

Graziers plot a course to greater profitability

Nebo producers are now ready to revolutionise their property management thanks to hands-on property computer mapping and GPS workshops held in the town last week.

Attendees at the AgForce Projects workshops were eager to get their hands on satellite imagery of their property and start using the useful farm technologies to improve property monitoring and infrastructure planning.

Nebo grazier Margaret Maddern, "Mystery Downs", said she was excited to start using the skills she developed at the workshops to create her own property map and improve planning and budgeting on her property.

"Having your property mapped is a great management tool, and now I have the skills to do it myself," Ms Maddern said.

"I can't wait to discover the full potential of the technology but I can already see it is an unbelievable tool for property planning and development and I have learnt so much."

Ms Maddern said she plans to use her newfound mapping and GPS skills to forward plan and rebuild run down infrastructure and plant improved pastures.

"I believe budgeting is very important and if you want to be building or rebuilding fences and infrastructure a planned approach is a good approach. I will be using GPS to plot my new fencing and start to build my own property map. I also look forward to using this as a development tool to plant improved pastures and to install pipelines on my property," she said.

"Using a GPS in conjunction with the mapping program will help me identify where things run on the property and enable me to mark out GPS points to improve accuracy and create greater efficiencies on my property."

AgForce Projects officer Natalie Schick showed landholders how to correctly set-up a hand held GPS unit and use the device for improved property navigation and to work with waypoints and tracks.

"GPS technology can help producers pinpoint vegetation boundaries, record landscape and property information and accurately plan infrastructure such as pipelines and fencing which will make future planning more effective and efficient," Ms Schick said.

"Once landholders have an understanding of GPS they can then transfer their captured property data into their mapping program which will help them keep a comprehensive record of property information and production history."

Attendees were able to complete the course through AGDATA's FarmReady approved Sustainable Farm Planning and Management – Module 3 workshop and received Phoenix Mapping software as part of the course materials. All attendees received their property's latest digital data including Landsat (11 years from 1988 to 2010) and SPOT5 satellite images.

These workshops were delivered by AgForce Projects in partnership with Fitzroy Basin Association through the support of the Australian Governments' Caring for our Country Reef Rescue initiative or the Australian Government's FarmReady program.

For more information or to request a workshop in your area please visit www.agforceprojects.org.au or call 07 3238 6048.

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Photo caption: AgForce Projects officer Natalie Schick helps Nebo grazier Margaret Maddern transfer property information from GPS onto a property map.