: Well drained neutral to alkaline soils >5.5 ph.



Desmanthus – progardes

Benefits: Improved carbon storage in soil and soil health through additional nitrogen fixation and corresponding organic matter increases.

Climatic zones: Tropical to sub-tropical.

Minimum rainfall: 550–1,000mm annual average.

Soil conditions: Textured clay soils with neutral to alkaline pH. Brigalow clays, open downs and heavier alluvial soils.



Common stylo

Benefits: Potential to add 40–50kg of liveweight per year, increase breeding success, provide pasture feedbase late into the dry season.

Climatic zone: Tropical to sub-tropical.

Minimum rainfall: >900ml annual average.

Soil conditions: Sandy loam soils with moderate acidity.



Chicory (*Chicorium intybus L.*)

Benefits: Superior herbage production with great animal performance, potential to reduce enteric CH₄ emissions and CH₄ emission intensity. No bloating risk.

Climatic zone: Temperate.

Minimum rainfall: 600–700mm annual average.

Soil conditions: Acid soils, well-draining soils, good fertility.



Lotus (*Lotus uliginosus*)

Benefits: High animal performance with potential to reduce enteric CH₄ emissions by up to 30% compared to perennial ryegrass and white clover pasture. Low or no bloating risk.

Climatic zone: Temperate.

Minimum rainfall: Suitable for high rainfall regions (>800mm annual average).

Soil conditions: Suited to a wide range of soils, particularly infertile soils.



Sulla

Benefits: Superior herbage production in the first two years, with potential to reduce enteric CH₄ emissions by up to 30%. No bloating risk.

Climatic zone: Temperate.

Minimum rainfall: 400–800mm annual average.

Soil conditions: Neutral to alkaline.



Biserrula (*Biserrula pelecinus*)

Benefits: Potential to reduce enteric CH₄ emissions by up to 50% compared to commonly grown annual legumes, but with medium risk of photosensitisation on pure sward. Highly productive, quality feed at >5 t/ha.

Climatic zone: Temperate.

Minimum rainfall: 325–700mm annual average.

Soil conditions: Low fertility and acidic soils.

Further information and learning

Persistent pastures hub

Resources to get pastures performing at their best. Best practice information on managing pasture growth, assessment, selection, establishment and persistence.

Find out more: mla.com.au/persistentpastures

Leucaena hub

Access best practice information, dry matter digestibility stats and results from MLA studies.

Find out more: mla.com.au/leucaena

Leucaena network

Producer-led forum for sharing Leucaena tips from other graziers.

Find out more: leucaena.net

EDGE workshops

Workshops for beef producers provide practical learning activities for carbon, land management, nutrition, breeding and business.

Find out more: mla.com.au/edgenetwork

Profitable Grazing Systems

Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) takes small groups of like-minded producers who want to improve their whole-farm performance and matches them with a deliverer who builds their knowledge, skills and experience through hands-on training.

Find out more: mla.com.au/pgs

MLA pasture etools

Find pasture tools designed to help with pasture selection, feed budgeting and stocking rate.

Find out more: etools.mla.com.au

Legumes hub

Five ways legumes can benefit your business include:

1. More feed, less fertiliser
2. Faster weight gains and healthier animals
3. A more resilient feedbase
4. An ally against dieback
5. Towards carbon neutral 2030 (CN30).

Find out more: mla.com.au/legumes

Feed additives and supplements

Enteric methane released in ruminant digestion is the largest source of emissions in raising livestock. As a result, novel additives that suppress methane production when included in the diet present the most promising opportunity for the red meat sector to reduce emissions. In addition, methane emissions can be avoided through increasing production efficiency and thus reducing the amount of emissions an animal produces due to its shorter lifespan. More well-known supplements, such as phosphorous and probiotics have a role to play in this regard.

MLA is investing in the development of synthetic and natural supplements that reduce enteric methane production. At the same time, methods to deliver these supplements are being explored – such as through direct water injection to troughs, oils, pellets, bolus and lick blocks.

It is important to note that low methane additives will vary in effectiveness, with a range of factors at play, including the supplement itself, diet, dosage rate, stock age and breed.



Bovaer®-10 (3-NOP)

A novel synthetic feed supplement (3-NOP) designed to reduce enteric methane in ruminants.

Benefits: Up to a 90% reduction in methane emissions from cattle when given daily.

