

# SHEDFED SYSTEMS | The Australian Opportunity

P.O. Box 1819- 53 Bore Road, Waggrakine WA 6530

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## ShedFed Systems Australia

The principal of this company, Bob Griffith, was born and bred to farming in the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia. It was as late as 2001 when he was first introduced to hydroponic fodder sheds and admits to being ‘blown away’ with the potential for Australia’s farmers, and subsequently made adjustments to his goals in life.



Late 2003 saw the construction of a mobile demonstration fodder production unit – capable of producing 150 kgs of hydroponically grown fodder per day. This combined the simplicity of what Peter Ryan has demonstrated for more than a decade, and the permanency of what Peter Doyle has more recently developed in Australia, or , more recently what Chris De Vere has done in New Zealand with Green Feed Fodder Factories.

Shed Fed Systems now offer complete production shed options, ready for ‘seeding’, OR, a service that allows the client to save some money and construct all or part of the shed themselves.

Shed Fed Systems encourages potential clients to visit the web sites of all known manufacturers of fodder sheds before signing up for a production unit. It could be that they might find an alternative system that offers something specific to their needs that Shed Fed Systems does not.

***Please feel free to browse through this site or alternatively you can download a printable brochure in pdf (portable document format) by clicking the link at the top of this document.***

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## What is a HYDROPONIC FODDER SHED and how does it work?

Simply put, the sheds are an insulated, air conditioned shed that allows entry of natural light to aid the growth of plant matter.



An automatically controlled reticulation system applies a mixture of water and nutrient to seed in trays or troughs – without using any medium.

Water usage is minimal, as is the power requirement.

One kilogram of barley seed – approx 12% protein – will be transformed into six kilograms of succulent green feed – approx 25% protein – in seven days.

The biscuit of seed, roots and plant growth are simply fed to stock in the paddock.

This fodder is:  
Rich in protein,  
High in energy,  
Highly digestible,  
The same quality 365 days of the year,  
A cost effective fodder alternative,  
A means of achieving high productivity from a low acreage,  
An alternative to buying out the neighbour.

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## What are the Major Features of Hydroponic Fodder Sheds?

**Fodder Alternative** – A highly nutritious and digestible fodder is provided daily on your property to be used in conjunction with other feed or as an alternative to them. The cost per kilogram is very competitive – depending largely upon the current prices of the seed grain.



**Drought Proofing** – The conversion of seed grain into succulent fodder by a factor of six to one has much appeal during drought or normal dry summer periods.

**Management Tool** – To have such a fodder available 365 days of the year allows farm managers to drop lambs, calves, etc at an optimal time to meet market peaks, as well as having the comfort of being able to produce fat stock that has a consistent quality.

**Productivity in a Shed** – Owners of small properties now have the means to economically increase their stock numbers without having to lot feed or the need to purchase additional land.

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## Which Farmers will Benefit Most?

Those with a small holding who wish to increase stock numbers but do not have funds to purchase additional land.

Hobby farmers who wish to generate sufficient dollars from their landholding with a view to withdrawing from their off-farm employment.

Farmers who have sons desirous of becoming farmers but where there is insufficient land to provide for an additional family.

Any farmer who simply wishes to increase stock numbers.

Prime cattle and lamb producers who wish to grow stock year round and be guaranteed that feed quality will be constant.



Those who wish to drought proof their properties or maintain stock numbers over summer periods.

Dairy farmers who need a cost effective feed to gain maximum litres from their stock and to slightly increase both productivity and fat content.

Those who have saline land that needs to be withdrawn from production and regenerated, yet also have the need to maintain current stock numbers.

Those who need the benefits of irrigated fodder but do not have the luxury of the water or would like to reduce their dependency of that water.

Any manager who wishes to maximise productivity from lactating animals.

Owners or agistment managers with working horses that require a feed readily accepted by those animals

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## SHED FED SYSTEMS CAPABILITY



Shed Fed Systems (SFS) are advocates of hydroponic fodder sheds and readily offer potential clients information from all known Australian manufacturers. This is done to give clients the confidence that what they may purchase from Shed Fed Systems (SFS) is as a result of reasonable research into all of the options.

Potential owners have three options:

- # They can purchase an off-the-shelf unit from any of the manufacturers – along with built in profit loadings (SFS included),
- # They can build their own by copying any of the current designs – taking the risk of costly mistakes and slow ramping up to maximum production, or,
- # they can design and build their own with the assistance of SFS.

