

meatup FORUM

For the latest in red meat R&D

Grazing decision making in variable rangeland environments

Tanisha Shields

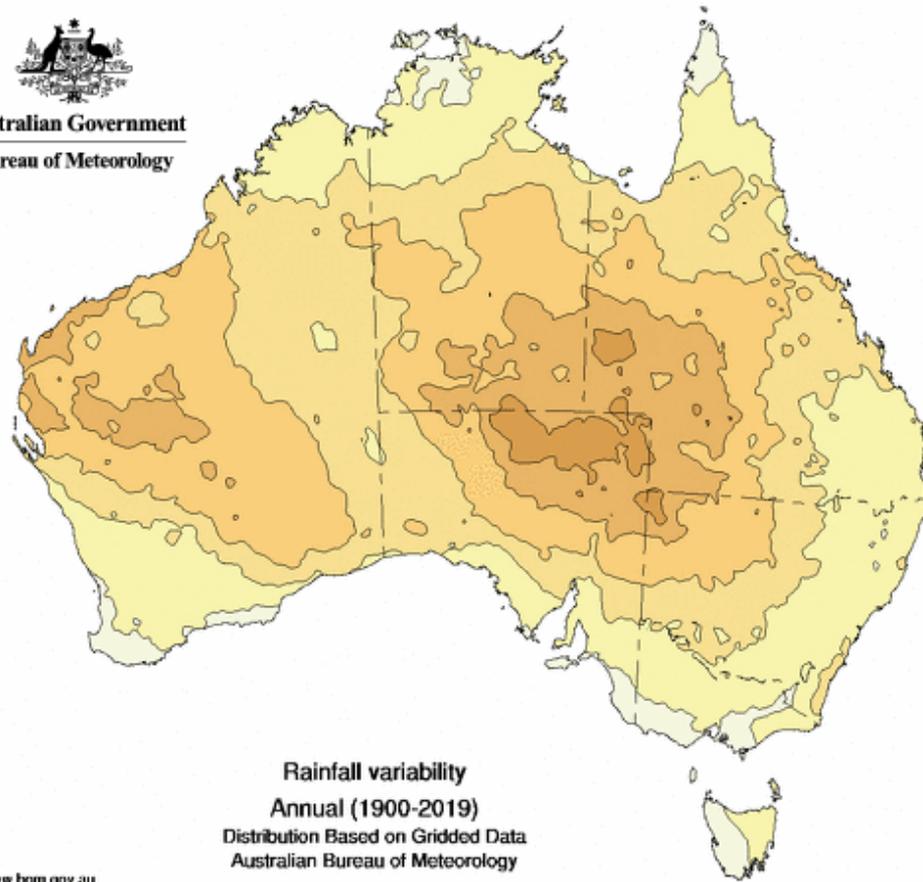
Agrista

Variability is the only constant.

