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## Koojan farmer demonstrates soil amelioration

Ian McGillivray is a Koojan farmer who likes to get the best from all his land - even his poor gutless sands. Establishing perennial plants in deep white non-wetting sands is problematic. This is due to poor water and nutrient holding capacity of the soil at the root zone, and ensuring the plants survive their first summer in the NAR before accessing subsurface moisture.

Rachel Walmsley, Moore Catchment Council's NRM Officer said "Back in March 2013 Ian scribbled his idea on the back of an envelope for a trial to better establish fodder shrubs on his poor sands using a variety of proven soil amelioration techniques. He then visited Moore Catchment Council and I submitted his project idea through the Federal Caring For Our Country Community Landcare grants program and was successful in obtaining \$10,900 to demonstrate his trial."

Ian is also a great planner and decided to have a mini trial of his main trial in 2013 to pre-test some of his ideas. With pre-trial knowledge gained, Ian got to work setting up a 47 run trial plot in 2014 which has involved different scenarios of chicken manure, organic soil conditioner, clay and Agflow. All trial runs have been ripped to 350mm and 600mm before spading in the different ameliorants. Ian has a preference for fodder shrubs and has planted 6,000 saltbush (River and Oldman) and Tagasaste as part of the trial.

Rachel said "On inspection in late July with Ian and Phil Barrett-Lennard (Agvivo), it was interesting to see the difference in the subsurface condition of ameliorated soils as compared to the poor water capacity of the normal sand. It was also already clear to see that some of the scenarios involving high rates of chicken manure were causing the seedlings to stress."

The trial will be reinspected after the summer and a field walk held for other farmers to view the trial. For more information please contact Moore Catchment Council on 9653 1355.



Ian (right) explains the ripping depth to Phil Barrett-Lennard



Saltbush planted in ameliorated soil

The Moore Catchment Council promotes Natural Resource Management in the Moore River Catchment

19<sup>th</sup>  
Aug  
2014

