

A lush area of Silky Bluegrass *Dichanthium sericeum* growing near Murtoa, Victoria. This grass has excellent pasture qualities.

Grazing benefits of native pasture

Native grass pastures provide high quality, low cost grazing because they are nutritious, require no fertilizer and are self seeding. They help maintain healthy soils, suppress weeds and provide valuable summer feed^{1,2}.

Comprising a variety of grass species, native pastures can provide green pickings all year, particularly during summer. This is important for maintaining healthy sheep, but also in maintaining the high tensile strength of wool grown from native pastures.

Stock gain a variety of nutrients and trace elements by grazing on the different plants in native pasture. There are also anti-bacterial and anti-parasitic benefits with native pasture. For example, sheep on native pasture require drenching less frequently.

Changing grazing patterns to promote native pastures, including rotation grazing to allow recovery, can lead to improvements in overall carrying capacity and profitability.

Investigations into the production values of native pasture have shown that a summer

active grass such as Red Grass *Bothriochloa marca* can yield benefits such as:

- production of up to 10.4 tonnes/ ha
- crude protein levels of 4 – 15%
- digestibility of 48 – 59%³

**For more information contact
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¹ Crouch, C. 2005. *Tangible benefits of Native Vegetation*. Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.

² Langford C. et al, 2004. *Managing Native Pastures for Agriculture and Conservation*. NSW DPI.

³ Mitchell, M. 2003. Native Grasses: an example of using on-farm biodiversity. *Proceedings of the Conference on Rural Land Use Change*. DSE.



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