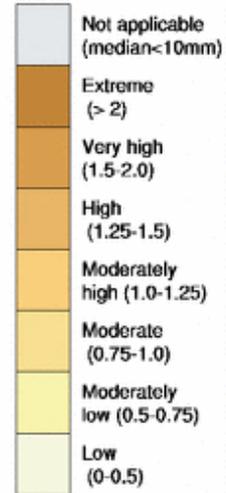




Australian Government
Bureau of Meteorology



Index of variability



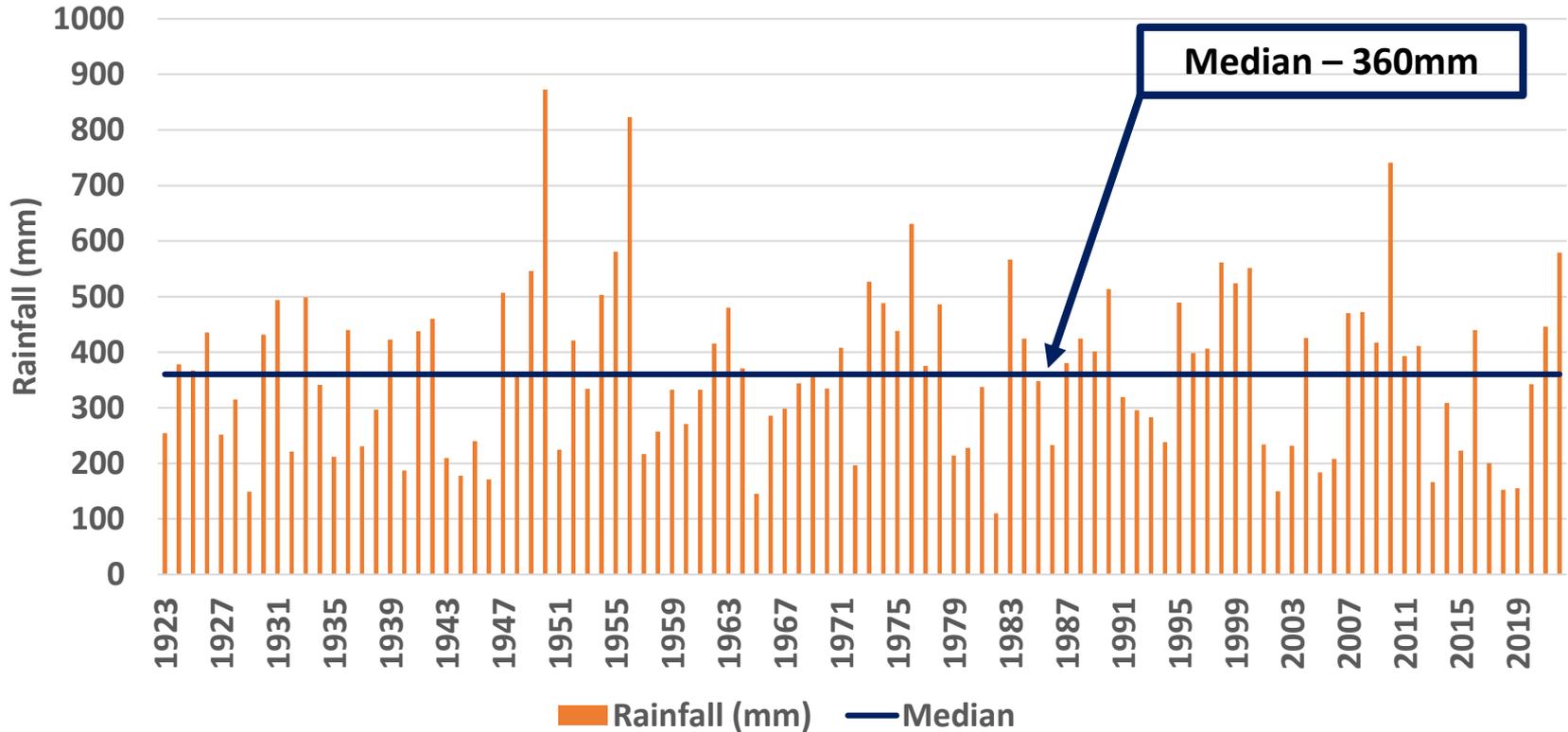
Rainfall variability
Annual (1900-2019)
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Australian Bureau of Meteorology

<http://www.bom.gov.au>

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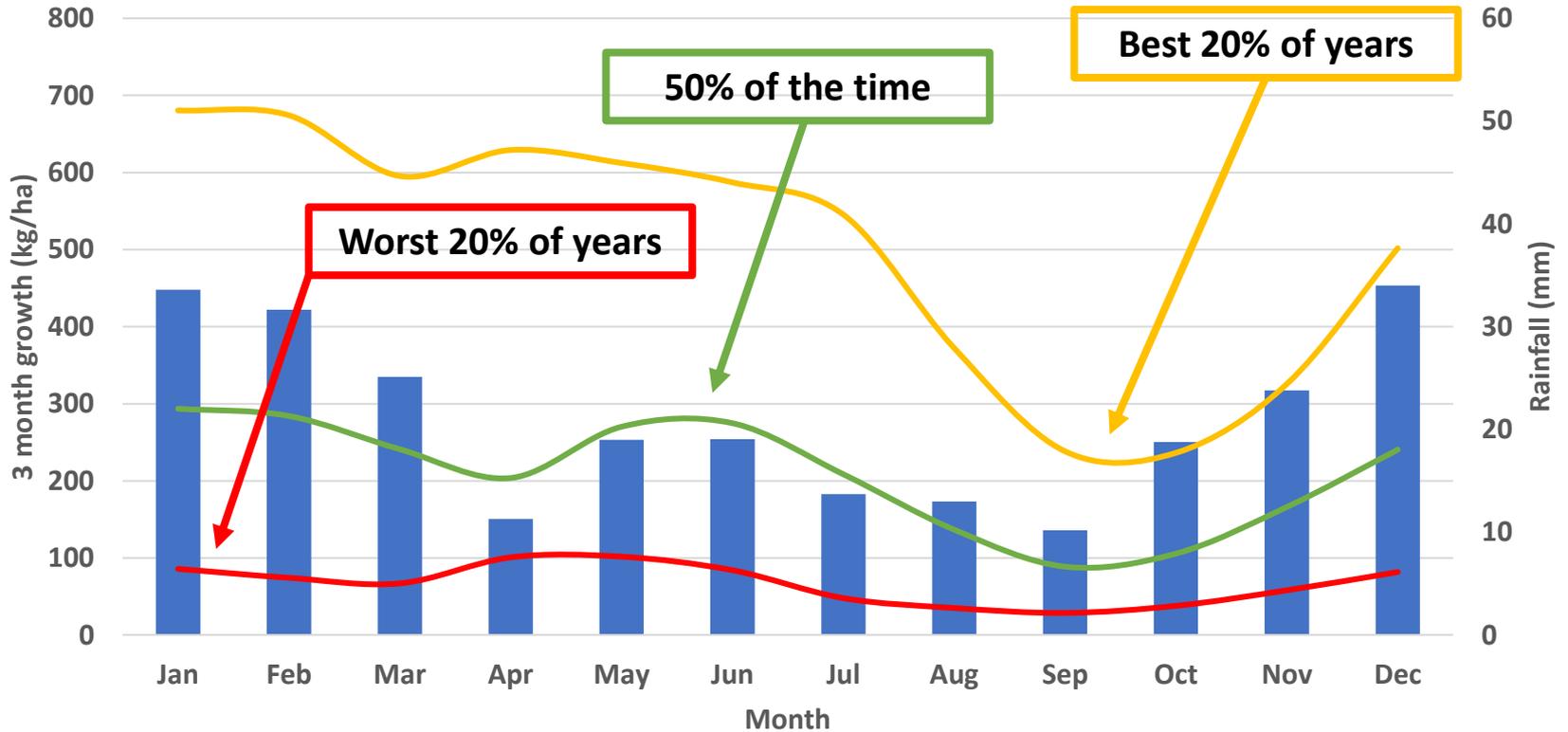
Annual Rainfall - Warrego Plains



