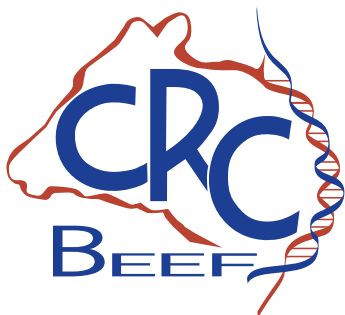
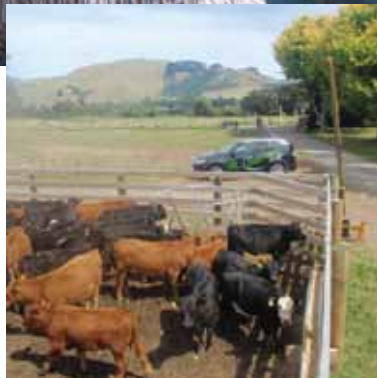
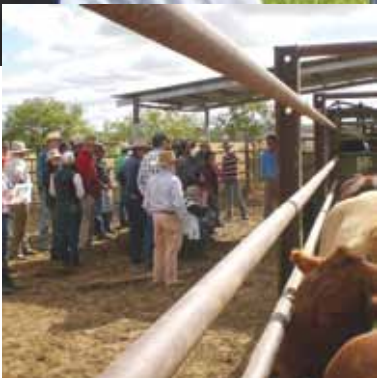


Beef Profit Partnerships



2011



Editor's Note

It is a pleasure to write the editorial for the Beef Profit Partnership (BPP) magazine. I have very much enjoyed working in the project, especially the involvement with the progressive beef producer members who have contributed significantly to the project's success.

With the world's population predicted to reach nine billion by 2052, the demand for food will increase by between 50-80 per cent. Productivity within the Australian agricultural industries will need to grow if we are going to contribute to this increased demand.

Productivity and profitability gains made by BPP group members demonstrate that beef producers can achieve gains by being focussed, using new technologies and innovation, and importantly measuring and monitoring the health of their businesses.

The development of networks which facilitate the distillation and implementation of research outcomes and the sharing of knowledge and experiences can contribute towards achieving these gains. The BPP project has demonstrated that this model can work.

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine which reports on the work and successes of the BPP project.

Bill Hoffman, Editor

About the Beef CRC

Developed as a partnership between the Australian beef industry and prestigious national and international scientific institutions, the CRC for Beef Genetic Technologies aims to give cattle producers the knowledge they need to produce beef which consistently meets consumer expectations both domestically and in those 110 countries to which we export.

The Beef CRC focuses on world-class gene discovery and gene expression research to improve profitability, productivity (through improved reproductive performance and feed efficiency) and animal welfare.

Along with its partners in the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand and Korea and associate partners in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, France and South Africa, the Beef CRC aims to increase the gross revenue of the Australian beef industry by an additional 1.5%. This is estimated at \$179 million per annum from 2012, with total expected benefits of more than \$2 billion over 25 years.

Beef CRC Major Research Sites



Established and supported under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program

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About the BPPs



Some cattle producers across the country have increased annual profits by more than \$70,000, thanks to a project run by the Beef Cooperative Research Centre.

The Beef CRC's Beef Profit Partnerships (BPPs) are a ground breaking initiative aimed at accelerating the rate of adoption of new technologies in the beef industry.

Project manager, Cynthia Mulholland said although the BPPs have taken a while to get traction, the results speak for themselves.

"When compared to statistics provided by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE), two thirds of the BPP businesses outperformed the average beef producer in each state," said Mrs Mulholland.

"Furthermore, three quarters of the BPP businesses have achieved a 20 per cent increase in annual profit at least once since joining the project."

Established in 2005, the BPP project consists of a network of groups located in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand.

Currently there are 29 BPPs comprising over 200 businesses, over 378,000 head of cattle and more than 1.5 million hectares of land.



The Beef Profit Partnerships differ from conventional technology transfer projects in that they offer an innovative and stimulating way to achieve rapid, measurable and sustainable improvement in the profitability of beef businesses.

“Traditional extension activities often rely on magazines, fact sheets and field days to deliver new information,” said Mrs Mulholland.

“Whereas it’s been proven that working in groups often result in a greater adoption of new technology and knowledge.”

The BPP project equips members with a reliable, proven decision-making process and tools, so the BPPs can continue to improve their productivity and profitability.

“The BPP groups use the ‘Continuous Improvement and Innovation’ (CI&I) process to stay focused and help reduce the adoption lag,” Mrs Mulholland said. The “BPP group members actually thrive off each other” she added.

“An individual is more likely to look at new things and make changes to their operations if they are surrounded by peers that share a similar background and goal,” she said.

BPP groups develop focuses that are relevant to their own situation. They then use the steps of CI&I to research and implement changes and measure the impact. Focuses developed by the groups are wide and varied and are not limited to technologies developed by the Beef CRC.

“Besides producing the cattle, pasture management is one of the biggest components of a beef business and has been focused on by a number of groups and individuals,” said Mrs Mulholland.

“Some groups in New South Wales have trialed new crops, while groups in WA are utilizing kikuyu in rotational grazing.”

She said examples of other focuses developed by BPP groups include alternative fertilizers, succession planning, wild dog control and Bovine Diarrhoea Virus (BVDV) or commonly referred to as pestivirus.

Pestivirus is a major issue in some Australian beef herds, with production losses of between 25 and 40 per cent recorded due to reduced reproductive performance, death losses and ill thrift.

Mrs Mulholland said the issue of pestivirus was investigated as a common focus across three BPP groups in New South Wales.

She said a number of producers from each group supplied blood samples for testing to establish status of their herds. A veterinary expert then explained how to interpret the results and presented the case for and against vaccination.

“The producers, along with their facilitator, then used the CI&I processes to decide on how to manage the risk Pestivirus posed to their individual herds and develop a plan for the future.”

Although some producers had been independently concerned about pestivirus in their herds, Mrs Mulholland said their involvement in the BPP prompted them to take action.

“They told us that speaking to other members of the group as well as the fact they could access the latest information and technical assistance helped them make the changes.”

Mrs Mulholland said it is difficult for beef businesses to move ahead, unless they know where they have come from.

To that end, BPP group members calculate their Costs of Production annually to identify Key Profit Drivers and opportunities for improvement.

“By doing this they can then develop their focuses more easily,” she said.

“That’s where a very good facilitator comes in. If the Facilitator has a wide knowledge of the latest farm management practices they can offer the latest information to help the producer implement successful changes.”

Mrs Mulholland said there are numerous examples of successful changes being implemented right across the BPP network.

In the Esperance group alone, four businesses have increased annual profits by nearly \$300,000.

“One business implemented intensive rotational grazing on 300 hectares of land and subsequently increased stocking rates from 150 cows to 300 cows and calves,” said Mrs Mulholland.