Implementation: The product is suited to mixing with concentrate diets or total mixed rations when fed to livestock. Solutions for delivery in grazing systems are in development.

Providers: dsm.com/corporate/sustainability



Red Asparagopsis

The red seaweed product licensed by FutureFeed™ has demonstrated substantial methane reduction potential when fed to cattle in research trials. Bromoform is its active ingredient.

Benefits: Up to 98% reduction in methane emissions from cattle when included in diets daily.

Providers: CH4 Global, SeaForest. For a full list of licensees: future-feed.com/licensees



Probiotics

Live microorganisms that convey benefits to livestock via improved gastrointestinal flora, in particular improved weight gain, feed conversion, and overall animal health.

Benefits: Methane reduction results vary between 12–20%. Improved feed conversion efficiency leading to increased weight gain. Reduced instance of diseases (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Clostridium*) and improved reproductive performance.

Implementation: Commonly added to feed as a liquid or powder. Probiotics can also be delivered as a drench, direct injection and through drinking water. Method will vary by strain of probiotic used.

Providers: ProAgni, Terragen.



Dietary oils

Unsaturated fatty acid oils such as vegetable and soybean oil.

Benefits: Inclusion of dietary oils has been shown to reduce methane emissions by 5% for every 1% increase in oil or fats in a feedlot ration, with diminishing returns above 10% oil or fat content.

Implementation: Can be added to feed ration.



Essential oils

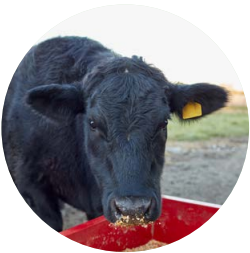
Highly concentrated plant extracts such as citrus oil can promote livestock wellbeing due to their anti-microbial and anti-fungal properties in small volumes.

Benefits: Shown to improve digestion and lead to improved nutrient absorption. Modest methane reduction in cattle and sheep by inhibiting growth of methane-producing bacteria. Studies in beef and lamb are limited, but an essential oil (Agolin)

supplementation of dairy cows at 1 gram/day reported increased milk yield (3.6%) and feed efficiency (4.4%) and an 8.8% reduction in methane production.

Implementation: Diluted in a carrier oil then added to feed ration, or through a lick block.

Providers: Agolin, FourSeasons, Mootral.



Ionophores

Ionophores such as monensin are antibiotic rumen modifiers that prevent rumen acidosis in cattle fed on high concentrate diets.

Benefits: Increased feed conversion efficiency up to 4%, reducing lifetime methane per kilo of beef.

Implementation: Added to feed or water rations.

Providers: Rumensen®, a number of animal nutrition companies produce monensin-based products.



Phosphorus

Essential nutrient for animal metabolic function that is deficient in many landscapes of Australia.

Benefits: Adequate phosphorus (P) intake can increase weaning rates by 10–30% and increase breeder liveweights by up to 130kg. If P is fed over the wet season on deficient country, mature breeders can maintain an additional

100kg weight advantage and young growing stock can increase growth by up to 90kg, over un-supplemented cows.

Implementation: Loose lick or lick block, dosage (grams) per head will differ based on P deficiency in the region and life-stage of the animal.



Grape marc

Grape marc or pomace are the left-over skins from pressing grapes into wine.

Benefits: Shown to reduce methane emissions by up to 20% in cattle and 10% in sheep – available at approximately \$15–\$30/tonne ex depot.

Implementation: Purchased through stockfeed suppliers, marc can be added to feed bunk in mixed ration with silage, hay or grain. Can also be found in pellet or lick block form. Use in moderation as high tannin content can be harmful in large quantities.

Further information and learning


Nutrition EDGE workshop

Three-day workshop for grassfed beef producers focused on nutrition in pastoral systems, including the use of supplements.

More information: mla.com.au/edgenetwork

MLA Phosphorus manual

General guide to phosphorus supplementation with focus on breeding success and impact to farm profit.

More information: 

Animal husbandry and breeding

Animal husbandry activities that improve herd efficiency deliver a win-win benefit for performance and CN30, through avoiding emissions altogether and reducing emissions per kilogram of product.



Early breeding

Animals intended for breeding do not contribute economically until they deliver their first offspring. In the meantime, they consume feed and generate methane emissions. Reducing the time before first joining can reduce emissions intensity and increase profitability. Females must

be at a suitable weight before they can breed for the first time. Mating underweight young females can cause lower reproductive performance, which can offset any emissions reductions gained from mating early.



