P.O. Box 353
Franklin,
Tasmania 7113
M: 0418 532130
E: graemehand9@gmail.com
W:www.handfortheland.com

Developing Safe to Fail Practice Areas and Strips

By Graeme Hand

Management

Using grazing management to regenerate pastures and native grasslands is complex and requires safe to fail practice areas[1] to determine the combinations of stock density and perennial grass recoveries that increase landscape function. Once these combinations are observed then fencing and water can be developed to suit. Flexibility in number and size of paddocks and water points is critical for success.

Steps

- Fence off practice areas or strips and allow to grow for most of the growing season.
- Take photos and complete soil surface monitoring
- Put animals at the suggested density into an area or strip and graze deeply while maintaining ground cover (usually 2-3 hours). See photos of density and ground cover post grazing.
- Take photos of before, during and after grazing.
- Lock up the area or strip for the planned recovery time.
- Repeat including photos and soil surface monitoring

Practice Area Design

- Low cost and simple
- Can use current infrastructure or can be fenced off corners of paddock or temporary electric fencing strips
- Minimum of 3 sites is usually required on most farms at 3-month, 6-month and 12-month recoveries
- Small areas so only tempted to graze as planned.
- Secure to contain “yard” densities (>10,000 DSE/ha or 3000cows/ha) for short periods of time – see photos
- Easy to monitor

P.O. Box 353
Franklin,
Tasmania 7113
M: 0418 532130
E: graemehand9@gmail.com
W:www.handfortheland.com

Areas and fence length for yard density

Safe to Fail Practice Area Design Cattle			
Number of Cattle	Stock density Cows/ha	Area m^2	Fence length/side m
10	3000	33	6
20	3000	67	8
50	3000	167	13
100	3000	333	18
200	3000	667	26
500	3000	1667	41
1000	3000	3333	58
2000	3000	6667	82

Safe to Fail Practice Area Design Sheep			
Number of Sheep	Stock density DSE/ha	Area m^2	Fence length/side m
10	10,000	10	3
20	10,000	20	4
50	10,000	50	7
100	10,000	100	10
200	10,000	200	14
500	10,000	500	22
1,000	10,000	1,000	32
2,000	10,000	2,000	45
3,000	10,000	3,000	55

Photos of required stock density

Source: Peter Raynolds

P.O. Box 353
Franklin,
Tasmania 7113
M: 0418 532130
E: graemehand9@gmail.com
W:www.handfortheland.com

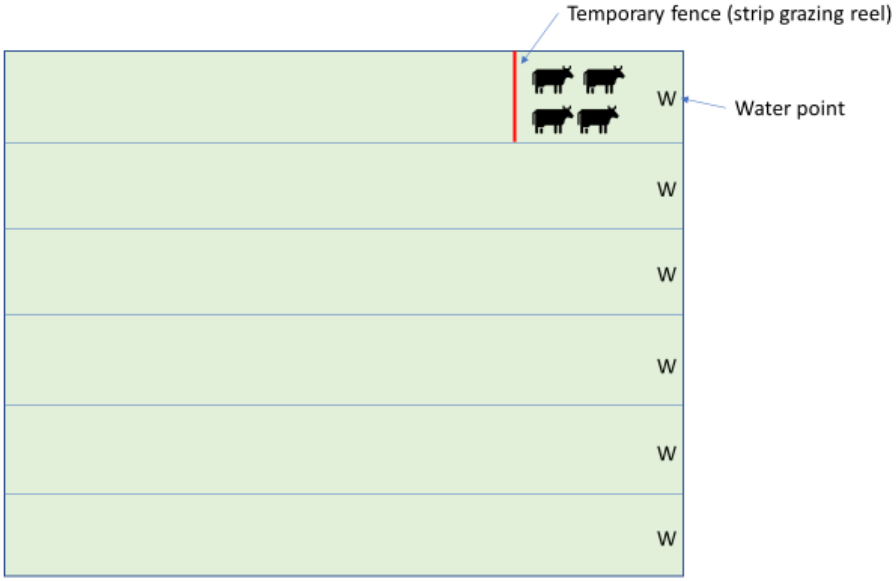
2. Perennial grasses fully recovered

- **Practice Areas**
- Animals monitored closely
- Soil surface left covered
- Couple of practice areas with a range of recoveries

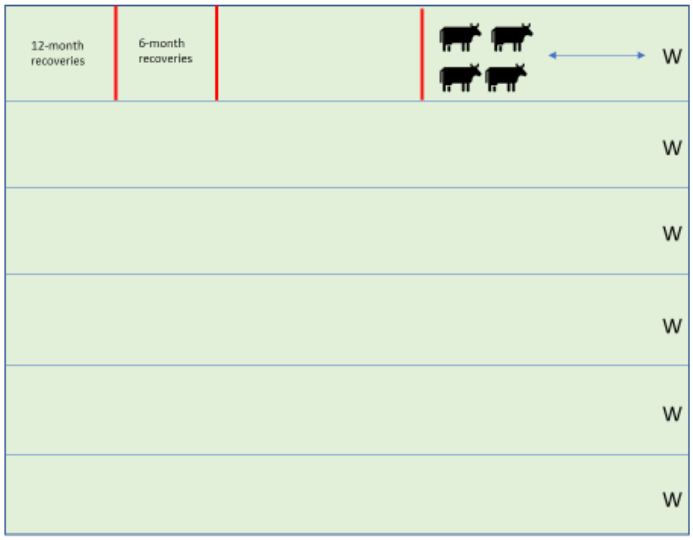
79

Strip Fencing design

End of strip for 12-month recoveries, next break back 6 months etc



P.O. Box 353
Franklin,
Tasmania 7113
M: 0418 532130
E: graemehand9@gmail.com
W:www.handfortheland.com



Monitoring

Photos across the paddock and showing ground surface and actual stock density are taken before and after. Soil surface monitoring using the biological and landscape function monitoring form with suggested corrective action can be useful.

References:

1. Snowden, D and Boone, M (2007) A leader's framework for decision making, Harvard Business Review pp. 68–76
2. Savory A., Butterfield J., 1999, Holistic Management: A New Framework for Decision-Making, Island Press
3. Hand, G., 2010, Regenerating Native Grasslands, STIPA Newsletter, Number 44, August 2010,