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Welcome to the Moore Catchment Council's (MCC) 21st *Moore to the Point* quarterly newsletter. Happy New Year to all our readers, lets hope 2011 brings a little bit more rain to the region. The last couple of months has seen us wrapping up our latest saltbush project. We are very pleased with the outcomes and look forward to seeing how the pastures develop.
 editor *Rachel*

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Super results for Moore catchment saltbush project

The latest saltbush project delivered by the Moore Catchment Council and Moora-Miling Pasture Improvement Group, and supported by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, has seen many more seedlings planted in the Moore River catchment than originally budgeted. The project, funded through the federal Caring For Our Country Natural Resource Management program, promised to plant around 144,000 saltbush seedlings on salt and wind erosion affected farms in the eastern catchment. Instead over **176,000** saltbush seedlings were able to be planted over **270ha** thanks to the close involvement of Ian Pulbrook of Greenoil Nursery, Mingenew, who supplied seedlings and planting services.

Twenty farms were involved with installing the saltbush pastures, from Gunyidi down to Gabalong. Tony White, president of the MMPIG, says 'saltbush pastures are an important part of farming systems in this area. They will help drought proof



Above: Tony White & Ian Pulbrook holding the sign to be displayed at each saltbush site

your farm and protect the land from the natural elements whilst adding extra feed at critical times of the year.' The site preparation and planting methods are tipped to be the key for the good establishment seen even with the dry winter experienced. Tony explained 'we have had a great result all round due mainly to the mounding carried out in the saltier and lower lying areas, and this has helped transform previously unproductive areas into useful paddocks.' The project also hosted a successful saltland pastures workshop in March and was a feature part of the MMPIG spring field days in 2009 & 2010.

Rachel Walmsley of MCC says 'this is the second successful saltbush project delivered by the MCC in partnership with MMPIG. In the last three years, over **307,000** saltbush seedlings have been planted in the Moore River catchment through these federally funded projects. The combination of a NRM group, a grower group and a nursery has helped deliver another fantastic result this year.'



Above: One of the project participants, Don McKinley, admiring his flourishing saltbush pasture

A project booklet and DVD are available from the MCC office on 9653 1355. For an online taster – visit www.youtube.com/MooreCatchNRM0

more results on page 4



Case Study: No-Kill Cropping

MCC is fortunate to receive detailed practical information on Phil Barrett-Lennard's no-kill cropping success and we are very pleased to be able to pass it on to our readers. Phil is well-known in his roles of Technical Manager at Evergreen Farming and Agricultural Consultant with agVivo, and his technical services to NACC perennial pastures incentive programs, so we were a bit curious about what he does in his own paddocks at Beermullah in the south of the NAR.

What is No-Kill Cropping?

The no-kill cropping method is sowing crops into existing live plant cover and residue. Retaining plant cover and dry-sowing with Coulter type implements means that covered soils have minimum disturbance and only when soil strength is greatest. Therefore soils are protected from erosion and compaction, and fuel usage can be reduced. Existing pastures, such as valued sub-tropical perennial grasses, are not damaged and can even be enhanced through nitrogen-fixing legume companions. Plants also benefit from enhanced biological activity in the soil and the complementary effects of a more diverse agro-ecosystem.

Returns on no-kill cropping are comparable to conventional cropping by producing harvestable crop yields grown within grazed pastures. No-kill cropping is a lower input, lower risk method allowing greater flexibility for the farmer and contributing to long-term sustainability of farmland.

Establishment of the No-Kill Cropping Paddock

The soil type of the paddock is mainly shallow sandy loam over clay, with a couple of spots having clay at the surface and a small patch of deeper sand. The sandy loam is mostly only 5 to 20 cm deep. There is a very impenetrable silcrete hardpan beneath all this country, which contributes to poor drainage on the very flat site.

The fertiliser history of the paddock for the last 20 years is between 100 to 150 kg/ha of a Super Potash blend annually. However, no Super based fertiliser was applied in 2009 and 2010 due to low cattle prices. It was limed and had trace elements applied (Cu, Zn, Mo) once in the last 10 years.