Enhancing fertility

Higher fertility means that fewer breeding animals are needed in the herd to meet production targets, resulting in lower methane emissions. Enhanced fertility and weaning rates can be achieved by increasing the amount of energy supplied to cows and ewes during the

breeding season (nutritional flushing). Culling unproductive animals and selecting for improved fertility can also help to enhance the productivity of the herd or flock.



Retaining high performing animals

Culling for age is a standard management practice but can lead to the loss of high performing animals in the herd or flock. By focusing on keeping high-performing females

and reducing the number of non-productive females, a farm enterprise can reduce its emissions intensity.



Rising plane of nutrition

Ensuring a rising plane of nutrition has an associated benefit to reproduction rate, weaning rate and end-of-season liveweight performance. These strategies include targeted nutritional flushing (during breeding, pregnancy or weaning) or seasonal supplementation, feeding-out and

grazing management for groundcover retention. During feed gaps or overly wet or dry seasons, confinement feeding may be beneficial for feedbase recovery and maintained animal performance through the season.



Improving animal health

Infected and diseased animals have poor productivity and lower reproduction rates. Maintaining herd and flock health through good parasite and disease prevention, as well as culling for disease, will reduce methane emissions and increase growth rates and reproductive performance.



Genetic selection

Estimated breeding values for increased feed conversion efficiency, calving ease and other reproductive traits can support improved emissions intensity of a herd or flock.

Acknowledgement to NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Further information and learning

BredWell FedWell

One day workshop for sheep and beef producers.

Gain knowledge to analyse and plan a genetics and nutrition regime suited to environmental and market conditions to boost profitability and reduce livestock methane emissions intensity.

Find out more: mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell

Breeding EDGE

Three-day workshop for northern beef producers.

Develop a breeding program or improve an existing program using reproductive and genetic knowledge and technologies to achieve desired production targets and productivity-led reductions in livestock methane emissions intensity.

Find out more: mla.com.au/edgenetwork

Making More from Sheep

Resource hub for sheep producers to maximise returns for their meat or wool enterprise.

Find out more: makingmorefromsheep.com.au

Genetics hub

Explore how better breeding values can help you accelerate your herd or flock's productivity

Find out more: genetics.mla.com.au

Vegetation and soil management



Biochar

Benefits: Biochar improves soil health and promotes plant growth to increase soil carbon levels, particularly when applied in combination with active dung beetle populations to cycle nutrients in soil.

Cost: \$500–\$2,000/tonne

How to access: Various forestry suppliers, organic waste treatment companies or commodity traders.



Dynamic stocking rate

Benefits: A responsive stocking rate can ensure maintenance of ground cover, optimal plant utilisation and recovery as well as soil health and fertility. Ground cover biomass has the strongest relationship to maintaining and building soil organic carbon.

Find out more: mla.com.au/stockingrate



Seasonal confinement feeding

Benefits: Reduce risk of erosion and soil carbon loss from over-grazing during autumn feedgap; maintain body condition and nutrition; supports future ability of grazing systems to direct feed methane supplements.

Find out more: mla.com.au/confinement-feeding



Fertiliser management

Benefits: By carefully planning fertiliser application, producers can save money, boost pasture, crop production and reduce nitrogen fertiliser losses and excess nitrous oxide emissions. Managing this correctly can save up

to 60% of nitrogen applied being lost in the environment and adding to overall farm emissions. As slow-release nitrate fertilisers become less cost-prohibitive, they will reduce nitrous oxide emissions.



Shelter belts

Benefits: Reduced heat/cold stress in livestock, increased pasture production in cold conditions, reduced erosion, improved water quality, increased biodiversity and potential timber sales. For maximum impact, choose an orientation and location that shields against prevailing winds, avoid gaps in tree line and aim for the stand to be 10 times the length as your tallest tree species. In case studies, planting trees on 5–12% of

high-productivity land was estimated to reduce grazing emissions by 29% to 50% over 30 years.

Cost: \$2,000–\$5,000/ha depending on the extent of ground preparation required.

How to access:



Savanna fire management (SFM)

Benefits: Appropriate in parts of northern Australia's extensive grazing systems. SFM can avoid emissions and promote a palatable feedbase using controlled fire management regimes.

Cost: Varies by management and labour costs.