3 years of difference



Warrego Plains Pasture Growth



■ Median Rainfall
 — Median
 — 20th Percentile
 — 80th Percentile

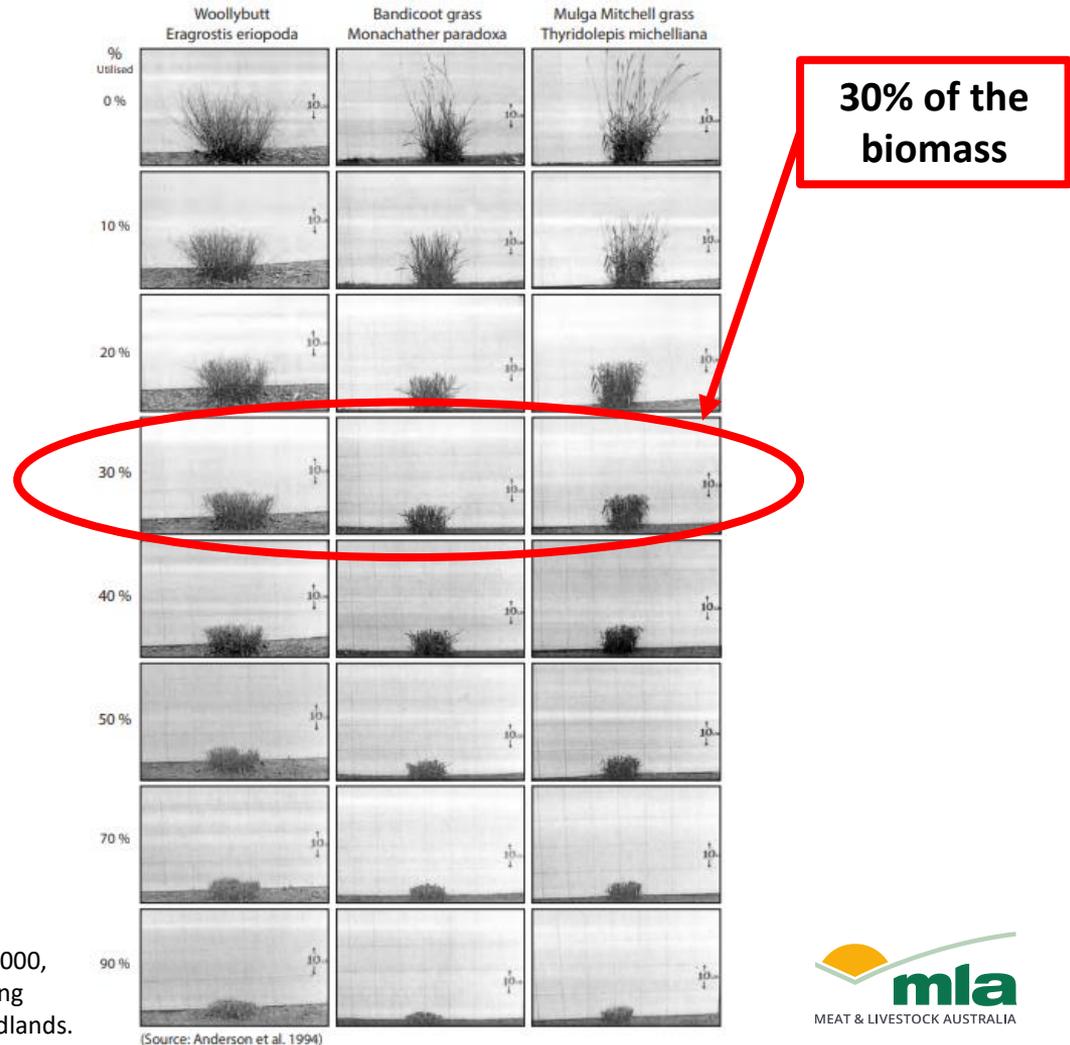
Benefits of perennials in pasture

- Productive rangeland pastures have a diverse mix of species.
- Rainfall is becoming more variable and less reliable.
- Pasture needs to be able to respond to rainfall at any time of year.
- Diversity of species allows this response to occur.

