

Exciting New Technology for Sowing Broombush

Sightings of the Moore Catchment Council (MCC)'s precision air seeder around the district have generated plenty of interest according to Broombush Project Officer, Sarah Bellamy. Usually used for horticultural crops, the PTO-driven seeder was adapted for MCC's broombush project to sow *Melaleuca uncinata* at 33 cm spacings for broombush fencing. MCC successfully sourced \$132,500 from the federally-funded National Landcare Program (NLP) and the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) last year to look at establishment of broombush from seed and seedlings.

Over the past couple of months, Sarah has been busy sowing broombush seed between Bindi Bindi and Greenough. All receiving a similar rainfall, the 12 sites varied in area between 4ha and 12ha. Three cultivars of *Melaleuca* have been sown and Sarah will be comparing germination rates, according to soil type, and the degree of salinity of the site. "The initial harvest of the broombush will vary with site conditions but we expect it will be five to seven years, with a subsequent harvest six years later," she says.

As the melaleuca seed is so small, the seed was first pelleted using peas. Sarah says the pelleting of seed will be further fine-tuned ready for next sowing season when further areas are sown. Farmer response to the broombush project has been more than encouraging, with enquiries this year to sow more than 1,000ha.



Above: Sarah Bellamy, Broombush Project Officer, alongside the PTO-driven seeder recently adapted to sow Broombush (*Melaleuca uncinata*).

For further information, contact Sarah Bellamy on 9651 8091.

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Upcoming Events:

- **Aquaculture Open Day**
TAFE Northam
October 13 (to be confirmed)
RSVP (08) 9622 3905.
- **Moora Show**
September 25
Visit the MCC display!
- **SGSL Saltland Pastures Field Walk**
Buntine
October 21
RSVP (08) 9664 2030

Help Save The Black Cockatoo

Many people in the Moore Catchment are probably noticing that the Rainbirds are back.

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos have begun their annual migration to their wheatbelt breeding sites and in some places breeding has already begun.

If Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos return to your property each year around July to August and stay throughout spring you probably have them

Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

RECOVERY PROJECT

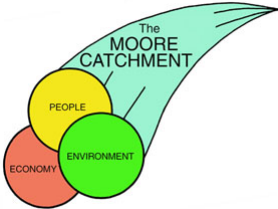
project officer: LEONIE McMAHON

address: BIRDS AUSTRALIA, 71 OCEANIC DRIVE, FLOREAT WA 6014
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breeding in your area. They are endangered and much can be done to assist them.

If you wish to find out more you can visit the **Birds Australia WA website** at: www.birdswa.iinet.net.au (the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

Recovery Project is found in the projects section) or contact the Project Officer,
Leonie McMahon. Ph: 9287 2448. Mobile: 0438 678492
Email: ljmcmahon@bigpond.com



Moore Catchment News – Spring Update –

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Growing Lucerne: Site Preparation Recommendations

If you are thinking of sowing lucerne next year, then now is the time to prepare. The WA Lucerne Growers' (WALG) has some straightforward recommendations in selecting a site for the deep rooted perennial:

- preferably a recharge area
- well drained
(a site that does not waterlog for more than 3 or 4 days)
- soil pH_{Ca} 4.8 or above

Lime should be applied to marginal pH soils preferably the year before sowing. Likewise, weed control needs some prior thought because young lucerne plants do not compete well with weeds. If you are not sowing into stubble with good weed control, spray top in spring ready for sowing lucerne the following year.

WALG membership costs \$30 per year and a further \$100 will get you two on-farm visits by a technician pre and post planting to advise on site selection, soil type, sowing machinery and pest control requirements.

'weed control needs some prior thought... young lucerne plants do not compete well with weeds.'

WALG sourced National Landcare Program funding last year to extend its activities into the Northern Agricultural Region. The group offers an Assistance Package to help members successfully establish lucerne.