Find out more:



Image: Bernie English, Senior Beef Extension Officer, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and FutureBeef futurebeef.com.au



Dung beetles

Benefits: Dung beetles can promote soil carbon through their ability to break down dung, leading to improved water quality, plant health and weed management. They may also contribute to improved animal welfare and feed intake by reducing blowfly load in the paddock.

Remember to check which species are already on your property, so you can introduce a complementary species for year-round benefit.

Find out more and purchase: dungbeetles.com.au

Further information and learning

Australian Feedbase Monitor

Access farm-level rolling monthly pasture biomass estimates updated every five days. This tool can be used to ensure you are maintaining ground cover to prevent any loss of soil carbon. Free for MLA members with a Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) linked to their myMLA profile.

Find out more: mla.com.au/afm

Grazing Fundamentals EDGE

A one-day workshop for producers. Improve your understanding of the core principles behind successfully maintaining grazing land condition, carbon storage and long-term productivity.

Find out more: mla.com.au/edgenetwork

Grazing Land Management EDGE

A three-day workshop for producers who wish to build a deeper understanding of the core principles behind successfully maintaining grazing land condition, carbon storage and long-term productivity.

Find out more: mla.com.au/edgenetwork

Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS)

PayDirt – will teach participants how to interpret soil test results and how to prioritise fertiliser investment for maximum return.

Sowing for Success – has been designed to enable participants to work through the benefits and costs of sowing new pasture and to develop and implement a plan that maximises the chances of success.

Pasture Manipulation – identify opportunities to improve the productivity of pastures and develop a well-considered action plan that includes improved pasture utilisation, grazing methods, soil condition and weed manipulation.

Pasture Principles – provides a group training environment for producers to learn the guiding principles of pasture management that will allow them to work confidently regardless of the season or system.

Gra\$\$ to Dollars – This gives landholders the skills to grow and then utilise more pasture by being less reactive and more proactive as well as learning how to manage risk.

Find out more: mla.com.au/pgs

FutureBeef: Managing soil organic matter

Grazing management tactics to promote soil organic matter for healthy and productive soils in northern systems.

Find out more: futurebeef.com.au/resources

Participating in carbon farming projects

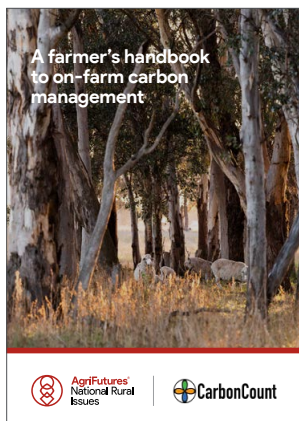
While many activities are beneficial to carbon on-farm, the term *carbon farming projects* tends to refer to activities that yield carbon credits under an audited scheme. One carbon credit is issued per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent stored or avoided.

There are several methodologies available to red meat landholders that broadly aim to either:

- sequester carbon from the atmosphere (re-vegetation and soil projects), or
- avoid carbon emissions of beef production by targeting a younger, heavier herd.

In the right circumstances, participating in a carbon farming project can be an attractive secondary financial reward for practices that the business may like to undertake anyway, e.g. plantation, herd efficiency. For others, the productivity benefits of carbon efficient farming will pay significant dividends on their own without the compliance and cost of committing to an audited project.

1. Consider your motivations. Are you looking to convert your credits into offsets for your own farm, or trade credits as an asset for revenue, or both?
2. Consider an independent feasibility assessment and credit yield forecast through [Carbon Scout](#).
3. Consider implications for cash flow. Carbon farming projects will involve a mix of upfront and on-going costs and may involve excluding stock from the project area. Is the cost-reward of a project right for your property?
4. If engaging a carbon service provider, as many do, the structure of your contract strongly determines tax treatment on ACCUs as assets and any income from sale of ACCUs. Have an accountant review any contracts.
5. Consider your personal circumstances. Projects are long-term commitments to practice change lasting between 7–25 years with implications for property transfer, other interested parties or landowners.
6. Have a legal advisor review any contracts.
7. Understand that carbon yields can fluctuate with climatic and regional factors outside your control. Know what conditions are placed on your project type, what the buffers for losses are, and who bears responsibility if carbon permanence is not maintained.
8. Do your own research on the methods through the Clean Energy Regulator website and in *A farmer's handbook to on-farm carbon management*.



Thinking of registering a carbon farming project? *A farmer's handbook for on-farm carbon management* published by Agrifutures Australia can step you through the process.



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