

Grazing and regenerating degraded land, Goondicum Station, Central Queensland Case study



Fast facts

Location: Goondicum Station, Central Queensland

Property size: 7,000 hectares

Carbon farming methods: Human-induced regeneration and avoided clearing of native regrowth

Project collaborators: Nadia & Robert Campbell – Goondicum Pastoral Co. owners, GreenCollar, Burnett Mary Regional Group

Contract Period: 25-year permanence period

beef cattle property owned and operated by the Campbell family for over 150 years. It is now home to one of Queensland's largest carbon farming projects which will see the Campbell family increase total tree coverage on the property to 20 per cent. The diversification has brought about a new form of income that is paying for improvements to the environment whilst allowing sustainable and profitable cattle grazing.

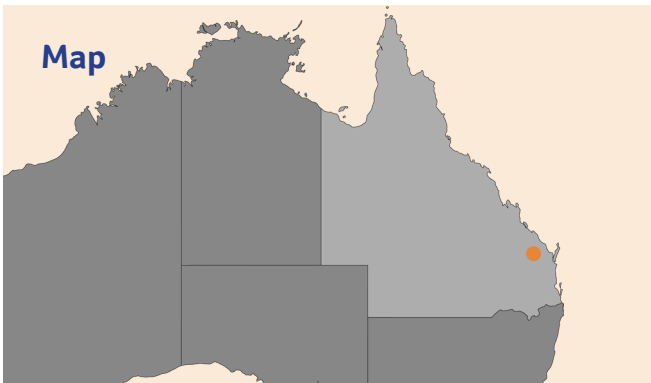
CREATING HARMONY BETWEEN GRAZING AND LAND REGENERATION

During the 1920s–30s, many trees on the property were ring-barked (girdled) and cleared as was common practice in an era of different attitudes towards good farming practice.

In the 1950s the Campbell family looked to implement conservation practices on their property to combat soil-loss problems and a decline in habitat and biodiversity. Their approach was to return cleared grazing land to native forest, a carbon farming method which was ahead in thinking for that time and one that would ultimately lead to a better beef business. Land degeneration included loss of natural pasture and compacted soils with low moisture and nutrient levels.

Today's current owners of Goondicum Station, Nadia and Robert Campbell (Goondicum Pastoral Company, pictured on page 2), are passionate about raising cattle in a natural environment. As a result of their ongoing efforts they are producing high-quality, hormone-free and 100 per cent grass-fed beef for several major markets around the world. This has been achieved whilst having reduced stocking densities by 25 per cent to enable longer rest periods that encourage pasture, shrubs and trees to regenerate. Despite that, the Campbells are producing more kilos of meat now than 30 years ago and have built up valuable natural capital. This is attributed to the rich soils and better quality feed

Map



OVERVIEW

A multi-generational family of graziers in Central Queensland are garnering many benefits from their environmentally sustainable approach to beef farming through land regeneration and carbon farming practices.

Goondicum Station, located at the head of Burnett River near Monto in Central Queensland, is a 7,000 hectare





grasses due to carbon farming practices such as human-induced regeneration and avoiding clearing of native regrowth. Thinning processes and 'cool fires' to reduce fuel loads are used on the property to maintain a balance of trees and pasture and create an all-round healthier environment.

Thanks to a partnership between Burnett Mary Regional Group (the peak body for natural resource management within the Burnett Mary region), GreenCollar (an environmental markets investor and project developer) and the Goondicum Pastoral Company, Goondicum Station is able to generate carbon credits through the Federal Government's Emissions Reduction Fund. This is achieved by regenerating parts of the property where vegetation has previously been suppressed and by managing the timing and extent of grazing by their cattle - both methods increase carbon abatement and storage and prevent the release of emissions from clearing native vegetation.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The co-existence of grazing and increased tree cover has made Goondicum Station more profitable than ever, even with less cattle per hectare now compared to 25 years ago. The right balance between grazing and land regeneration has allowed Goondicum Pastoral Company to increase the commercial viability of its business. Paddocks with more trees grow better quality feed grasses than cleared land and lead to improved nutrition, healthier cattle and increased profit margins. This increased productivity allows Goondicum Pastoral Company to continue to invest in the ongoing conservation of their property which they fund with their own commercial profits and income generated from carbon credits.

Goondicum Station is also now experiencing healthier soils and native grass pastures, increased wildlife and wildlife habitat including some endangered species, as well as financial benefits from commercial timber. Goondicum hosts a long list of native bird, mammal, reptilian and aquatic wildlife, including the endangered glossy black cockatoo and vulnerable brush-tailed rock wallaby.

Educational investment has also been a focus for the business, with university students regularly visiting to observe and study the local wildlife residing on the property.

Learnings from Goondicum Pastoral Company's approach to environmentally sustainable farming are shared among other farmers and graziers to foster a long-term profitable agricultural industry, while regenerating natural resources and combatting climate change.