“Originally their gross margin per hectare was roughly \$100. As a result of the changes they increased that to about \$289, adding \$56,000 per annum to their bottom line.”

She said another business also implemented rotational grazing and increased stocking rates of both weaners and cows. This led to a \$59,000 annual increase in profits.

“The same business shifted their calving dates from March to April thus reducing supplementary feeding,” she said.

“By doing this, they were able to generate an extra \$24,000.”

Mrs Mulholland said the Beef CRC is currently working on a sustainability plan for the BPPs after the CRC has wound-up.

She said while the finer details are yet to be finalised, there is a commitment at a state level that the BPPs will continue.

“Whether they are run by the state agricultural departments or by private consultants, the facilitators are extremely dedicated to the BPP process,” she said.

“They constantly see the achievements made by their members and as a result are pushing for their long term survival.”

Mrs Mulholland said they would ideally like to see the network of BPPs grow. And if groups in New Zealand are any indication, it will be possible.

Under the Beef + Lamb New Zealand funding model, Mrs Mulholland said groups in New Zealand are required to show achievements to Beef and Lamb NZ levy payers in a very short amount of time.

“Beef + Lamb New Zealand are now implementing Sheep Profit Partnerships using the CI&I processes,” she said.

“That’s something we’d like to see here in Australia. Improving profits shouldn’t just be reserved for the beef industry; we’d like all agricultural industries to benefit from this knowledge.”

Next Page: Members of the Upper Clarence BPP working on their focuses for change



Beef producers sing the praises of BPPs

Beef producers across Australia overwhelmingly agree that being a member of a Beef Profit Partnership (BPP) group has paid huge dividends for their beef business.

For many, the first simple step of measuring cost of production has opened their eyes to the capacity for improvement within their beef business. Roger Zuill, who runs 300 cows and backgrounds 900 steers and heifers, at Guyra in the Northern Tablelands of NSW, is a member of two BPP groups. The first group started seven years ago as a cost of production group, before evolving into a BPP group. A BPP group then started up locally, and he became a member of that group as well. "The cost of production has absolutely, by far, been the best thing about being involved in the BPP groups. I have always calculated my cost of production but standardising it and comparing it to other enterprises is so valuable. It enables us to question what we are doing in an educated way," he said.

John Sharpe, who runs 1800 head at Esperance on Western Australia's south coast, agrees that calculating cost of production has been one of the best elements of BPPs. "It has been great to use a cost of production tool to see where our efficiencies lie and don't lie, and



Bill Hoffman and John Sharpe discussing John's involvement in his BPP group

where we need to make changes," he said. The Esperance BPP has been running for nearly five years, over which time its members have built a great rapport and trust with one another, particularly when it comes to sharing farm financials. "We started off keeping all our figures confidential but now we are comfortable enough with each other to put names against our cost of production," he said.

John Fry, who is a member of the recently formed Kirup BPP in Western Australia's south west, runs 450 breeders and supplies feedlot cattle for the domestic market. He agrees that the process of calculating cost of production in a group environment is one of the best aspects of his BPP group. "It has been great to able to discuss more detailed components of our business for the mutual benefit of the group," he said.

While many agree that cost of production is an imperative first step on the road to improving profitability, it is not a step that everyone makes easily. There is still reluctance in many of the BPP groups to share what some regard as sensitive and private information, despite the confidential manner in which the figures are reported. Roger Zuill believes there are probably several reasons for their unwillingness to participate. "I

can understand the reluctance for some people to share their cost of production. Maybe they are scared of what they are going to find out and some people are just very private. It's sad because they miss out on so much. Cost of production is the starting point of everything," he said.

BPPs have also served as a great forum for beef producers to network, interact and look beyond the farm gate.

John Sharpe has found the BPP process gives him perspective on his own beef operation. "Being part of the group is great to remind yourself that you are not the only one with certain problems. We bounce ideas off each other to try and nut out a way around things. We do regular farm tours so we can get a picture of where our farm sits compared to the rest of the district. When you are stuck on your property by yourself you can't make that comparison," he said. The Esperance group have travelled further afield than their immediate district, having undertaken several long bus trips to the west coast of WA to investigate rotational grazing practices and holistic agriculture.

Mareeta Cox, who produces yearling steers and heifers at Coojar, north-west of Hamilton in

Victoria, has been a member of her BPP group for the last five years. She has found the sharing of knowledge from larger producers in her group to be hugely beneficial. "We have some people in our group who have large numbers of cows, as well as some agronomists and it has been great to learn from them. I have also really valued the external speakers that our facilitator has organised," she said.

BPPs have provided farmers with a valid reason to get together. Roger Zuill believes that "BPPs get like-minded, forward thinking producers together who are concerned about their business". The social aspect is also valued by John Fry. "It's not just networking but socialising. We don't socialise much as farmers so the BPP group has been a great excuse to get together," he said.

The information exchange between group members, the facilitator, expert speakers and the results of on-farm trials have been a catalyst for change for many members involved in the BPPs.

Roger Zuill has made multiple changes to his operation as a result of the lessons learned at his BPP meetings. "I have increased the amount of nitrogen I am applying and that has proved worthwhile. I have also switched to using a long acting drench at weaning and my weaners have never looked better," he said. Roger has also sown new varieties of fescue and ryegrass after being exposed to their benefits through his local group. Trial results from members of his BPP group have also resulted in changes to Roger's selenium program. "Different people did trials with selenium which showed that even though the blood count went up, there was no added benefit to production so I have stopped using selenium in my growing stock," he said.

Rose Noble, who runs 100 cows in her vealer operation at Woodhouse in Victoria's western districts, has also made changes to her worm management program as a result of being part of her local BPP. "We had several guest speakers who talked about best practice worm control. As a result I am using worm egg counts more regularly to confirm my gut feel on whether my animals need to be drenched," she said. Rose has found the BPP to be a terrific place to source information. "We had one BPP meeting where grass tetany was discussed. This equipped me with the right information to be able to diagnose cases early enough to save several animals," she said.

Despite the Kirup BPP group only being in its infancy, John Fry has already considered making alterations to his enterprise. "I have more readily considered going into a carryover steer operation and trading Friesian steers as they are cheaper to farm and to source. You can add more kilograms

of liveweight per hectare with Friesian steers than you can with breeders. If we had a bigger incentive to produce higher carcass weights we would definitely change over more quickly. At the moment there are too many penalties and we are more or less limited to a 15 month old animal," he said. He also believes there is a trend for the Kirup group to change to a later time of calving which would better align feed supply and demand.

The Esperance BPP group has made sweeping changes to their farming system which has paid huge dividends. With the aim of increasing stocking rate, group members adopted different strategies including the implementation of rotational grazing, changes to the time of calving and improving pH through liming. As a result one business managed to increase its beef produced per hectare from 199kg/ha to 407 kg/ha. John Sharpe said that he is moving to focussing on fodder crops "We are looking at how we can utilise fodder crops in conjunction with our rotational grazing system to finish animals quicker. Some group members have been using fodder crops for a few years but now the time is right for us to consider them. The group is also getting a real understanding of how to use our fertilisers properly, and what drives certain types of pastures to grow. We can't change the markets so we are concentrating on production," he said.