Having pastures 'conditioned'

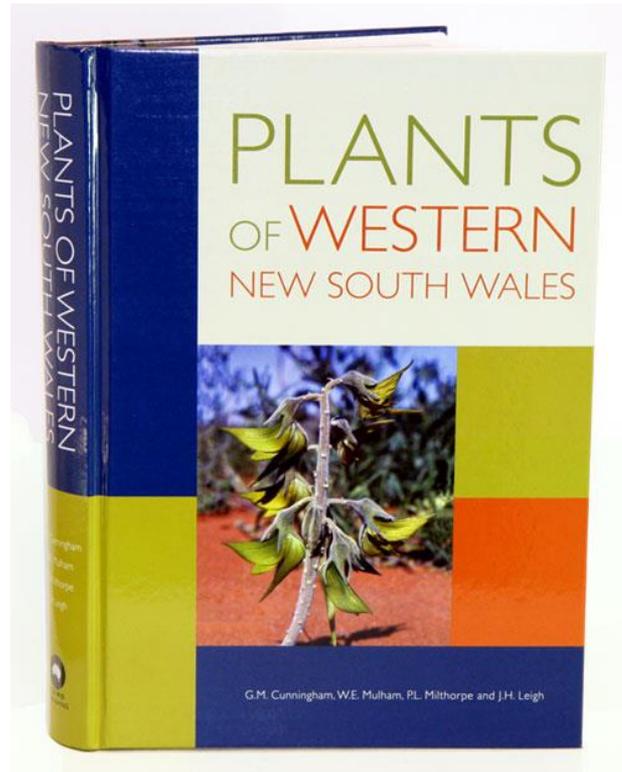


Palatable Productive Perennials

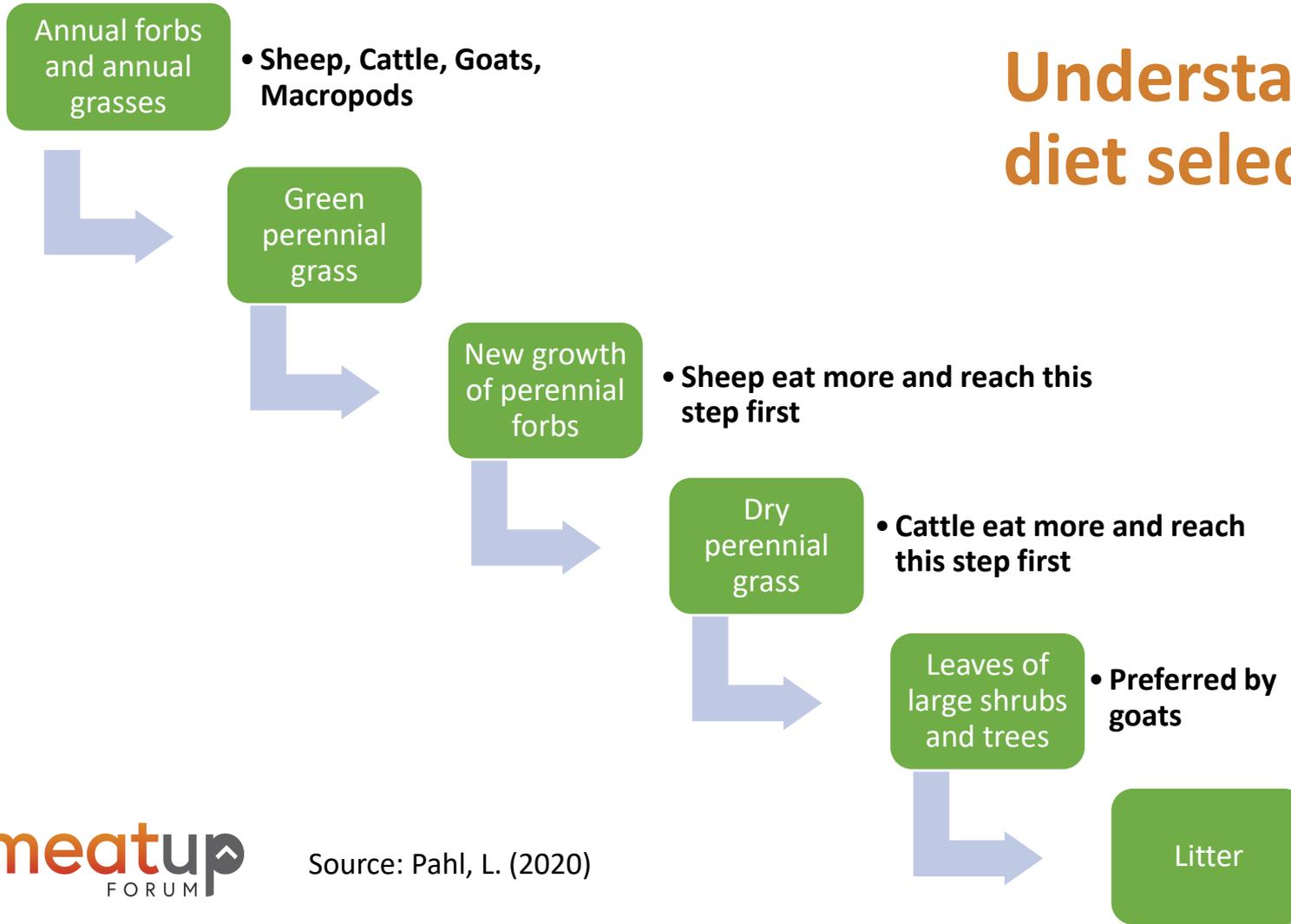


Get to know your key perennials

- Plant ID books
- Online resources
