



Intensive rotational grazing does not result in phalaris dominating the pasture sward



Aim

To study the effects on botanical composition of changing the grazing management of phalaris-dominant pasture

Introduction

Phalaris (*Phalaris aquatica*) is a significant component of many sown pastures in the high rainfall zone of southern Australia (>600mm rainfall).

It persists well through the summer dry, has high growth rate and grows well on the shallow, heavy clay/loam, alkaline soils (pH 8.0-8.5) less well suited to other grasses.

Relatively little is known of its ability to withstand intensive rotational grazing.

Methods

- In 2002, 190 ha of phalaris-dominant pasture was converted from 10 paddocks into an intensive rotational grazing set up where the grazing area could be restricted down to 0.067ha.
- Grazing was therefore restricted to small areas for only 2 days at a time, but with long rest periods between grazing.
- Botanical composition (BOTONAL) at 6 set points was estimated at least seasonally, except for the summer when insufficient dry matter was present.
- Data was collected for the 5 years to Spring 2007.

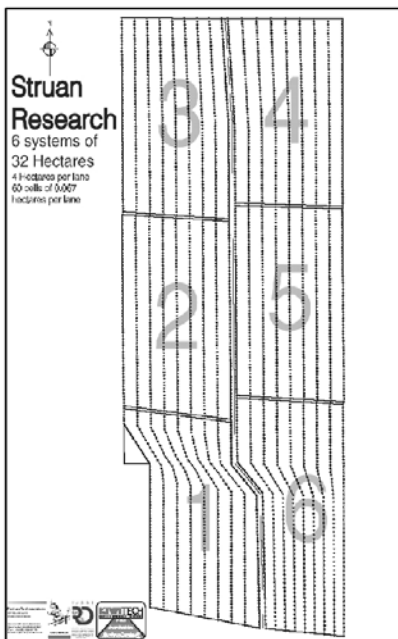


Figure 1: Layout of the Struan Technograzing™ systems.



Table 1: Botanical composition (% of dry matter) in paddocks soon after being re-fenced into an intensive rotational grazing configuration in 2002 and in the corresponding seasons in 2006 and 2007.

	Phalaris			Clover			Weeds			Other Grasses		
	2002	2006	2007	2002	2006	2007	2002	2006	2007	2002	2006	2007
Autumn	40	47	37.6	22.7	21.1	4.6	10.4	3.2	4.6	26.9	28.7	53.2
Winter	39.9	39.6	35.5	14.4	8.7	3.6	6.5	7.2	9.1	40.2	44.5	51.7
Spring	37.8	34.6	35.1	10.3	7.7	4.9	1.8	5.4	9.6	50.2	52.3	50.3

Conclusions

- Rotational grazing maintains the phalaris component of a pasture.
- There is no evidence that intensive rotational grazing results in phalaris domination of the sward.
- Significant effects on the clover and "other grasses" components of the sward appear to be seasonally related (2006 was the driest year on record and may have impacted on clover regeneration in 2007).



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