The partial false break in April 2009, followed by dry until late May, prompted Phil to dry sow hay into the pasture paddock. Early sowing is advisable as the paddock can get wet, so having to wait for rain and spraying germinated weeds would be wasting time.

The 30ha paddock was seeded on May 19 and 20 by Brett Edwards, a local farmer and contractor, using his Duncan Renovator no-till drill (Coulter, Baker t-boots, and press wheels). Seventy kilograms per hectare of Vasse oats were sown in alternate rows to a clover/rye/rape mix, comprising 2 kg/ha Balansa clover, 1 kg/ha Persian clover, 2 kg/ha Dargo ryegrass, 1 kg/ha Cadiz serradella and 1 kg/ha Pasja forage rape.

There was good rain a few days later, followed by a 2 to 3 week dry spell. Phil says the pasture just hung on but the Pasja forage rape was targeted by red legged earth mites and declined in density a bit.



Grazing and Cutting for Hay

The paddock was strip-grazed with about 70 yearling heifers from July 5 to 29, having been divided into 4 sections to graze it as evenly as possible. The paddock was then de-stocked to allow it to bulk up before cutting for hay. In early August, 70 kg/ha of urea was applied. This was the only fertilizer for the year but the paddock had a good fertiliser history. Regrowth following grazing was excellent due to good rains in July, August and September.

The paddock was cut for hay in the first week of October and then raked a week or so later. It was left in windrows in place all summer rather than being baled, to avoid the cost and time of baling, carting, storing and feeding out. The windrows were strip grazed using portable electric fencing consisting of 3 wires with the top and bottom hot, and the middle one as earth, 2 wires not being quite enough with such dry ground.



The windrows were grazed from March 1 to May 8 with about 70 heifer and steer weaners, and 30 first-calvers. This was immediately followed by 120 pregnant cows which had started calving, continuing until June 19. The cattle found the windrows less palatable for a day or two after each rain event but continued grazing as it dried out.

Phil says the quality of the material in the windrows was clearly quite good early on, as it looked like the weaners were slowly gaining weight, but then it obviously declined with each rain event. However, the cattle were happy enough to eat the windrows by the middle of June due to the lack of other feed.



In late May and early June, the cows were also getting a small green pick from the pastures that had germinated on early rains, satisfying them until the windrows dried out. Phil said “we could be in trouble if we got a 50mm plus rain event over the summer-autumn period, but that’s where our perennials come in. We’ve got both bases covered! I’d move our young stock, needing higher feed quality, onto the perennials and leave the pregnant cows, needing less feed quality, on the windrows to clean them up.”

Achievements and Refinements

Phil calculated that he achieved approximately 3550 DSE grazing days per hectare grazing the windrows, which is a fraction under 10 DSE/ha for the whole year. Grazing in July 2009 adds another 416 DSE grazing days per hectare, equivalent to 1.1 DSE. So in total, the paddock achieved about 11 DSE/ha for the year. It was produced with the extra cost of seed, seeding (contractor), mowing and raking but Phil believes it’s a good result, especially due to the time of year when the feed was utilised.

Phil said “All up, I’ve been very satisfied with the result. We also windrowed some other pasture paddocks that had not been dry-sown and these were also very successful.” He says that deciding to add extra seed by dry-sowing is based on how good the pasture is expected to be. “Some of our pastures lack good density and need to be topped up with oats, clovers and rye. Otherwise they wouldn’t be bulky enough to bother windrowing them.”

He has done some more no-kill cropping in 2010 using less oats and more ryegrass, and more clover where needed (20 kg/ha Vasse Oats, 15 kg/ha Ryegrass and 5 kg/ha of a mix of Balansa, Persian, Gland and Sub Clovers). He noticed that the cattle really like the windrows with higher clover content but unfortunately the season had been poor and insect pressure was immense, so the clovers took a hammering.



One downside is that continuing to graze the windrows past the break of season makes it very late for re-sowing. The section of the no-kill cropping paddock which was grazed until mid June was sown to oats, clovers and rye in late June following a knockdown and insecticide. Phil says that hopefully there was enough time to yield some decent windrows for grazing next autumn.

Thanks to Phil Barrett-Lennard for providing the information and photos.