- Local knowledge



Understanding diet selectivity

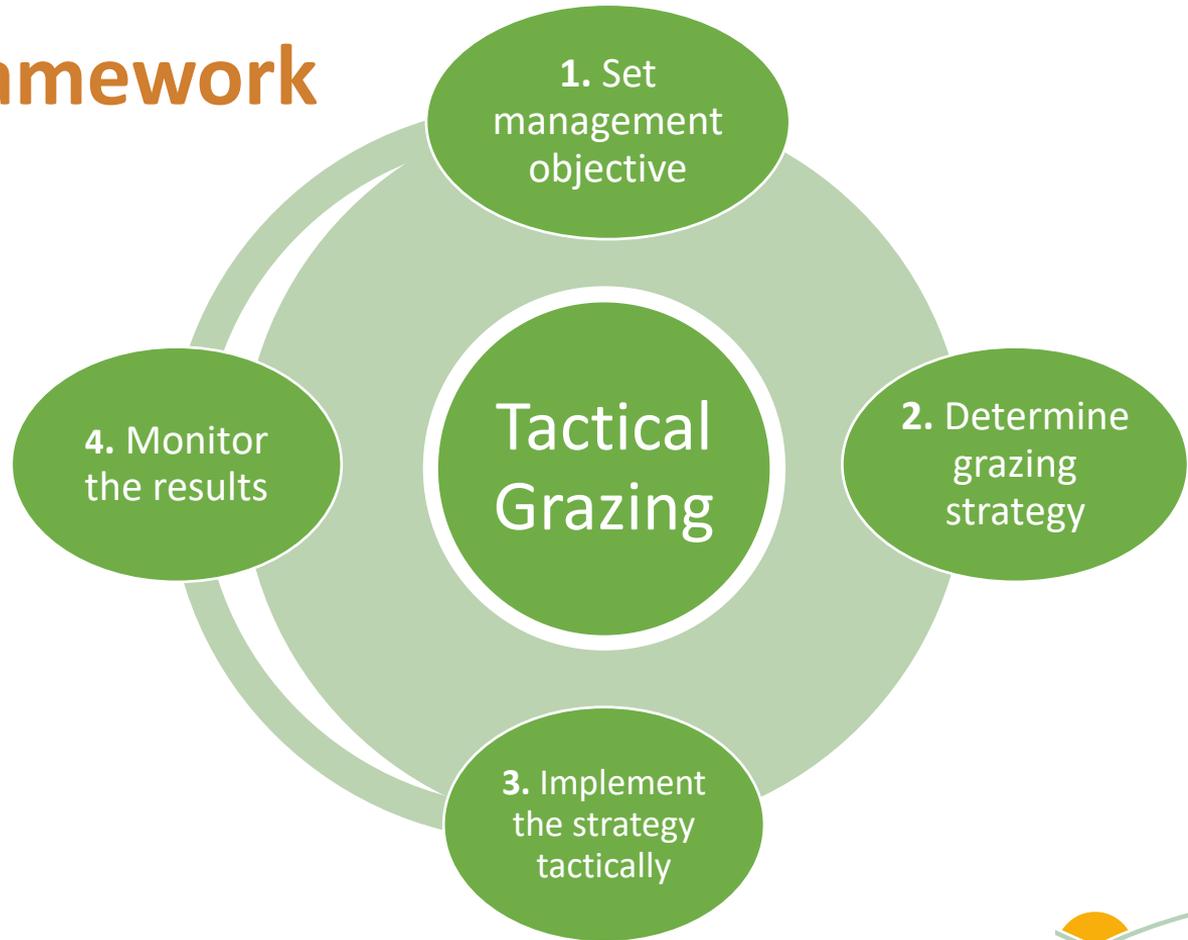


Trade-offs

There can be short-term trade-offs between pasture production and animal production in grazing management.