For further information contact Tom Bailey at the Katanning Department of Agriculture on 98 213333 or Email: tbailey@agric.wa.gov.au



Successful lucerne establishment at Gillingarra

Saltland Pastures = Fodder Reserves

The potential of saltland pastures is of particular interest to four farmers in the Moore Catchment Council. Backed by the research project, Sustainable Grazing on Saline Land, these landholders are each carrying out a range of treatments to boost productivity on salt affected sites on their properties.

Sustainable Grazing on Saline Land is a subprogram of Land, Water & Wool and a joint initiative of AWI, Land & Water Australia, MLA and the WA Department of Agriculture.

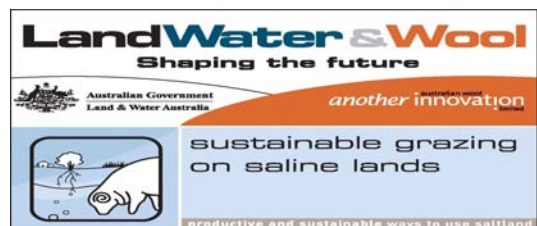
Miling farmer **Tony White** set up salt bush alleys based on the width of his boom and has since sown tall wheat grass, puccinellia and Italian ryegrass in the inter-row. Tony says his initial goal was to get some ground-cover established on the scalded site but he now wants to focus on boosting productivity.

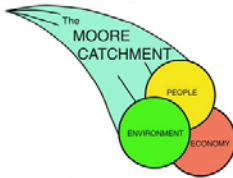
Brad Tonkin has previously had success direct seeding saltbush seed collected on-farm on salty sites at Coomberdale. Germination was poor last year because of the dry start and Brad will re-sow the site in September. He has also had a Wickepin contractor sow saltbush with a niche seeder this season and has carried out a range of liming and deep ripping treatments across the site. Brad will also be looking at establishing Rhodes grass on the sandy loam but he reckons sheep may preferentially graze the grass.

Lex Langridge is looking at animal live weight gain from various pasture types, including Elephant Grass under different grazing regimes. Lex's project, west of Gillingarra, is also investigating water use in potentially waterlogged areas.

Peter Kelly is aiming to regain productivity on a salty site at Gillingarra adjacent to the Moore River. Initially, Peter will be covering in his drains and installing spinner drains to direct surface water off the site. He will then be establishing saltbush and saltland pastures.

There are more than a dozen SGSL projects across the Northern Agricultural Region and the program encourages farmers to take a bus trip to look at how producers in other regions are dealing with salt affected pastures. SGSL will be holding a **field walk** on saltland pastures on October 21st in the Buntine – Jibberding area. Contact Gavin Bignell from the Liebe Group on 9664 2030 for more information about this event.





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Floating Tanks Transform Inland Aquaculture

New technology involving Semi Intensive Floating Tanks has the potential to transform the inland aquaculture industry according to TAFE researcher Dr Gavin Sarre, who is based at Northam.

He said the soon to be patented, **Semi Intensive Floating Tank System (SIFTS)** gets around issues that have traditionally limited aquaculture production such as predators, harvesting the fish and waste removal.

According to Dr Sarre, SIFTS is a low cost technology that would suit many landholders with existing water bodies on their farms. TAFE estimates that yields of 15-20t/ha are achievable with the system which relies on airlift pumps which exchange water up to four times every hour.

This low pressure air is also used to drive the waste removal system, allowing 90% of the waste to be removed in minutes. The waste is collected as a thick sludge and has applications for plant fertilizers and methane generation.

“the ...system gets around issues that have traditionally limited aquaculture production”

CY O'Connor TAFE at Northam has 40 m³ of culture in place which can hold up to 3200 kg of fish. At present, saltwater trout and mulloway are being grown and barramundi will be stocked later in the year. Watch the local press for developments.

Australian Government Envirofund supports local on-ground action

The Australian Government Envirofund provides grants of up to \$30 000 to support on-ground actions aimed at conserving the local environment and promoting sustainable resource use. Individuals as well as community groups can apply for the grants, as long as the project activities are shown to have a high public benefit.

