



Why Dung Beetles Are Essential

It is estimated that in Australia there is half a million tonnes of cattle dung dropped on the land every day. If the dung pats are left to dry they can quickly become breeding ground for flies and when the rain comes are washed away into creeks and waterways along with your nutrients. What a waste!

Whereas when you have dung beetles they will bury that dung within 24-48 or 72 hours. The dung beetles quickly take the balls of dung up to 300 mm underground where they utilise about a third, leaving the rest as organic matter in your soil. This recycled manure thus reduces the need for applied fertilisers. Their tunnels increase water filtration and reduce run-off.

So here is Nature's best tool a farmer could ever have to spread organic matter, to fertilise his paddocks and to increase nutrient retention.

Dung beetles have many other benefits

Health & Money

Thousands of dollars have been saved on farms when dung beetles are present. When dung beetles remove the dung quickly, they also remove the breeding matter for the bush fly or Buffalo fly, which need some 6 days for their larvae to hatch. Both of these flies cause problems and an ongoing cost to manage, the most common to farmers is the cost of pink eye in cattle and sheep. Removing the dung also reduces the need for drenches.

Improved Water infiltration and Soil Structure

Taking dung below the soil surface improves soil microbiology and the numerous tunnels allow water infiltration. The beetles will penetrate hard compacted layers and bring nutrients to the root zones of pasture grasses thus leading to better growth.

Reduced Pollution

The dairy industry in particular has to reduce run-off into waterways and find ways to retain any waste on the farm

General description

There are 1000s of types of dung beetles all of which are described as tunnellers, ballers and dwellers depending on their activity. There is not 1 breed that is active year round hence the need for at least 3 breeds to cover the seasons, more breeds is preferable. As the name implies, dung beetles will handle all dung including domestic animal dung.

Warning: Drenches and back liners are toxic to dung beetles. Whole colonies can be wiped out by toxic dung. As it's best to maintain conditions so that dung beetles stay on your property, avoid spraying pesticides. They will fly to your farm overnight if the conditions are right and will leave just as quickly if they are not.

Dung beetles are extremely important in an ecological regenerative farming system as a tool in your toolbox

Farming Secrets says: Dung Beetles Are An Indicator of A Healthy Ecosystem