



My Dad Drives by Zoe Cargill

My dad drives
As if it is for his life
Through the backyard
Where he does stock work.

I see him through the kitchen window
Animal smells wafting in and
Somewhere cows mooing are making their way back
Through the bush.

My dad drives as if to make your eyes
Widen from your head.
When my dad drives there is no music, no
stopping him.
He drives as if to the moon and back
Foot pressed to the accelerator
So you feel you are flying
And your sweat sucks into your lungs
As you inhale.

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FOOD PRODUCTION

Paddock preparation

Madi Guan, agronomist at Braidwood Rural

With below average rainfall in both 2017 and 2018, it is easy to understand why many farmers and primary producers in the Braidwood region are tentative, as we move into 2019. Many properties are now carrying well below their normal stocking rates, and are hoping for a more prosperous 2019 to allow them to begin rebuilding their sheep flocks and cattle herds.

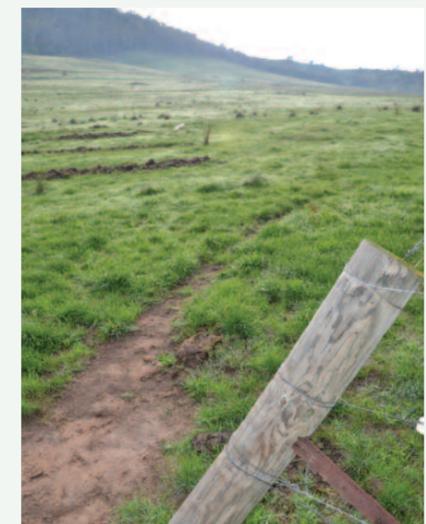
A large aspect of drought recovery is preparing the land to be as responsive as possible for when we do finally receive decent rain. This is likely to be a challenging task, as large amounts of time, money and willpower have already been drained on feeding to keep stock alive. However, producers are remaining optimistic, and are planning autumn sowing to provide feed for their livestock coming in to winter. Oats are still a very popular choice, providing a sturdy feed base, despite

the recent price rise due to lack of supply as a consequence of the previous two seasons. Ryegrass is also in high demand, with many producers looking at annual or Italian options to provide quick, quality feed. Other producers are looking at putting in long term options, hoping that we will receive generous autumn rains to give their perennial pastures a good start.

The planning and preparation that goes into sowing one paddock should not be underestimated. Producers begin planning months in advance, anticipating when they will need to have feed under foot to support lambing and calving, and later weaning. Carefully considering how many paddocks will be sown to a high energy and protein “finishing” paddock that will ready the stock for market. Putting in place weed control programs to clean up the land and give the desired crops and pastures the best chance to thrive. Soil testing to gain an

understanding of soil nutrient levels, and then amending the soil with lime and fertiliser to support plant growth, and consequently, animal growth. Even then, the most carefully thought out plans can be thrown out the window when Mother Nature gets involved.

Food production is a tricky business – we are just lucky that we have some of the most resilient, hardworking and dedicated producers at the helm of the farming ship. Fingers crossed for a successful 2019!



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