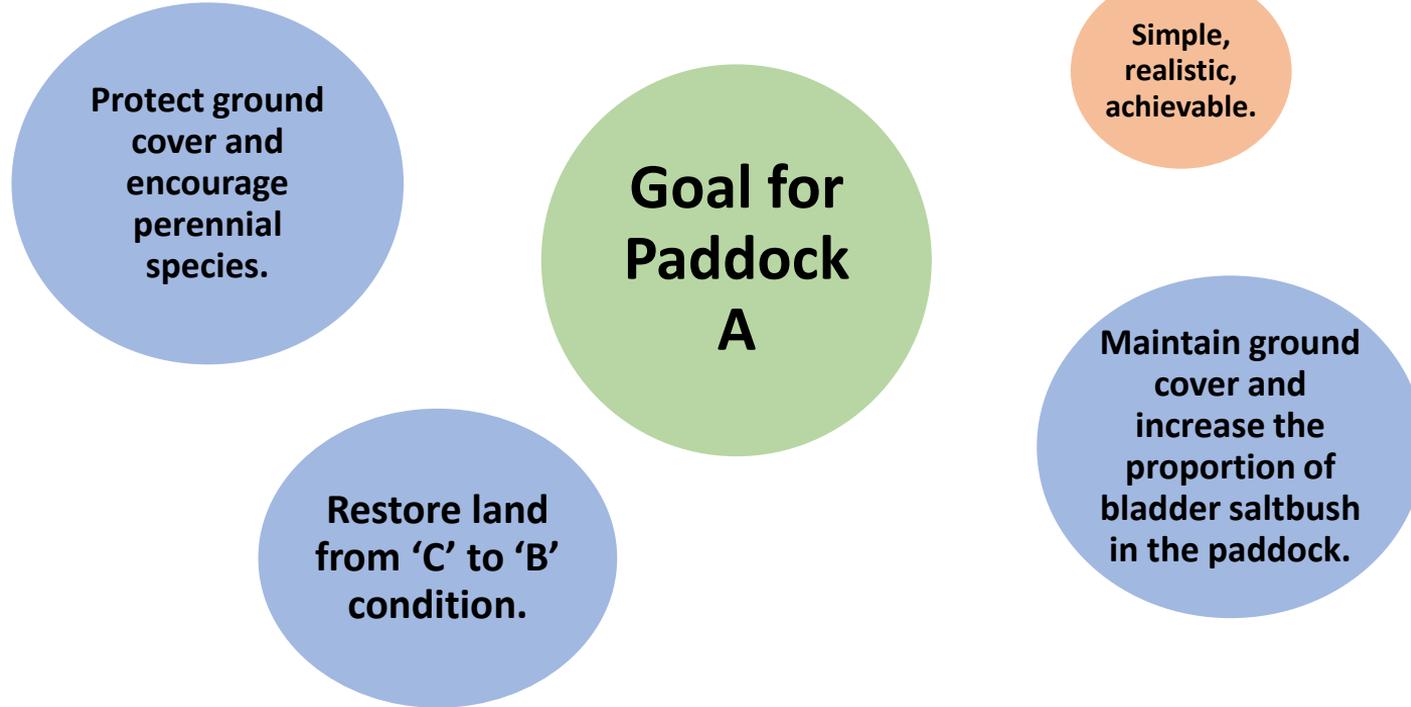


A decision framework



Source: Campbell, T and Hacker, R 2000,
The glove box guide to tactical grazing
management for the semi-arid woodlands.
NSW Department of Primary Industries.

1. Set management objective



2. Determine grazing strategies

Grazing Strategy 1

- Maintain a minimum of 50% ground cover.