### Benefits of Engaging Shed Fed Systems

- Clients can design a shed to fit their needs, even to the point of using an existing structure.
- The payment of a single consultancy payment will allow the client to choose their tray size, shed design, insulation types, air conditioner type, door sizes and positioning, nutrient type, etc., and be provided with a components list with indicative prices for each.
- Clients can build all or parts of the system themselves and utilise local suppliers or those recommended by SFS.
- Be part of an expanding network of owners who share their management experiences.

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## General Comments

At the beginning of 2004 it is believed that there are in excess of seventy hydroponic fodder sheds in Australia that have been erected by bona fide manufacturers. There could possibly be at least that many again that have been constructed by farmers who have copied others. Most of them probably work reasonably during times of moderate temperature, but too few are working well for 365 days of the year.



Though there could be any number of reasons for this, the one major factor governing disease control is that of air conditioning.

Fodder Factory Australia has been the market leader in Australia and has by far the largest number of sheds in operation. Many people – including Shed Fed Systems – have seen the concept at work, have recognised the potential for rural Australia and themselves, and have attempted to manufacture an improved model. That few have been successful to date indicates that, though there is no rocket science in the design or construction of the sheds, there are some factors that are being ignored. Shed Fed Systems are of the belief that currently, few options are worthy of consideration – cost aside.

There is some anecdotal information available to support growth rates, protein generation, energy production, water usage, cost of operation, etc., but there is practically no independent scientific data available to date. Some individual scientists throughout Australia have generated data that indicates a bright future for hydroponic fodder sheds, but few, if any, scientific trials have been conducted or published. Most owners to date are using their sheds for feeding cattle and have not had the time or inclination to conduct research into any of a myriad of obvious areas where increased productivity might be the reward. They are simply grateful that the sheds are working and are cheap to operate.

A brief read through the web pages for all hydroponic fodder shed manufacturers will show that most are using barley seed, all are showing growth rates of between 5-8 kilograms of green fodder from a single kilogram of seed in seven days, the protein levels are similar and the energy levels are consistently good.

Some of the claims are a little optimistic, but most have a common level of anecdotal support that will induce increasing numbers of farmers to look a little more closely. One limiting factor is the attempt to compare the quality of this highly digestible fodder with a range of dry food alternatives. Too many nutritionists are using a simple conversion and making a desktop assessment that this hydroponic fodder compares poorly with traditional fodders. The stabilised conversion method is seriously flawed.

Practical results by farmers throughout Australia have demonstrated that the conversion method is “missing something in the translation”. Farmers are witnessing growth rates in cattle of 1-1.2 kilograms per day using this green fodder in conjunction with a range of dry fodders.

Dr Geoff Tudor a former Senior Beef Research Officer with the Department of Agriculture in Bunbury, has prepared a short note titled Hydroponically Sprouted Barley. His findings from a single, brief trial in the upper Gascoyne make quite interesting reading and point to a need for ongoing research that might answer some of the questions raised from his trial. Agrarian Consultants in W.A. have determined that the Tudor data, if replicated, suggests considerable profits for stock owners using hydroponic fodder beyond what dry feeds are currently in use throughout Australia.

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## Web List of Hydroponic Fodder Shed Manufacturers

[www.peterdoyleconsultancy.com.au](http://www.peterdoyleconsultancy.com.au) | **03 5678 1012** | [fodder@peterdoyleconsultancy.com.au](mailto:fodder@peterdoyleconsultancy.com.au)

[www.hydrocentre.com.au/fodder/questions.htm](http://www.hydrocentre.com.au/fodder/questions.htm)

[norwood@northnet.net.au](mailto:norwood@northnet.net.au) | Greenfeed Solutions | **02677 55777**

[www.abhydroponics.com.au](http://www.abhydroponics.com.au) | 026674 1708 | [contactus@abhydroponics.com.au](mailto:contactus@abhydroponics.com.au) | Rudi Azzato

[www.rdaquaponics.com.au](http://www.rdaquaponics.com.au) | 0297 561 833 | Joe Romer GreenfeedTechnologies [rdaqua@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rdaqua@ozemail.com.au)

[www.optigrow.com/](http://www.optigrow.com/)

[www.foddersolutions.org](http://www.foddersolutions.org)

[www.almightyfodder.com.au](http://www.almightyfodder.com.au)

[www.fodderwheel.com.au](http://www.fodderwheel.com.au)

[www.globalfodder.com](http://www.globalfodder.com)

[www.nuffield.com.au/report\\_f/2002/](http://www.nuffield.com.au/report_f/2002/)

[www.hsc.csu.edu.au/agriculture/electives/innovation/fodder\\_factories/fodderfac\\_answers](http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/agriculture/electives/innovation/fodder_factories/fodderfac_answers)

<http://www.greenfeedfodderfactories.co.nz/>

[www.foddertech.com](http://www.foddertech.com)

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