There is general consensus among BPP participants that good facilitation is fundamental in guiding a group towards its goals.

John Sharpe believes a good facilitator with passion and enthusiasm is critical. "The facilitator needs to be enthusiastic about cattle production. They need to know where the group can go and what can be achieved when heads are put together rather than someone who just rings up and organises a meeting. They need to be able to think ahead about the best person to talk in front of the group to help the group achieve its outcomes," he said.

Mareeta Cox agrees the facilitator is integral to the group's ability to function effectively. "Beef producers are too busy to be thinking ahead about the needs of the group. This is why a good facilitator is critical," she said.

John Fry believes that for group extension to work, members have to have trust and respect for each other. "You don't take private information out of the group. Group members need to contribute totally to the group for everyone's mutual benefit," he said.

Rose Noble values the diversity among group participants. "If everyone in the group is doing the same thing you don't learn as much. Having variety among group members allows for some

cross pollination of ideas," she said. Rose also believes that the low cost of being involved with a BPP has made them successful, allowing it to be accessible to everyone.

While the majority of BPPs are still a hive of activity there is consensus that most groups have a finite lifespan. Roger Zuill believes that acknowledging this is one of the challenges of group work. "You seem to reach a plateau when the group naturally finishes. If you have been together for a long time you seem to run out of things to look at. I'm very concerned about that and I don't know how you would change it," he said.

In an effort to improve the profitability of beef businesses, BPP members across Australia have been kept on task through the Continuous Improvement and Innovation (CI & I) process. It has allowed for accelerated change by focussing the thinking and action of the group. According to Roger Zuill, "There is no doubting it is an important part of the process. Without this process you get bogged down and it helps you focus on the facts".

Rose Noble agrees that some kind of process is definitely necessary to keep the group on task

"Every time we met some time was put aside to bring the group back to looking at its focus. The facilitator worked hard to keep us on track. We would go out to the paddock and talk about many different things. But whenever we came back we would spend some time on it. It kept the group focussed on the long term goal rather than becoming reactionary," she said.

John Sharpe sees a large amount of merit in the CI and I process. "As farmers we may not necessarily see it or refer to it as CI and I, but the refocusing process is essential. You need to analyse what you started out to do and then look at the economics of it every year so you can see that via your actions have allowed you to achieve your goals. I think the process is critical in any kind of business," he said.

The network of BPP groups across Australia has been an avenue for forward thinking farmers to gather together in the name of increasing the profitability of their beef businesses. While the size and type of enterprises vary enormously across the groups there is little doubt that the BPPs have provided a vehicle for healthy debate, accelerated change and ultimately increased profits.



Members of the Kirup Bridgetown BPP (WA) are learning news skills, such as condition scoring



Impact on the Australian Economy

There have been some significant improvements made by individual businesses and in specific regions. Here, we try and aggregate these individual analyses to provide some evidence of the wider impact of the BPP network.

In the Esperance BPP in Western Australia, the impact analyses that were done by the local economist, and subsequently acted on, indicated an average expected increase in gross margin of around \$175/ha for four producers across eight improvements. These improvements were all essentially more intensive use of pasture on small parts of their properties, as seasonal pasture quantity and quality is the key driver of herd productivity in that region of WA. The expected economic impact for these four businesses alone, now mostly realised, is in the order of \$275,000 per year, with the benefits continuing to accrue.

There are also some excellent examples of improvements coming out of the Hamilton and Ballarat BPPs in Victoria. For nine businesses in these two groups, the average expected increase in gross margin across 12 different improvements was around \$79/ha or an increase in profit of close to \$6,000 per business per year. This sums to \$68,000 per year for these nine businesses. Again most of these improvements have been implemented and the benefits have been and continue to be realised.

The average improvement achieved across five North Queensland BPPs due to BPP interventions was about \$14 per adult equivalent (AE) for breeding stock and about \$43/AE for sale

stock. These 26 North Queensland businesses control some 140,000 cattle. Hence the annual improvement in profit achieved in these businesses alone was more than \$2.3 million.

The 40 businesses included here have improved their profit from beef production by some \$2.6 million per year in aggregate, or on average by \$66,000 per business per year, due to making practice changes developed using the BPP process. These 40 businesses obviously vary greatly in scale of production, in access to resources and in management expertise, so aggregating across the whole BPP network is problematic. But if the other 210 businesses in the current network only achieved the sort of profit increase shown by the smaller Victorian BPPs, then that would add another \$1.25 million per year to the total. An aggregate annual return of \$3.85 million to members of the BPP network is pretty good.

Note that this figure does not account for any spill-over benefits to the broader beef industry who may see or hear about the improvements made by BPP members and who then implement these improvements in their own businesses.

Impact on the New Zealand Economy

The Beef Profit Partnership program funded by Beef + Lamb New Zealand started in New Zealand 3½ years ago with the pilot program based around 9 Farms in the East Cape of the North Island. It was designed to achieve practice change for farmers who were in desperate need to increase profitability from the beef operations on their farms.

The impacts can be described in two ways: the direct and immediate versus the indirect and long term.

The pilot program gave a major boost of renewed enthusiasm by the participant farmers keen to lift farm profits. The program was hampered by weather conditions initially but maintained focus throughout. The farmers were very interested in what was happening across the ditch and funded a tour to “walk & talk” with the BPP farmers in Australia as to what they were doing in the same space. Farmers learned that the same problems existed on both sides of the Tasman.

Once the four new programs were set up around New Zealand, the information transfer really started to fire. Farmers were very keen to see what could be achieved in different areas around the country and sent the BPP program into top gear. The participant farmers needed no arm twisting to experiment with new options on-farm and test out the yard weaning that had been previously highlighted out of the Gisborne pilot program and previously in Australia.

Recently the first of the annual field days on the new programs attracted a good crowd of curious farmers to Mt Somers for an entertaining look at what these progressive farmers were trying to achieve. Areas of interest included trace element effects, breeding cow performance and electronic identification. Excellent feedback dictated that this approach was going to work as an Information Transfer mechanism at the early stage as well as down the track.

The indirect benefits are really around speeding up the rate of information transfer and genetic gain. These are cumulative effects but can be reversed by loss of information, poor confidence and even farm succession. The faster that farmers are equipped with sufficient information to make practice change decisions, then the faster the industry will break new horizons in productivity and profitability. The lifting of the “Beef” profile in New Zealand and the overall contribution to the \$2.6 billion industry, which is still reliant on prime non-dairy beef as a major component, is seen as very important to New Zealand agriculture.





Why are BPPs so successful?