Grazing strategy 2

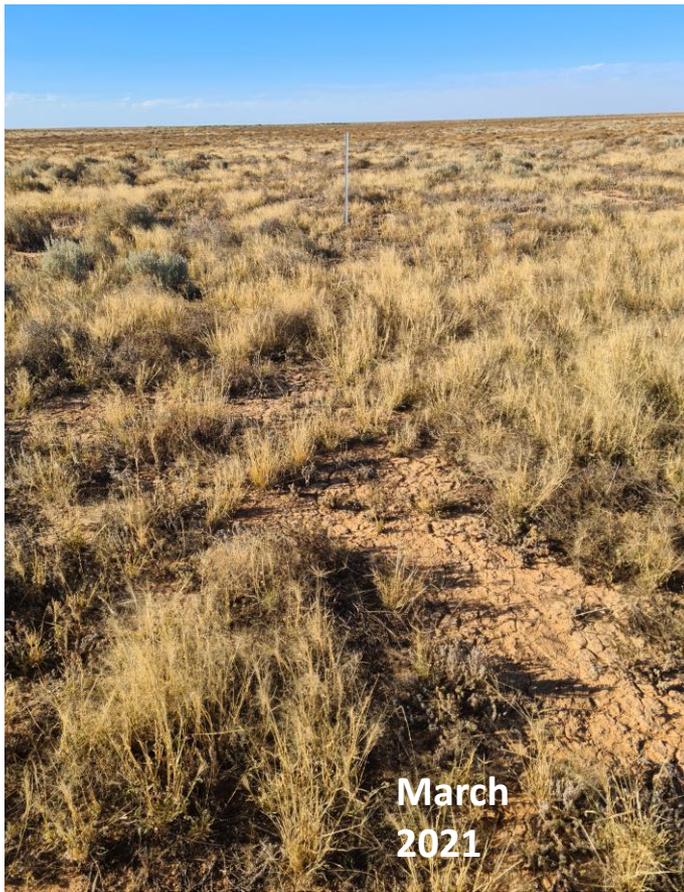
- Monitor for evidence of grazing on perennial saltbush and remove pressure when this occurs.

Grazing strategy 3

- Do not exceed 30% utilisation of key perennial grasses.

