

# Oats Crops Stands Out in the Dry

Stewart Bulmer, Bolivia Station, Tenterfield, has had plenty of feed-back on the oats crop he grew in winter.

With the property located along the New England Highway, Mr Bulmer grew his oats in the front paddock of "Bolivia".

The Bulmers have developed a side-line business to their main production selling Angus and Angus/ Hereford cross heifers to local butchers at 180 to 200 kilograms dressed, with Mr Bulmer saying his animals were also grazed in the front fodder paddock.

"The 2013 spring season was restricted to small rainfall events but we have produced feed consistently though this period," he said.

"I've had feed all winter."

With still so much feed left going into summer, Mr Bulmer made the decision to lock paddocks up and take grain off them.

"The history of some of these paddocks prior to 2011 was poor," he said. "Inspection of the profile at the time showed the soil was limited principally by compaction."

Back in 2011 Mr Bulmer engaged Shane Fitzgerald from Petrik to soil test the blocks, where several trace elements were found to be limiting, so sulphur and boron were added to the manure.



**RIGHT:** Stewart Bulmer, had so much feed left going into summer, he made the decision to lock paddocks up and strip them for grain

Mr Bulmer said with consistent fodder crops in these paddocks Petrik Evergreen had been applied three times in the past 18 months following light rates of manure.

Mr Bulmer has a Marshall spreader set up with an inoculation tank that treats the manure as it leaves the spreader belt.

"This application technique has proven very robust," he said.

"Despite the high grazing pressure the soil structure here continues to improve and the increased rooting depth meaning the oats did not pull out at feeding and held on to produce grain."