BPP groups work because they are largely made up of beef producers who are:

- Keen to work with other beef business managers interested in achieving improvements in productivity and profit.
- Focussed on opportunities to improve profit and willing to take on-ground action to achieve rapid and measurable improvements in the drivers of profit.
- Willing to share their experiences with others in the BPP teams.
- Equipped to track changes in the key drivers of profit and productivity.
- Keen to work with a team facilitator and have access to a wide range of researchers and professionals who are committed to improving profit.

BPP Groups Stay Focussed

BPP groups across Australia and New Zealand largely work independently in a self directed manner but there is a common process used in all groups to ensure they stay focussed on achieving the project's goals.

The thinking, decisions and actions taken in all the groups are based on the principles and processes of Continuous Improvement and Innovation (CI&I).

In general terms, CI&I is a thinking process. However, it is more than that, it is about focussing thinking and action. The CI&I process

is focussed on how to make a real difference to performance in a given situation.

CI&I involves cycles which include a focus for improvement and innovation, and the sequence of six steps outlined below in Figure 1.

CI & I Steps Explained

There are several steps involved in this process which facilitators and members use. They are:

- **Focus** - It's easy to get sidetracked by the range of technologies, ideas and recommendations being promoted each and every day. Having a clearly defined focus can prevent investment of a lot of time, effort and resources into things that don't achieve the planned outcomes.
- **Situation analysis** - In every business, there are already a range of practices, processes, systems and technologies in place. An effective Situation Analysis challenges members to think differently about what they do and why they do it.
- **Impact Analysis** - In business there are many competing calls on time, energy, finances and other resources. It is important to ensure they are put towards only those opportunities that will help achieve the defined goals. An effective Impact Analysis helps quickly assess the options and decide whether they are 'in' or 'out' for now.

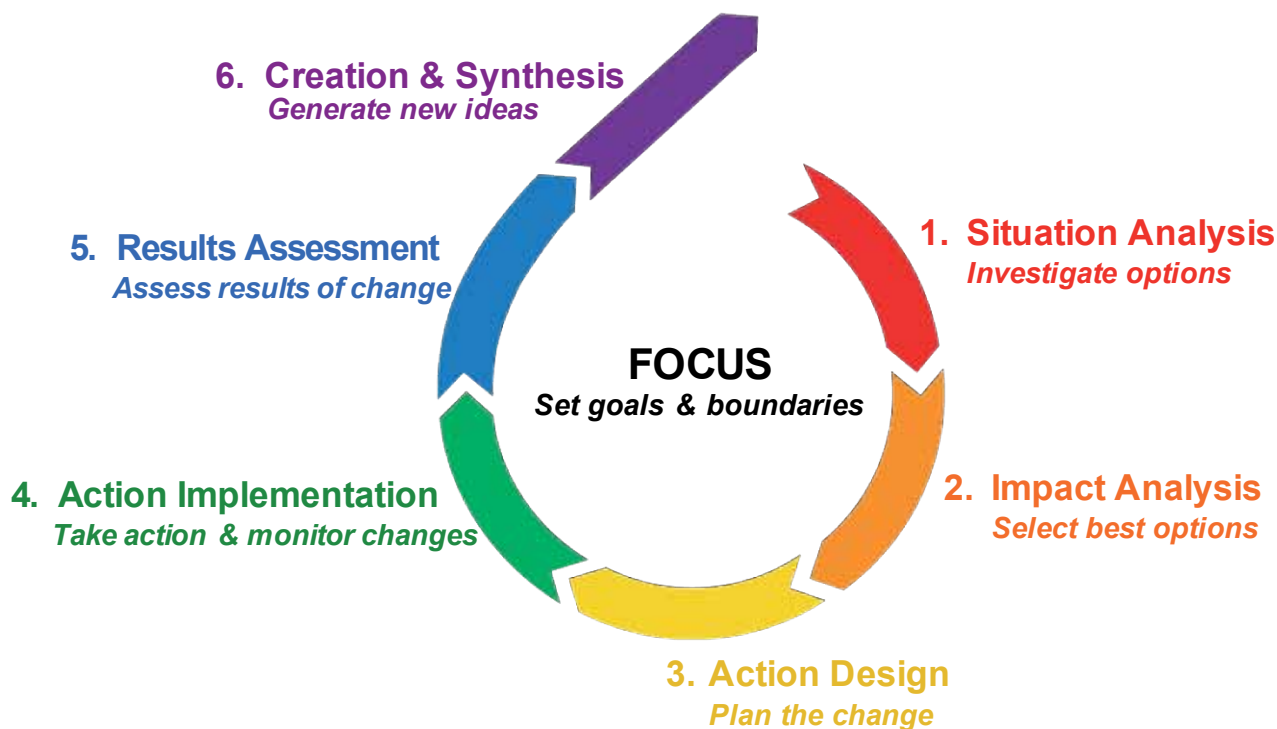


Figure 1. Steps of the Continuous Improvement and Innovation Cycle

- **Action Design** - One of the reasons why people don't follow through on their ideas is because they are not confident they have made the right decision. However, having successfully completed the Focus, Situation Analysis and Impact Analysis steps, members are more confident about the implications such as expected risks, costs, benefits and ease of implementing the option. A good design and plan can help in figuring out what has to be done, what should be done first, when things should be done, how they will be done and who will do them.
 - **Action Implementation** - Action Implementation in CI&I is not just about individuals implementing their Action Designs, but the BPP groups coming together regularly and frequently to support each other. These sessions allow members to share their progress; provide support; measure and monitor changes; and build effective partnerships.
 - **Results Assessment** - A Results Assessment step can help figure out the actual impact of the improvements; what worked well, and what didn't. If an option didn't perform as well as expected or gave a totally unexpected negative result, that's great - as long as the individual and the group as a whole learns something from it
 - **Creation and Synthesis** - Innovation depends on the generation of new ideas, questions and opportunities. This step helps in thinking about opportunities not thought of before, so that things never done before can be considered. It also helps in looking at the larger picture and seeing ways to do those things that may have been thought of as being impossible. But it doesn't stop there. The process is cyclical. Once the cycle is completed for the first time, a new focus can be identified and each step worked through again and again and again.
- This process is used to assist in the efficient management of the BPP groups and help keep them focussed. Importantly though it doesn't dominate the key objective which is to achieve an improvement in productivity and business profit amongst the BPP group members.

Reflections of one year in a BPP group

Fraser James purchased Guy Fawkes Station in 2004 while he was working in investment banking based in Hong Kong and returned to take on a hands-on role in the day to day operation in April 2010. One year on and he is very happy with his decision to be involved in the beef industry including being a member of the Ebor BPP group.

Guy Fawkes is a 955 hectare property located in the reliable high rainfall Ebor area on the eastern fall of the NSW northern tablelands. It is based on fertile basalt soil with improved permanent pastures. One hundred and fifty hectares of this pasture have recently been replaced with high performance rye grass and will be soon stocked for the first time in a rotational grazing system. Fraser is hoping to achieve 1000 kg beef/ha from this system when it is fully established and stocked next spring and summer.

