

## Trial Sites Wanted!

The North Central CMA is developing two funding proposals for the Australian Government's *Action on the Ground* program. **We only have a short time frame to submit our application (as per the funding guidelines) and we need your help!**

The proposed projects have been designed as on-farm trials and demonstration of practices and technologies that will reduce agricultural sector greenhouse gas emissions and/or increase carbon stored in the soil.

	Project 1 - Restoring soil health	Project 2 - Improving on-farm nitrogen use
<b>Why?</b>	Weedy pastures, poor animal performance and soil health issues are common problems facing livestock producers. Increasing ground cover, perennial grasses and diversity of pastures species can overcome these issues and improve grazing profitability.	Nitrogen from fertiliser and legume crops is at risk of large potential losses by either natural conversion into greenhouse gases or by leaching into waterways. Such losses are a waste of money, productivity and pose a serious threat to the environment.
<b>What?</b>	We are seeking up to ten pasture sites across the North Central CMA region to demonstrate 'planned grazing' as a method of increasing grazing profitability and soil carbon levels. Planned grazing is a structured way of using animals to regenerate pasture and grassland, and to improve soil health and grazing profitability. The idea is to put lots of animals into a small area for a short time, then remove them and let the area recover before returning the animals again. The practice has the potential to significantly reduce costs while improving the land's ability to respond to seasonal and climate changes. Other benefits we hope to demonstrate include: higher levels of perennial grass, dry matter cover, diversity of grass species and improved landscape functioning (soil stability, water infiltration and nutrient cycling).	We are seeking three farms within the North Central region to demonstrate options for improved nitrogen use efficiency and greenhouse gas (nitrous oxide) abatement: irrigated dairy, broadacre cropping and mixed farming. Soil and fertiliser management strategies for nitrous oxide abatement and improved nitrogen use efficiency may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• slow release coated fertilisers and nitrification inhibitor sprays</li> <li>• matching nitrogen supply to crop/pasture demand, for example, nutrient budgets and split fertiliser applications</li> <li>• improved soil structure by reducing water-logging and compaction</li> <li>• stubble management</li> </ul>
<b>How?</b>	Trial sites will be selected using these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small area of pasture (less than 0.5 hectare)</li> <li>• Mob of animals (approx 500 sheep or the equivalent in cows, goats, etc – with the aim of getting stockyard density)</li> <li>• A suitable neighbouring paddock under current management practices, as a comparison.</li> <li>• Prepared to host the trial site until May 2015</li> <li>• Permission to hold field days and farm walks at the trial site.</li> </ul>	Trial sites will be selected using these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One each of irrigated dairy pasture, broadacre crop or a pasture site</li> <li>• A suitable neighbouring paddock under current management practices, for comparison</li> <li>• Prepared to host the trial site until May 2015</li> <li>• Permission to hold field days and farm walks at the trial site.</li> </ul>

**All the trial set-up and monitoring costs would be covered by the project.**

**To register your interest by 10 am Monday 6 February 2012 contact either Joel Spry or Ashley Beven by:**

1. Phone: (03) 5448 7124
2. Email: [info@nccma.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@nccma.vic.gov.au)
3. Mail: North Central CMA, PO Box 18, Huntly VIC 3551.

**Please include:**

- Entity name
- Property name
- Address
- Approximate area of trial site
- Details of the site (current management, soil condition, rainfall, stocking rate, crop/pasture yields).