Examples of activities that are eligible for Envirofund grants include:

- Planting of native vegetation to stabilise soil, reduce erosion and/or enhance biodiversity
- Fencing off areas of remnant vegetation
- Relocating watering points and fencing off watercourses to protect streamside biodiversity and water quality
- Demonstrations or trials of sustainable farming, forestry, fishing or other land use practices which are relatively untried in the region.
- Skill and knowledge development for resource managers

Funding has been obtained for a number of projects in the Moore region over the past two years, with more applications currently waiting for approval. Current projects include fencing off a section of the Moore River to allow the natural bush to regenerate; fencing off remnant vegetation and planting 8 000 trees to create habitat for the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo; creating a drive trail to showcase landcare activities in the Calingiri-New Norcia Land Conservation District and working with local schools to make clay seedballs for use in revegetation projects.

If you've got an idea for a project that will help our local environment, the Natural Resource Management Officers in the Moore region (see back page for contact details) can help you apply for funding. The next round of funding is expected to open in November – we look forward to hearing from you before then!

Cropping and Grazing Under Spotlight

The livestock component of mixed farming enterprises will be scrutinised on 20 farms across the Northern Agricultural Region over the next four years.

Grain and Graze is a collaboration between Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Wool Innovation Limited, Grains Research & Development Corporation and Land & Water Australia. The program offers mixed farming enterprises the opportunity to significantly increase their profitability, while managing their natural resources.

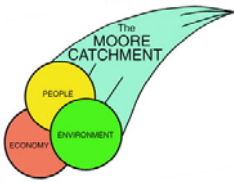
One of eight projects across Australia, the Northern Agricultural Region's Grain and Graze project involves local grower groups Evergreen, Liebe, Mingenew-Irwin and Victoria Plains.

The five demonstration farms within each of the groups will be looking at available feed throughout the year and comparing the productivity of annual and perennial pastures and cropping. A future extension of the project to be funded by NACC will look at sustainability issues such as water use.

Northern Agricultural Region Coordinator, Phil Barrett-Lennard says the Grain & Graze program offers producers in the region the resources and expertise to strengthen their business while supporting their natural resources. The project will run for the next four years.

Contact your local farmer group for further information, or visit the Grain and Graze website at www.grainandgraze.com.au.





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What is the MCC?

The Moore Catchment Council is the body that administers natural resource management in the Moore region on behalf of the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC). One of four subregions within NACC, the Moore region extends across the surface water catchment of the Moore River. The Moore River catchment covers 1.38 million hectares, linking the Shires of Gingin, Dandaragan, Coorow, Victoria Plains, Moora, Dalwallinu, Carnamah and Perenjori. Representation on the Moore Catchment Council is from each of these shires with members drawn from both shire councils and the community. The Department of Environment, Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Department of Agriculture also have representatives on the Council.

The role of Moore Catchment Council is to promote integrated catchment management and to coordinate efforts in the catchment to get the most effective action on the ground.

Your local representatives on the Moore Catchment Council are:

Dandaragan: Brian Cahill & John Longman
Gingin: Harry White & Alan Alderson
Coorow: Jim Ovens
Victoria Plains: Barry Johnson, Geoff Erickson & Sarah Mason

Why Join The MCC?

- Receive a FREE quarterly newsletter updating you on NRM issues in the Moore catchment
- Vote for your representative at the AGM
- Shape the direction of natural resource management in the Moore catchment by getting involved with a MCC committee (eg. project development committee, education committee)
- Have your views represented to NACC, the regional natural resource management body for the Northern Agricultural Region

Your Membership Form Is Inside!

Need Help With Natural Resource Management?

Your local Natural Resource Management Officers (NRMOs) can:

- work with community groups and individuals to develop and implement solutions to environmental problems
- provide information on funding sources and assist in preparing funding applications for environmental projects
- organise training/workshops for community members who want to know more about particular environmental issues
- put you in touch with others who can help
- work with local schools to increase environmental awareness

All you have to do is give us a call!

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The draft natural resource management strategy for the Northern Agricultural Region is now available on the NACC website at www.nacc.com.au. This strategy will guide state and commonwealth investment into natural resource management in our region for the next three years.