The investment in this high performance ryegrass system is Fraser's first major step in his overall plan to grow the productivity and profitability of Guy Fawkes. He aims to significantly boost the kgs beef produced per ha but is looking to take a sustainable approach. Green compost, chicken litter and bio-waste are all being used in combination with inorganic products in a balanced approach to fertiliser management.

Fraser's reflections on his first year in the Ebor BPP group are very positive — he lists a number of valuable outcomes:

- As a new member of the rural community the group afforded him a great opportunity to meet other beef producers.
- Sharing information and experiences at the business level is extremely valuable.
- There are many tangible benefits such as being able to learn from the knowledge and experiences of the other group members.
- The very "hands-on" approach to delivering the meetings/workshops is very appealing.
- Being part of the group gives access to technical experts who would not be available at an individual level.
- Calculating cost of production and discussing it in an "open book" manner within the group is very useful in gaining a basic

understanding of how your beef business is performing.

Guy Fawkes currently turns over 1500-2000 steers annually (mainly as feeders) and produces around 360kg of beef/ha. Fraser has some challenging goals for the future - he hopes to improve the kg beef/ha by 20% over the next 3 – 5 years and in doing so boost profitability.

Fraser believes there is a positive future for the beef industry. He is not going to just rely on capital growth in the land asset. He is committed to making the beef enterprise profitable. He intends benchmarking his beef business profitability level against what a similar investment would return in the stockmarket.

So far he is happy with how the business is going but admits it will be tough for trading businesses to generate adequate profitability in the short term because of the current highly inflated prices for restocker cattle.

With that in mind, one of Fraser's goals for the future is to reduce the level of risk his business is exposed to. He intends building a breeding component into his overall cattle enterprise. Initially that will be done by running a 500 head breeding herd on part of Guy Fawkes but his is also looking to acquire an additional property to allow him to eventually run 1,000 breeders as well as the trading business.

Fraser says the one thing he brought to his current role from his extensive involvement in the corporate world was that "if you don't measure it, you can't manage it." He believes that applies whether it is calculating Cost of Production and identifying Key Performance Indicators or managing the overall business at a higher level.

He sees being in a BPP group is very valuable in doing some of that measuring and helping with the development of plans to manage it.

BPP still valuable for a business supported by off-farm investors

Independent advisor to Wilmot Cattle Company, Bert Glover says there are many positives from being in the Ebor BPP group.

Wilmot Cattle Company runs a cattle business on an 1822 ha property in the prime beef producing eastern fall area of the Northern Tablelands in NSW. The bulk of the property is highly fertile basalt soils with 1250 mm annual rainfall. This enables improved pastures largely based on fescue and white clover to be grown. A portion of Wilmot has been further improved into a high performance ryegrass pasture system.

The current focus for the business is to utilise these resources to maximise productivity without escalating the cost of running the business. Kilograms of beef produced per hectare (kgs/Ha) and Cost of Production (CoP) are two of a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to monitor productivity. Others are soil and tissue testing which are used to monitor what is happening within the plant and soil.

The Wilmot's cattle operation is based on a trading enterprise predominantly focussed on backgrounding Angus steers. This is complemented by a finishing enterprise turning off heavy grass fed steers. The balance of this mix depends on seasonal and market conditions. The enterprises are constantly evaluated by calculating gross margins.

Bert Glover says there are two key reasons why he is involved in BPP project:

1. It offers the opportunity to calculate a number of simple but important KPIs for the business - kg beef/ha and CoP. Being able to benchmark these against other businesses in the local area and discuss them in an open forum is highly beneficial.
2. The networking opportunity is also highly valuable especially as he was a "new guy" to the area a few years ago. The BPP group provided an excellent opportunity to network at formal group get-togethers. But he says the informal networking that occurs outside the formal workshops is also invaluable.

The BPP group seems to naturally bring together like-minded producers keen on knowing more about how their businesses are performing and receptive to new ideas and technologies which may improve them.

The delivery of the BPP is underpinned by a Continuous Improvement and Innovation (CI & I) process which involves sharing knowledge and experiences which Bert says is invaluable.

Bert offers some interesting ideas in regard to keeping the BPP project alive and healthy into the future:

1. Find a middle ground so that all participants feel they are getting something of value to their business out of it.
2. Keep everyone engaged — avoid going too heavily in one direction. Cater for everyone with a mix of activities and topics for discussion.
3. If commercial sponsorship is required as part of the funding mix he sees no problem with that. Having sponsors involved can bring a new perspective to the discussions which is healthy. If sponsors gain something to help their business from being engaged it can be a "win-win" result if it means the groups continue to function and survive in the post CRC era.

Bert's final comment was that he sees representing a beef business which is supported by off-farm investors is in no way different to the family farming businesses that make up most of the numbers. He sees himself as "just another beef producer" keen to improve the productivity and profitability of Wilmot Cattle Company and the BPP group project is extremely helpful in doing that.

Being in a BPP group helps to do the job well

Mark and Jane Bunge run a mixed livestock enterprise on 1,270 hectares north of Coleraine in south west Victoria. Mark's philosophy is to run a couple of good enterprises and do the job well. Being a member of the Hamilton Beef Profit Partnership (BPP) group provides Mark with a mechanism for receiving up to date relevant technical information and learn of ways to implement it and assist in achieving that goal.

The enterprise mix consists of approximately 10,000 sheep and 1,000 trading cattle. The sheep enterprise is a self-replacing merino flock with breeding ewes and wethers, and approximately 900 ewes are joined to a terminal sire each year.

The beef trading enterprise consists of approximately 600 generally Angus steers and heifers and 450 wagyu dairy cross. The majority of the Angus stock are purchased in the paddock, with some purchased through the yards. Cattle are purchased at an average liveweight of 200-250 kilograms and sold around 8 to 10 months later at a liveweight of 450 kilograms. The majority are sold to the feedlot, with the heavier ones sent directly to the abattoirs

Mark strives for high labour efficiency and is the only full time worker on the property. Contract labour is employed when required which allows for the right people to be employed for the right job. Permanent labour costs are kept to a minimum, although this is offset with paying higher rates for contract staff.

The farm is made up of a pasture based system and up until a couple of years ago there was a considerable beef breeding enterprise, with some trading. However, like most farms the prolonged dry seasons and the poor returns from the beef breeding enterprise resulted in a change in enterprise mix. The beef breeding herd was eventually sold and more focus was put to the trading enterprise. The number of cattle traded is dependent on the seasonal conditions and pasture availability.

In order for the trading enterprise to be successful, scale was crucial to enable competitive buying and selling. Mark likes to be able to fill a unit load when selling and buying, which is part of helping reduce overall costs. The farm is well set-up to allow for monthly weighing and animal health programs to be implemented.

