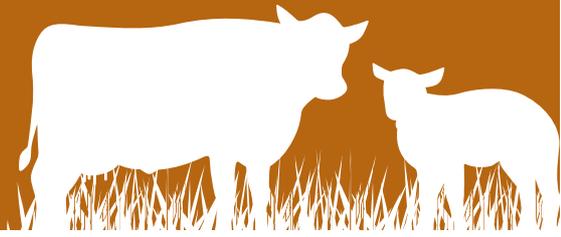


Managing Stock in and around Waterways



Stock access to waterways leads to considerable erosion and poor river health conditions



These waterways and gullies have been fenced and revegetated to exclude stock and prevent further erosion

The banks of waterways and the adjacent floodplains play a vital role in maintaining stream bank stability, good water quality and the general health of aquatic environments.

The root systems of trees, shrubs and grasses bind to stabilise and hold the soil together.

After heavy rain, when creeks and rivers are flowing fast, vegetation helps absorb the force of the flow and reduces the water's capacity to erode stream banks.

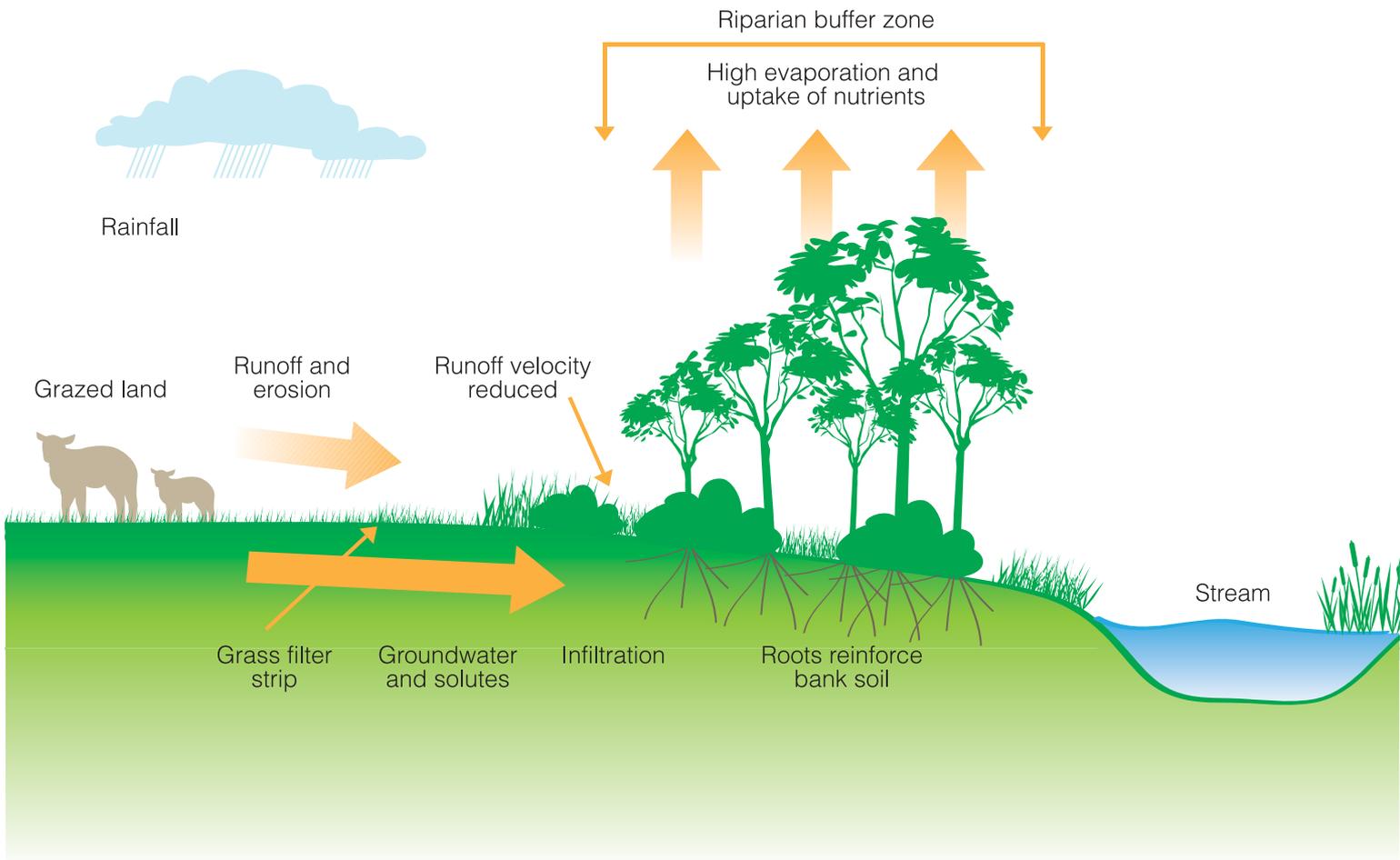
Trees and shrubs on the bank together with aquatic plants provide shade, shelter and a food source for aquatic and terrestrial fauna.

Grasses and other groundcover plants help filter sediment, nutrients and pollutants from run-off before they enter the stream. By acting as a buffer, vegetation helps maintain good water quality, and reduces the likelihood of algal blooms.

Stock access to waterways can lead to considerable environmental damage. Bank erosion, water pollution, habitat destruction and stream sedimentation are just some of the negative impacts uncontrolled stock access can have to waterways that impact you, your downstream neighbours and the wider community.

To reduce waterway erosion and pollution, it's best to exclude stock from waterways. Managing stock access to waterways can have long terms benefits, such as;

- Improvements in water quality by a reduction in nutrients and sediment inputs
- Improvements in bank stability
- Creation of a fodder reserve which can be used periodically and in times of drought.



Managing stock access

The most simple and effective way of managing stock access to waterways is to fence off riparian areas. The further the distance from the bank to the fence, the more effective the riparian buffer will be. Consider the placement of the fence and fencing materials with flood events in mind.

Fencing the banks may mean that stock temporarily lose shade and shelter as well as a watering point associated with bank vegetation. This can be addressed by growing shade trees in adjoining areas, and providing another water source such as piping from an existing supply to a trough.

It is not always necessary to permanently exclude livestock from riparian areas, but it is important to control their movement and manage grazing pressure.

Consider using controlled grazing where livestock only graze for short periods while still retaining good ground-cover. Sufficient rest periods are required to give grasses time to recover.

Off-setting costs

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority can support farmers to fence off waterways by matching you to available environmental funding, as well as provide the on-ground help required to make these projects a reality.

Riparian land is any land that is next to, or directly influences a body of water. It includes areas adjacent to creeks and rivers, gullies and dips which sometimes run water, wetlands or areas surrounding dams and lakes.

