



## COPE Family

336 Acres, 350 - 600 Head

The Cope Family in Fish Creek in South Gippsland is seeing increased milk production by improving their property's soil biology. Although not part of the Land Stewardship Program, the Cope Family are a great example of Land Stewards.

The 840 acre farm run by Graeme and Jenny Cope and their son Shaun, was purchased three years ago after selling their previous property in Middle Tarwin. Their new property has been converted from a low input beef farm to a high input, high production dairy farm milking 600 cows.

Graeme Cope's management strategy has involved using lime and commercially cultured microbes to stimulate soil biology in conjunction with conventional nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus and sulphur fertilizer regime.

He also plans to follow rotational grazing management and to apply nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus and sulphur at fairly conventional rates in winter and early spring, when soil biology is sluggish.

This strategy had seen milk production increase from 3.8 million to 4.6 Million Litres. Cow peaks have also been the highest he has seen.

Graeme says "We're getting a lot more production out of the pasture because it contains more rye and clover, and the cows are happy to graze it down nice and even. The lime and microbes don't replace fertiliser but they certainly help to drive the pasture."



# Improving soil biology dramatically increased our milk production

## What is the Targeted Land Stewardship Program?

Many landholders feel strongly about the land and about leaving it in a good condition for future generations. In some cases this means leaving it in a better condition than when they found it. Land Stewardship is having a sense of responsibility for the land and landscapes.

The Westernport Targeted Land Stewardship program provides support and funding to landholders to become a better land steward. The program is a partnership that encourages and pays farmers for land stewardship activities that provide ecosystem services that benefit the wider community (such as healthy waterways from revegetation) that are not rewarded in current markets.

This project includes:

- Funding for Revegetation and Remnant Protection
- Payment for Soil Improvement Works
- Subsidised Whole Farm Planning & Computer Mapping Training Courses
- Subsidised Soil Health Training Courses
- Discussion Groups and Field Days

## How can the Targeted Land Stewardship Program help you improve your soil like the Copes?

The Western Port Targeted Land Stewardship program provides support and funding to landholders to deliver effective sustainable management on their land. This includes funding at a set amount per hectare for soil health improvement works.

The project will also assist with funding for:

- Increasing Organic Matter
- Aeration
- Adding Microbes
- Increasing Pasture Cover to > 80%
- Application of High Quality Lime
- Nutrient Budgeting
- Application of Organic Fertilisers
- Effluent Management Planning
- Soil Testing

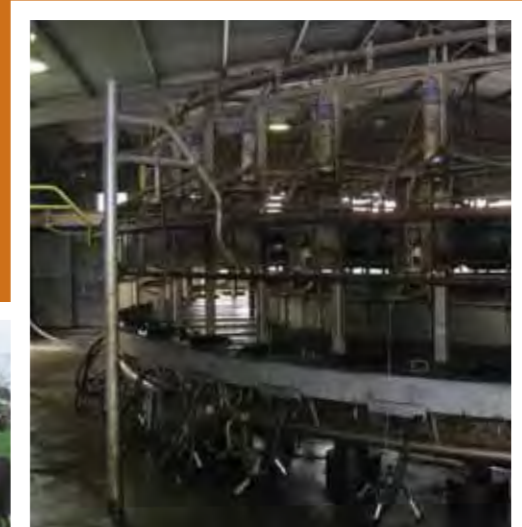


## Key Management Actions

- Used lime and sprayed microbes to improve soil biology
- Applying manure to pasture

### Benefits:

- Increased milk production
- Reduction in acid root mat
- Noticeably healthier cows
- Better pasture recovery
- More palatable grass for stock



## Further Information

To take part in this project or for further details contact your local Landcare Network:

■ Kathleen Bartlett  
South Gippsland Landcare Network - 0400 141 929

■ Bridgette McCallum  
Western Port Landcare Network - 0403 195 879

■ Joel Geoghegan  
Bass Coast Landcare Network - 0409 705 652