3. Implement the strategy





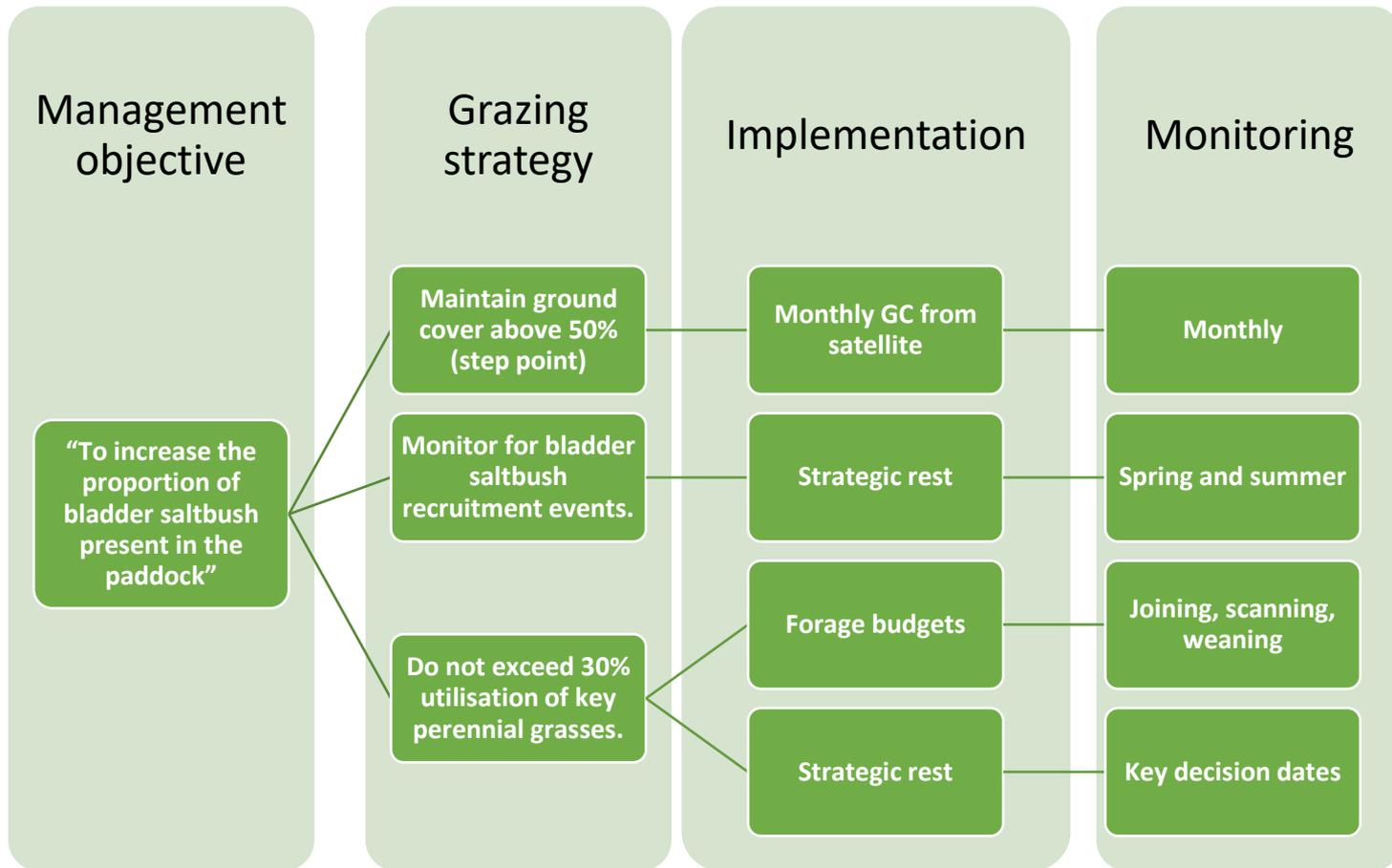
March
2021



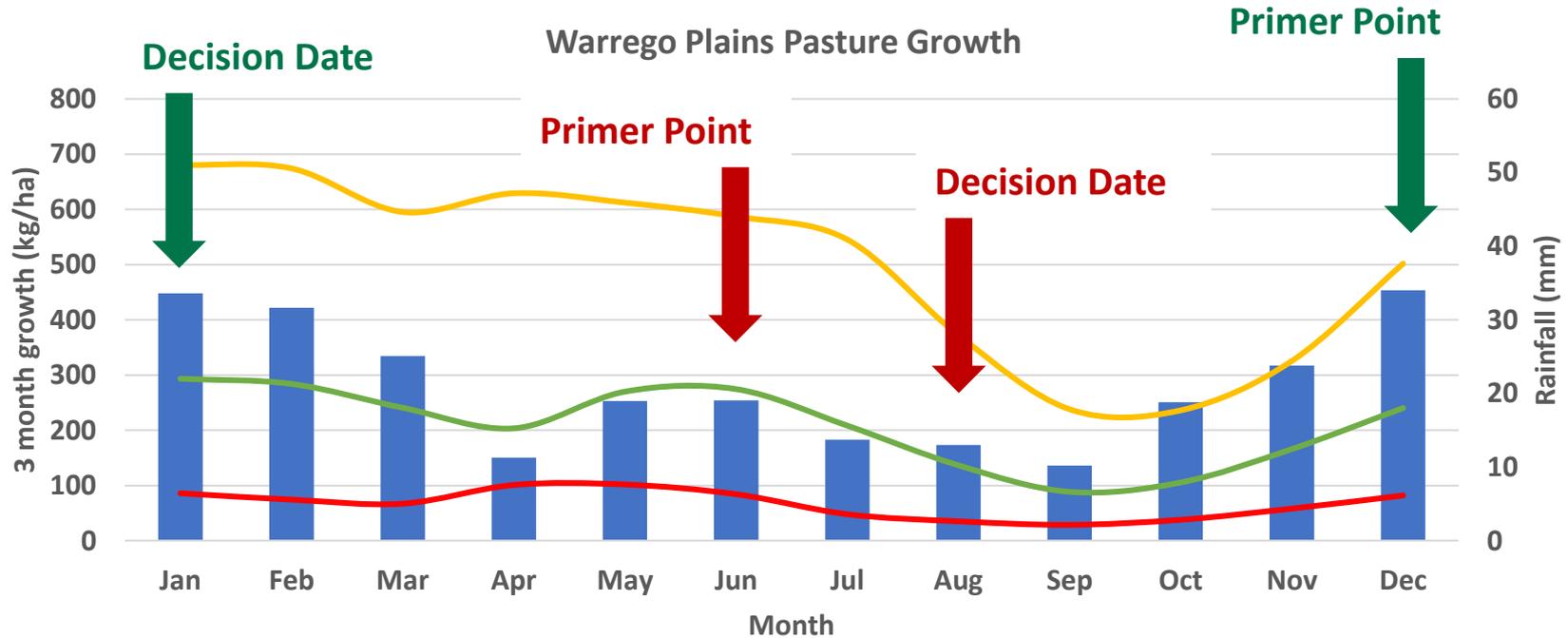
March
2022

4. Monitor the results

Tactical grazing in practice



Decision dates



■ Median Rainfall
 — Median
 — 20th Percentile
 — 80th Percentile

To get involved

- Improving Tactical Decision Making
- Developed by NSW DPI and Western LLS



Participants in the program are:

- Assessing pasture quality
- Matching pasture supply with demand from livestock
- Promoting key species
- Assessing pasture quantity
- Identifying and targeting rest

Take home messages

- Trends in pasture growth provide a guide for making decisions.
- Focus on having a diverse mix of palatable, productive, perennial species.
- Identify key decision dates to assist your grazing management.

Tools and resources

- MLA Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS)
<https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/profitable-grazing-systems/>
- Glove Box Guide to Tactical Grazing Management for the semi-arid woodlands
<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pastures-and-rangelands/rangelands/publications-and-information/glovebox-tactical-grazing-mgt>
- Making More from Sheep – Module 12: Efficient pastoral production
<https://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/module-index.html>
- AussieGRASS
<https://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/aussiegrass/>