

Capacity to Deliver

LP012-03

Winter Dung Beetles

Central Tablelands Landcare Inc



Schools and landholders working together to breed a winter active dung beetle, *Bubas bison*

The issue

There are over 400 species of dung beetles native to Australia but they only like burying the dung of native species.

We have 13 species of dung beetles in the Central Tablelands but they tend to be active in spring, summer and autumn.

What we need is a winter active dung beetle to help dispose of the cattle dung that sits on the surface of paddocks.

We also want to involve students in understanding the beneficial role that dung beetles have in farming systems by partnering them with a landowner who will also be hosting a beetle breeding nursery.

The solution

We received funding from NSW Environmental Trust education grants to run workshops, build nurseries and populate them with *Bubas bison*, an identified winter active dung beetle.

We invited Dr Bernard Doube, of Dung Beetle Solutions, to speak to almost 50 interested farmers and teachers about the benefits of dung beetles and, specifically, the benefits of the *Bubas bison*.

We then visited schools to show students about *Bubas bison*, how to set up a breeding nursery and 9 monitoring cores and how to record beetle data.

Each participant has received 250 dung beetles to populate their nurseries and cores.

The impact

Four nurseries have been installed with the beetles being fed moist, wet dung.

The cores will be opened at predetermined intervals to measure the progress of the beetles, to check what stage they are at and to confirm they are doing their job. We will also be checking the impact of drenches in the life cycle of *Bubas bison*.

This allows the nursery to remain undisturbed until the juvenile beetles are ready to be released into the paddocks-to do what they do best-consume dung, aerate the soil, increase water infiltration and combat the bush fly.

Learnings

This is a 3 year project. As part of the Environmental Trust grant we have to demonstrate transformational learning. This will be done through a series of entry and exit surveys combined with the monitoring and the take up numbers of *Bubas bison*.



Key facts

- Landholders are keen to learn about, and implement, ways to improve soil health.
- Students, the next generation of landholders, are enthusiastic to learn about systems which will benefit the environment.
- We have 4 nurseries, 2 on landholder properties and 2 in secondary schools.

Project Partners



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