Saltbush project results from all twenty sites



Brendon Tierney

Site inspections four months after planting were carried out to see how well the saltbush had established. No two sites were the same but establishment had been overwhelmingly successful at the majority of the locations. Seedling counts revealed most sites had a >80% strike.

Photo points were set up for annual monitoring and interviews were conducted with each participant to document and gauge their opinion of their new pasture, the mounding and the project overall.



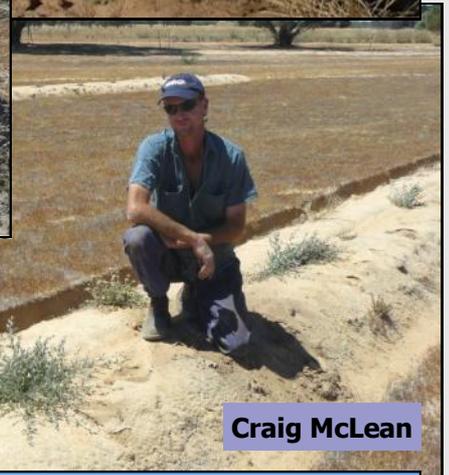
Derek Stewart



Frank & Marge King



Brendon Pratt



Craig McLean



Brian Stacy



Tony White



Richard Humphry

Cont.....

Les Crane



Neil Pearse



Bruce Topham

Ian Lehmann



Ken Seymour



Lloyd Elliot



Brad Millstead



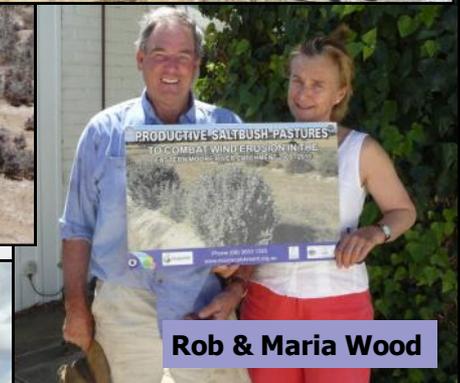
Stan Lewis



Don McKinley



Rob & Maria Wood



Phil Martin



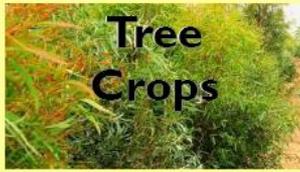
Quentin Brickell



NACC's CFOC On-ground Incentives - Out Now !

NACC have recently reviewed and updated their incentives program to make it more attractive to apply. Tree crops now have further options on top of just oil mallees that include sandalwood and brushwood. The fodder shrub (saltbush) incentive has been doubled to a maximum incentive of \$8,000 which could help plant up to 47 ha of saltbush !

If you're interested in any of these then give us a call to discuss on **9653 1355**.

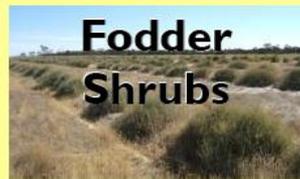


Tree Crops

Overview: Incentives available for Sandalwood host species, oil mallees and brushwood

What do I get?

- Up to \$250/ha
- Membership to industry group for one year ie Oil Mallee Association



Fodder Shrubs

Overview: Incentive available for saltbush and rhagodia sp. Also plain and mesh fencing

What do I get?

- Seedling - \$0.20 each
- Fencing - \$2,000/km (mesh). \$1,000/km (plain)



Perennial Pastures

Overview: Incentives available for sub tropical perennial grasses, tagasaste, fencing and watering point

What do I get?

- Pasture - \$85/ha
- Fencing - \$1,725/km (mesh), \$1,150/km (plain), \$575/km (electric)
- Watering point - \$1,000 each (max 1)



Strategic Revegetation

Overview: Incentives available for fencing, weed and rabbit control, and seedlings

What do I get?

- Fencing - between \$1,150 & \$3,450/km depending on size of area
- Re-veg - \$750 - \$1,000/ ha
- Weeds - \$30/ha/yr. Rabbits - various rates



Rabbit Control

Overview: Incentives for fencing, 1080 baiting, fumigation and warren ripping

What do I get?

