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MAINLAND MINERALS IMPROVES HILL COUNTRY PRODUCTIVITY

It is a well attested fact that each of us is often blind to the most obvious things. In many situations we become so used to operating in a certain way that, if we continue to do that for a long enough period of time, then we become closed to other options or alternatives. At that point, we've stopped thinking, we've switched to "auto-pilot" mode and as a result, other options or possibilities never occur to us – we have become blind to options an outsider might see as obvious.

Clearly all pastures become run-out and need to be renewed. No issue there. But for many farmers with a mixture of flats and hill country, often the more fertile flat land gets all the attention, while the poor producing hill country is overlooked.

Take the following scenario: a farm with 200 hectares of flats and 800 hectares of hills (the latter split between sunny north facing slopes and darker slopes with a southerly aspect). The flats are already producing well i.e. 15 tonnes of dry matter/ha/yr. The hilly areas produce (on average) 5 tonnes of DM/ha/yr. The 200 hectares of flats (20% of the farm) are producing 3000 tonnes of dry matter which is nearly 43% of the production off the property. By comparison, the hills (80% of the farm) are only producing 4000 tonnes of dry matter or 57% of total production.

When the farmer seeks to lift farm productivity, he often looks to push the flats to even higher production levels – after all these are the most fertile and easiest areas to work. However, to increase production by say 1 tonne/ha on the flats may cost as much or more than to increase productivity on the hills by the same amount.

AREA (ha)	DM/ha (T/yr)	Total DM (T/yr)	Increase production by 1T/ha/yr	Revised Total DM (T/yr)	Production Increase (T/yr)	Production Increase (%)
Flats 200	15	3000	16	3200	200	6.7
Hill 800	5	4000	6	4800	800	20

In the example above, increasing production on the hills by 1T/ha/yr lifted overall productivity from this sector by 20%. Pushing the flats to produce an additional 1T/ha/yr only resulted in a 6.7% increase from that sector.

For many years now, Mainland Minerals have been assisting farmers to get more production from their hill country, and particularly from the often neglected dark, south faces. Innovative fertiliser technology has resulted in these overlooked areas becoming more productive by increasing palatability of dry mater grown, opening up previously ungrazed or poorly grazed areas, improving nutrient cycling as well as creating an improved environment to establish new grasses.

If you've been blind to the potential of your hill country, why not give Mainland Minerals a call on 0800 433 787. A small increase in productivity on your hills can make a big increase in your overall productivity and economic bottom line.