Economics is a crucial component behind the performance of the trading enterprise. Analysis

is done for every cattle purchase and sale using both manual means and computer program analysis. The costs and benefits of management practices are also analysed, with possible returns estimated for every dollar spent.

The old beef breeding enterprise had an average cost of production of approximately \$0.89 per kilogram of beef produced and an average price received of \$1.19 per kilogram of beef liveweight. This gave an average margin of 30 cents. The average cost of production for the beef trading enterprise over the last six years has been \$0.74 per kilogram of beef produced, which is not a lot less than the breeding herd, but average price received has been \$1.74 per kilogram of beef liveweight, thus giving a margin of one dollar.

Average production for the breeding herd was 311 kilograms of beef produced per hectare, whereas for the trading enterprise it is 736 kilograms. Over the last 10 years the farm has been running at a stocking rate of about 21 DSE per hectare, which is above the regional average of about 16. This higher stocking rate is being achieved by above average spending on pasture renewal and maintenance, and pasture management.

On a per hectare basis, costs tend to be higher than what seems to be the average for the region. But when production is considered the overall cost of production per unit of product produced is a lot lower. Mark does not focus solely on cost of production, but rather looks at costs overall and improving production relative to expenditure.

Mark annually benchmarks the performance of the farm business, so he already had a good understanding of what his cost of production and production levels were prior to joining the Hamilton BPP group. Being involved in the BPP network enables him though to see how other beef enterprises were performing and see what works and what doesn't and the economic returns behind the decision making.

Talking about animal health issues through to pasture improvement options with experts and fellow farmers has been of significant value. This gaining of knowledge through being in a BPP group helps in fine tuning the current production system to improve productivity and ultimately profitability returns.

Involvement in a BPP has been enlightening

Stuart and Janet Morant run a mixed livestock enterprise on 400 hectares in the Tallangatta Valley, North East Victoria. They are members of the Beef Profit Partnership (BPP) group which operates in the area. Their enterprise mix consists of a Poll Dorset sheep stud, an autumn calving vealer beef herd and a spring calving beef herd.

Being a part of the BPP network and doing a cost of production calculation was a valuable experience for them as it showed just how much the drought had cost. This forced a rethink to improve the sustainability and profitability of their operation.

The sheep enterprise consists of approximately 300 stud ewes plus replacements and is run on about 120 hectares of the property.

The beef operation is made up of two enterprises, consisting of approximately 220 cows in total. These enterprises have and are continually being altered as a reflection of the drier conditions during the 2000 to 2009 period and the better season of 2010.

An autumn calving vealer operation consists of dairy beef cross cows joined to a Limousin bull. Calving takes place in February and calves are sold prior to Christmas at an average carcass weight of 215 kilograms. The dairy beef cross cows are good milkers which enables the terminal-sired calves to grow quickly and be sold early. The ability to reduce stocking pressure prior to Christmas is a drought management strategy. It enables the focus to then be given to fattening young stock in the other beef herd during the summer period when feed may be limited. The vealer enterprise makes up about 65% of the total beef operation.

The Morants also run a small spring calving herd based currently on 30 Hereford Simmental cross cows joined to an Angus bull. Steers are carried through to 550 kilograms liveweight. Surplus heifers are also grown out and finished. The spring calving enterprise makes up 35% of the total beef operation.

During the drought of 2006/07 a significant amount of supplementary feed was purchased to keep the operation going. Some stock were also sold early. There was apprehension that after the drought cattle prices would rise and thus the choice was made to feed stock through and sell at a higher price later, rather than destocking early and trying to buy back in at a higher price. However, it turned out that there was no significant rise in cattle prices post the drought.

Coming out of the drought with low stock numbers provided Stuart & Janet with the opportunity to invest in a significant pasture

renewal program. Deep rooted perennial phalaris pastures were sown and allowed to become well established, with hay being taken off to refill sheds. Regular pasture renewal is practiced and Stuart believes that pasture improvement needs to be undertaken regardless of cost just to stay in business. As well as new pasture an improved watering system has also been installed across the farm.

Post-drought, 80 unjoined heifers were purchased when prices were low, to increase breeding numbers. Breeding numbers are slowly being increased and any surplus grass is used to fatten steers quicker and allow for the resting of pastures.

Doing a Cost of Production (CoP) calculation is one of the most valuable aspects of being a part of the BPP network, as it shows where money is being spent and the areas that can be improved. Cost of production stimulates thinking about the whole production system and calculating it in drought years is just as important as doing it in the good years.

A CoP calculation will show the critical things that push costs up. But it is important not to react by just slashing costs. Increasing production (Kgs of beef/Ha) is the key to reducing CoP.

The Morant's CoP has changed over the last four years. The high CoP in 2006/07 was as a result of high supplementary feeding costs. Very little supplementary feeding has been done in subsequent years. Other costs in general have not altered much over the period. Most importantly though they have increased their production (Kgs/Ha) resulting in a steady drop in CoP (\$/Kg of beef produced).

The other important benefit for Stuart & Janet of being involved in the BPP network is the ability to learn from others. That may be through picking up different ideas, hearing what other people do, seeing other enterprises in operation, etc. It is important to go in with an open mind. The BPP network offers the ability to access a variety of information sources and helps decipher what information is important and relevant for implementation to boost productivity and profitability.

Being involved in a BPP has been an enlightening experience, reinforcing what was already known, providing new knowledge and giving confidence to move in such a direction. The last 10 years of drought have been a matter of surviving and changing the system to remain profitable. Because of this, the system is now set up as well as it can be to progress into the future.

BPPs get real results

Condingup farmer Phil Chalmer is a beef producer of 30 years. He farms with his wife Nicole and son Rohan running 850 breeding cows and trades up to 2000 yearling cattle annually. The Chalmer's 2600 ha property is a typical sandplain farm for the Condingup area on the south coast of Western Australia receiving 625 mm of rainfall annually.

Phil has been involved with five producer groups but says that Beef Profit Partnerships has been by far the best.

"It's been the best thing I have seen results for," he said

"In two years we doubled productivity on the focus paddock we were working on. We were able to lift our beef production from 180kg/ha live weight to over 400 kg/ha. Now two thirds of our farm is being managed differently as a result of what we have learnt in the group. We have also identified a number of other areas where we can also make significant gains. Although our group's activities have been mostly self funded, the financial benefits have been well and truly worth our investment."

He says that although the Continuous Improvement & Innovation (CI & I) cycle was "pretty boring" to learn about when the group of seven farmers from the Esperance region first started out, he now realises that it has provided structure, which is now a significant reason for the group's success.

"We limited the size of the group which was also a very good decision because we have now all worked out what is right for the particular personalities and needs of our members and we now have a very good method of operation and communication which suits us."

Initially each member of the group chose a focus issue. For most members, the chosen focus issue was rotational grazing. Phil says he had tried on several occasions to rotationally graze prior to joining the group – but never with sufficient success to justify continuing.