- Baiting - \$20/km/yr. Phostoxin fumigation - \$20 per warren
- Warren ripping - \$50 per warren
- Exclusion fencing - between \$4,500 - \$6,700/km dependant on size

Farmer focus

Who: Steve Slater

Where: Margam farm, Wannamal

What: Sheep (around 500) and cattle

Env problems: wind erosion, non wetting sands, rising ground water, salinity

NACC funded projects: Perennial Pastures, Fodder shrubs

MCC funded project: Moore river fencing & revegetation

Steve's comments: Get educated and understand how the landscape operates. Look beyond conventional farming and reduce your costs by working alongside nature. Encourage biological factors by improving soil condition to reduce pests and input costs.



Above: Mike Johnson (Department of Water) advising Steve Slater (left) on revegetation species to use around his wetland. He is keen to increase the number of bird species visiting his property.

The Moore Catchment Council decided that a trip to the coast was in order for their Christmas lunch and OGM. Out of the three coastal towns in the catchment, Ledge Point was chosen so that the MCC members could look at the recent rehabilitation works carried out by the Ledge Point Coastcare group.

As an additional treat, Ashley Robb (NACC's Coastal Project Officer) was invited along to give a presentation on the projects currently being carried out all along the Northern Agricultural Region's coastline. He also outlined the issues and opportunities facing the MCC in the lower region.

A fabulous two course Christmas lunch followed the OGM, catered for by the Ledge Point Country Club, which gave members a chance to discuss coastal issues in the region and also wear a Christmas cracker hat !



Above: John Braid & Jill Wilson pull a Christmas cracker hoping for a prize!



Above: Jan Richards takes the MCC members on a tour of rehabilitation works around Key Biscayne park

After lunch, members were given the opportunity to have a tour with Jan Richards - Ledge Point Coastcare Group's coordinator, of the rehabilitation works carried out in 2010. This included fencing of the view point walkway and coastal path, hand and spray weeding, and planting of 1500 coastal species on the dunes.

She also showed the group how on-going management is needed to keep on top of the weeds. Jan has taken on her own patch of dune which she intensively looks after to prevent weeds like sea spinach and

Pelargonium reappearing. Current activities for the group include seed collecting and commissioning of a dune rehabilitation plan and also a dune vehicle access plan, to aide future planning.

Our drive back to Moora took us through the Moore River NP which is particularly striking at this time of year. See below....



Left: The Moore River National Park erupts into vivid orange during the summer time with a marvelous display of *Verticordia nitens* (Morrison featherflower). They can be up to 2m tall and so are difficult to miss !



Moore River fencing project

Twelve land managers from all over the catchment have now signed up to the WA state funded 'Recovery and protection of the Moore catchment's natural assets' project. The project promises to fence and protect **22.75km** of priority native vegetation, and also to fence and protect **20km** of the Moore River and revegetate **18ha** of its riparian zone. Nearly all the funding has now been allocated but if you do have a fencing/reveg project that you are considering doing this year, then please get in touch as we might be able to squeeze you in. The assessment criteria is fairly flexible so we should be able to help you finance works.

A sneaky disguise ?



Left: fruit above and flat leaf below, surrounded by needle-like leaves

Hakea trifurcata, or Two-leaf Hakea, produces two types of leaves – needle-like leaves and flat, elliptical leaves. The fruit is leaf-like, or perhaps the leaf is fruit-like ... confusing? It's meant to be. It confuses animals intending to eat the fruit, possibly preventing the seed from being eaten.

More info at: http://www.raez.net/cedd/downloads/hakea_trifurcata_flyer.pdf



Moore fencing incentives

Are you in the Moore River catchment and planning to fence off creek lines and remnant vegetation this year but need financial assistance?

Do you want to contribute to the long term protection of the Moore Catchment's natural assets?

If yes, then look at these incentives available:

- \$3,000/km for fencing and \$500/ha for re-vegetating creek lines
- \$4,000/km for fencing off priority remnant vegetation

Any questions? Please phone the Moore Catchment Council for more information on **9653 1355**






Right: inconspicuous but highly-scented flowers.

Upcoming events

- ★ 28th Jan - **MCC OGM**, New Norcia - 9653 1355
- ★ 22nd Feb - **MMPIG AGM**, Roundhill - 0488 954 664

Moore Catchment Council



protecting the natural resources
in the Moore River Catchment



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