GOLD NUGGET

Diversity is becoming the new power word in progressive farming. Farmers who are using diversity in many different ways and for different reasons are winning and are becoming more profitable

Let's look at one example of diversity being profitable for the farmers.

When the Stipa group of farmers put in 200 test sites some three years ago they were using grazing animals for pasture enhancement. Some farmers were not convinced that they would see much difference as they had somewhat mastered controlled grazing so setting up sites seemed questionable.

The test sites were like 10 meter by 10 meter or 30 meter x 30 meter sites in strategic spots in big paddocks on their farms. Then the pastures were rested until they were considered ready before their sheep or cattle were put in for a short time at the ideal high density stocking rate which varied for example 200 head of sheep for 2 hours. However all test sites improved and had better results than the surrounding paddocks. The results that showed up include:

> The best stock density
> The ideal plant recovery time to produce maximum feed
> Better soil health - breakdown of surface litter
> Better rainfall infiltration
> Importantly an increase of plant **species diversity** that gives the pasture more resilience in adverse times
> Improvement in stock health from plant diversity including more **native perennials** has been a major feature.

The farmers were quick to use what they learnt in the test sites to improve their management of the rest of the property

If you haven't done so yet, put in your test sites. Then control your stock for best plant and soil management and get the coaching from a master farmer that you can learn from. Perfecting controlled grazing has numerous benefits like:

Pastures that never need replacing
Extra feed
High quality diverse species plants leading to robust animals and naturally more profit and farming satisfaction farming satisfaction.

Farming Secrets says: **If you're not doing it get the coaching and do it as soon as possible.**