Once each member chose a paddock on which to trial rotational grazing, they had regular meetings to see what each other had achieved. They could then re-assess what they needed to do next to achieve their target outcomes.

"Having the group made it work. We had to turn up to meetings every 6 to 8 weeks and we were forced to do something under (self imposed) peer pressure. We couldn't keep making excuses and put things off"

"This has been really good for analysing our own circumstances. As a group we have all worked really well together and we are now at the stage where we are able to work independently of the Department."

Department of Agriculture and Food Development Officer, Matt Ryan, helped to establish the group. He says it has been a great success story and the farmers involved have achieved some excellent results by dramatically increasing productivity in a very short space of time.

"We chose the constraints to productivity that could give us the best results in the quickest possible time and I think we achieved that goal."

"We don't focus on the process, we have focused on the outcomes using CI&I as the means of getting results."

"There is nothing amazingly new about the process of what we have done; we have just been more structured in our decision making. CI&I has given us structure and made sure we haven't missed out important steps along the way."

"Each of the producers has done a financial business analysis on an annual basis and this has helped to set their target and direction. We have also done a financial analysis on the impact of implemented changes which has been really valuable."

Phil values the financial analysis to help determine the profitability of their beef business "Because costs have risen so much in the past few years it has become essential to know our cost of production to know what sale price we need to achieve to be a profitable business".

Mark Scott believes in BPPs

Mark Scott is a busy man, but the huge appeal that being part of a BPP group presented was too good an offer to pass up.

Mark Scott is passionate about beef. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the Nannup BPP group in July 2010. The group shares a common passion for beef production but has spread their risk through a variety of secondary enterprises ranging from stud cattle, to tulip farming to farm stay accommodation.

Mark and Catherine Scott farm on 425 ha at Nannup, in the South West of Western Australia, with a rainfall of 860mm. The beef enterprise occupies 350 ha with the remainder dedicated to the production of stone, pome and citrus fruit. They spend ten months of the year picking, packing and delivering fruit while also managing to run 210 breeders, selling 140 calves to the domestic abattoirs and 55 calves to lot feeders or to the live export market.

Mark was driven to establish the Nannup BPP group to improve his beef business. "We want continual improvement in our beef business through the identification of the drivers of profit," Mark said. "I believe the BPP group will be instrumental in allowing our business to evolve and remain viable into the future".

While the group is not yet a year old they have already set about trying to establish a common base line to measure performance. "Measuring the cost of production in the first few meetings has opened the eyes of the members of our group," Mark said. "As a result I realise that price per kilo has a greater effect on overall profit than any associated costs".

Others in the group have made dramatic changes as a result of completing their cost of

production. "One of the Nannup BPP members has completely changed the way he markets his young beef animals after calculating his cost of production," group facilitator Julianne Hill said.

The group has identified pasture management as a key area to focus on. Mark has begun using a plate metre to measure pre and post grazing feed on offer (FOO). "It is important to put some hard figures on what we are doing. By measuring pre and post grazing FOO we can ensure we make the most of our pastures by getting the rotation speed right. We want to be able to improve utilisation but not to the point of overgrazing," Mark said.

Mark believes the Nannup BPP will be integral to sharpening his focus on the beef side of his business in future. "I see this group as a fantastic forum for benchmarking. I hope down the track we can compare what we do with other beef enterprises in this high rainfall area. I would love to know the figures associated with the various production types, be it milk fed vealers or feeder steer production, and how what we do compares," he said.

Mark Scott (foreground) is passionate about beef



The New Zealand experience

The initial pilot program (funded by Beef + Lamb New Zealand) run in the Gisborne and Wairoa areas of the East Cape of the North Island was a logical place to gauge the likely success of this program. Strong cattle country with high rainfall and year-round grass production were key ingredients to the attractiveness of this BPP pilot study. Unfortunately unseasonal droughts for two of the three years made analysis of some of the project results difficult and hampered the start.

Nine passionate beef producers volunteered their operations to be put under the spotlight with the sole aim of making more profit from beef. These farmers were of large scale and comprised 17,500 head of cattle on 18000 hectares of land.

An external consultant was employed to help the farmers determine their starting points and plan their strategies for making more money. Ideas were captured in a group facilitated discussion and initiatives were evaluated. The farmers decided to group these into three main areas: Great Potential, Potential and Limited Potential.

Initiatives with great potential included:

- Yard Weaning – restricted feeding of calves for 4 to 7 days on high protein diets
- Feeding Supplements in Droughts - feeding young animals high protein to keep them going rather than take a growth check as feed quality falls away
- Flight Time – effect of calming the stock down, more grazing time less stress time be measured in the yards.
- Artificial insemination in beef heifers with high EBV semen – lifting the genetic potential component, reduce calving spread and stem the gap from stud herd to commercials.

Activity that was seen to have potential were:

- Electronic Tags – performance recording
- North Face Sabbatical – leaving the sensitive north faces to grow tag through the summer months to have better clover and organic matter build up with a microclimate
- Crossbreeding – utilizing the F1 hybrid for faster growth rates

- Cow Efficiency – increasing calf weaning weight and calving %
- Higher Plane of Nutrition – aiming to improve growth rate and feed conversion ratios with better quality of feed
- Early Weaning – in times of feed shortage reducing the burden on cows and give more time for them to recover condition score.

One topic raised but thought to have limited potential was twinning.

Each of the farms tried a selection of these options with the overall aim of lifting their beef productivity and profitability by 5% per annum. Results are still being collated but the most notable result was the benefit of yard weaning where the calves were achieving 0.8 to 1.1 kg of liveweight gain per day from the practice compared to the normal loss in condition. Whilst this was not a new concept in New Zealand, it was a much needed reminder of the tools available to farmers. A main conclusion was that these practices are not silver bullets by themselves but a part of a toolbox of options.

Early weaning was another option that was explored with very beneficial impacts for beef farmers. The prevalence of drought conditions particularly on the east coast of both islands necessitates the use of every tool available to ensure good feed conversion ratios and optimal growth. Life time performance of the beef herd was a conclusion that many of the BPP farmers found themselves gravitating towards. The first sets of measurements around this are only just coming in but are certainly worthy of further investigation.

Farmers attending the annual field days saw the pilot study to be of value to their business. As a result, Beef + Lamb New Zealand deemed this to be an extension program of value to farmers and consequently was expanded to four programs in October 2010.



A Facilitator's Point of View



Maria Crawford, Victorian State Co-ordinator in the BPP project

Maria Crawford is the facilitator of the Hamilton BPP group in Victoria as well as the Victorian state representative on the BPP Project's Management Team. These roles give Maria an insight into the needs of producer members in BPPs as well as what is needed to manage a project that goes across state boundaries. Following is Maria's reflections on what it takes to facilitate a successful BPP.

