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2015

Stabilising unproductive land using NyPa grass

The Cudoralcarra lake west of Moora was a hive of activity on 27th August, as a team of twenty planters with shovels embarked on planting 8,000 stems of NyPa Forage grass for the Hamilton family. The project was initiated by Jim Hamilton as he sought a way to stabilise the degraded soil around the lake and provide stock feed if needed.

Moore Catchment Council (MCC) are running this innovative project in partnership with the Hamiltons, NyPa Australia and Moora-Miling Pasture Improvement Group using funding through the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council's (NACC) Federally funded Sustainable Agriculture demonstration sites program. Rachel Walmsley, MCC's NRM Officer said "NyPa Forage is a perennial salt loving native American forage grass that has been selectively bred over the past 20 years. The NyPa plants have an exceptional capacity to move salt out of the water that it takes up in respiration, this is due to its deep root structure and it's very efficient salt gland." NyPa Forage has featured in a remediation project at Gillingarra and has showed a considerable ability to stabilise a bare salt affected paddock.

John Leake, NyPa Australia, and Raymond Matthews from Wickepin, an experienced NyPa grower, delivered the seedlings and also instructed the planting crew on how to plant into the pre-prepared rip lines. Rachel said "Jim also wanted to have a go with planting using a tractor and tree planter to see if that was an effective planting method. Unfortunately it just wasn't as efficient as the hand planters. Hand-held tree planters also didn't work because the plants are bare rooted and have no weight." The planting team, whose normal job is picking local oranges, planted all the seedlings in less than 3 hours.

The demonstration site has been split into 3 densities – 1, 2 and 4 metres as an experiment. A follow up field day in Autumn 2016 will show off the project site and also be an opportunity for local farmers to investigate NyPa for their own properties. For more information please contact MCC on 9653 1355.



Jim Hamilton inspects his new NyPa



Planting crew from Moora

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

