

Confidence Grows Grass

With the encouragement of their employer Louise Campbell and Karen Kemp joined a FORAGE Skill\$ group to learn more about growing and utilising pasture and since becoming involved they are both now taking a much closer look at their pasture and growing more grass with confidence.

Working with Trevor Telford and milking up to 750 cows in a split calving pattern Louise and Karen have gained a lot of new knowledge from being involved in the group they both said that it had really opened up their eyes to look at what the cows are eating out in the paddock. "We don't just ride over the pasture anymore but take a keen interest and have a look, we pick through the grass and check the leaf stage, what pasture species are in the paddock, if there are weeds or pests and then we talk to Trevor and the other staff about where to put the cows and where to put the fence, it is making us think more about what we are actually doing" said Louise.

We also have more confidence in asking the agronomist & Trevor questions about what is going on and they too are taking notice because we are now talking in their 'lingo' about leaf stage and tillers.



Together Karen and Louise have started to manage the allocation of pasture to the cows, they work out how much to give the herd and then monitor what happens, how much they are leaving behind and adjust the pasture allocation to suit. "Our goal is to grow as much pasture as possible and then to allocate the pasture based on what is growing, we don't want to just follow the centre pivot around, but to make decisions and graze the pasture the best we can" said Karen.

The FORAGE Skill\$ group has visited a different farm for each of the eight sessions over the 12 months and always involves a paddock walk to see what others in the group are doing, "we give support to each other to help improve and make changes and the group has also come here to our farm to see how we manage our grazing, they were able to give us a few ideas and then Karen and I work together to make it happen", said Louise.

"In the past we have done other courses but you soon forget it afterwards, but being in this group is much better because we meet every 4-6 weeks you don't forget and you actually keep using what you have learnt on a daily basis" said Karen.

"When we started the program all we knew was the basics, how to identify a few different plants but now we know about how rye grass grows: daughter tillers, leaf stage, and also how to allocate pasture to the cows. Our increased confidence and knowing what we are doing is really starting to grow us more grass for our cows" said Louise.

For more information about FORAGE Skill\$ phone 8536 3958, New Groups are starting NOW.