Facilitating a group of inspiring, determined beef producers with a real desire to improve their bottom line, test new technologies and be innovative is always going to be a challenge. It's certainly a challenge for me but, it's the same for the participants in the group. No one gets away with not contributing, everyone is engaged, supported and peer reviewed.

A BPP meeting requires detailed planning. When run effectively those meetings are quite structured and require familiarising yourself as a facilitator with participant's current focuses, where they are within their decision-making cycle and potential outcomes. The facilitator also needs to be a font of knowledge on a range of issues such as the current market situation, how much bulls made at the recent sales and where the rain fell that week.

The benefits of a structured session are many though and are very outcome focused. Group members go away having learnt something they will use if not now but at a later time. They develop an understanding of their key drivers affecting their profitability and the importance of knowing their cost of production to make considered changes to their business. Seeing businesses progress and make substantial changes based on a sound decision-making

process is a very satisfying reward for the facilitator's effort.

The annual cost of production and farm economic performance session is always one of my favourites. This session regularly produces robust discussion around the cause and effect of enterprise cost of production and how to keep on improving it for next year. As the group becomes more familiar with each other there is much more critiquing of each others' decisions, resulting in much more beneficial outcomes.

Occasionally the group decides they would like to go on tour, whether that is to a beef producer doing something noteworthy, such as being in the top 20% for kgs of beef produced per hectare or to a feedlot. These are always interesting, targeted, thought provoking and fun days. Even the best laid plans go wrong though, generally around a lack of time and food. We can never fit enough into one day and I'm always amazed at how the questions keep coming and the discussion never stops.

One of the key parts of the national BPP program is the networking available to facilitators across the participating states. The communication between other BPP facilitators whether they be in Western Australia, northern NSW or NZ is always beneficial. Although we may be grappling with different environments, different markets, different issues, there is always commonality to be found around facilitating a group of producers in a BPP. The collaboration and guidance provided by other facilitators is incredibly valuable along with the back up provided by the Beef CRC.



Legacy Left by BPPs to Live On

As a testament to the success of the Beef Profit Partnership (BPP) program, New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand have vowed to continue supporting the existing network of groups, even in the absence of the Beef CRC. The strategies for supporting these groups are as varied as their geographic location, but the common denominator is the resolve of the State Managers to keep up the momentum and success created by the BPP project.

NSW currently has four groups containing 43 beef businesses and they are managed by private beef consultant, Bill Hoffman of Hoffman Beef Consulting. Bill commenced working with the groups in his time with the NSW DPI and continued facilitating them upon leaving the DPI and starting his own consulting business. He has plans to expand his network of beef groups.

“My plans are to get between 50 and 60 beef businesses represented and handle that within five groups. If I need to have a sixth group then I will. One area where I hope to extend and start a new group is in the northern rivers area of NSW,” Bill said.

Until now the delivery cost was shared between the Beef CRC and group members. With producers determined to keep the groups functioning, with Bill as the facilitator, a sponsorship model was developed which will fill the financial void left by the CRC’s withdrawal.

“We either needed to double the membership fees or replace the CRC money with commercial sponsors. At the moment we have been successful in raising enough money from

sponsors so that membership fees have largely stayed the same,” Bill said.

Sponsorship is marketed to businesses with the promise that their involvement with the groups will result in stronger relationships with progressive beef producers. There is a four tiered sponsorship package with exposure and advertising varying according to the level of financial contribution.

“Our initial call for sponsors has delivered a fantastic result with Pfizer Animal Health coming on board as a gold level sponsor and Practical Systems, Rabobank, Ebor Beef Incorporated and Grazag Agri Supplies as silver sponsors,” Bill said.

Across the Tasman, Beef + Lamb New Zealand are throwing their full support behind the groups started under the BPP project. The four groups, two located in the north island and two in the south, will have the full financial backing of Beef + Lamb NZ, a farmer levy-funded organisation, and will be facilitated by private consultants. Gary Walton, Extension and Uptake Manager, has been very happy with the progress the groups have made in the two years they have been operating.

“We like the model. It certainly appeals to the practice change part of the business. We will continue to use Continuous Improvement and Innovation (CI & I) as the focus and we have an overall aim of a 5% per annum net return to the bottom line. How they go about that is up to the individuals at the participant farm level,” Gary said.

The groups are motivated to meet the 5% increase in profitability as individuals failing to

meet the target after two years are removed from the group and replaced.

“Being levy funded there is an absolute requirement for us to deliver and meet our targets as we are using producers’ money. Our future is voted on every five years through the Commodity Levies Act,” Gary said.

Although Beef + Lamb New Zealand will be absorbing all the costs of these groups, their direction is steered by the farmer council in each region.

“Last year we established a regional delivery plan where farmers in the regions are steered by a farmer council that determines which activities are undertaken. The number of groups can fluctuate depending on the desire of the farmer council in the region to expand or contract,” Gary said.

The BPP model has been so successful that it is currently being trialled in the New Zealand sheep industry using the same structure and profitability targets.

Victoria has three groups that commenced under the BPP model. Until now they have been serviced by DPI development officers. As the CRC winds down the plan for these groups is to merge them into a network-based model called BetterBeef. Tim Hollier, from the Victorian DPI believes the transition for these groups into BetterBeef will be very smooth.

“BetterBeef was launched late last year and it has two entry points, either producers’ groups, of which we currently have 22, or associate membership which allows producers access to activities such as field days, conferences and also the fortnightly electronic newsflash,” he said.

The members of the BetterBeef groups will pay a standard per group price to cover the cost of delivery. This strategy gives group members an incentive to keep their numbers up to reduce the cost per business. Additional funds are provided from Victorian DPI and activities are supported by Meat and Livestock Australia’s More Beef from Pastures program.

The funding gives the BetterBeef groups the capacity to select their coordinator from either private industry or the Victorian DPI.

“We provide groups with the curriculum vitae of private consultants and DPI staff who can coordinate the facilitation and technical delivery to the group. Once chosen, the coordinator is then chartered to develop an annual plan of what the group is going to address. We will also be requiring the groups to have an economic analysis as a key aspect of the BPP program,” Tim said.

Over in the west, the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) is also planning on continuing the support of the nine groups started in the BPP program. Beef project manager Sue-Ellen Shaw has been thrilled with the success of the BPP groups but will be making a few minor changes.

“We will be moving to a part user-pays model and DAFWA will continue to provide assistance through facilitation and technical delivery. If our producers value the process of being involved in a group we don’t believe they will have any issue with group membership fees,” she said.

While the groups are currently being supported by DAFWA staff, Sue-Ellen admits the large geographic area over which the beef industry is spread stretches the capacity of her staff to develop more groups.

“What we need to do is work on building the capacity of industry and have a more collaborative approach if we are to increase the size of our group network,” she said.

The BPP project, along with its funding, will shortly cease to exist. However, its ethos of making and measuring change is a wonderful legacy left to the network of groups and appears set to continue.

To find out more about the BPPs in each State, including how to join, contact your local BPP State Co-ordinator.

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