‘The grass is greener’

Proceedings of the 24th Annual Conference of the Grassland Society of NSW Inc.

Edited by David Brouwer, Neil Griffiths, Ian Blackwood

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The Grassland Society of NSW

A unique blend of people with a common interest in developing our most important resource – our Grasslands

The Grassland Society of NSW was formed in March 1985. The Society now has about 500 members and associates, 75% of whom are farmers and graziers. The balance are agricultural scientists, farm advisers, consultants and executives or representatives of organisations concerned with fertilisers, seeds, chemicals and machinery.

The aims of the Society are to advance the investigation of problems affecting grasslands husbandry and to encourage the adoption into practice of results of research and practical experience. The Society holds an annual conference, publishes a quarterly newsletter, holds field days, and has established regional branches throughout the State.

Membership is open to any person or company interested in grassland management and the aims of the Society.

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Contents

The Grassland Society of NSW ................................................................. 2
Conference Sponsors .............................................................................. 4
Preface .................................................................................................... 7
Invited papers ........................................................................................ 8
  The Manning Valley – T Launders ......................................................... 9
  Sustainable beef cattle production systems – A Edwards ....................... 13
  Upper Barrington pasture improvement – J Laurie ............................... 16
  Rumen function and lameness in highly managed pasture based dairy systems – J Gibbs ...... 20
  Comparing Gippsland to Walcha – P Notman ...................................... 26
  Personal health and wellbeing – T Farrell ........................................... 30
  Land sector accounting and the national carbon accounting system – Dr W Slattery ......... 33
  The role of native pastures in the Mid North Coast landscape – CM Ross .................. 36
  Nutritional management options to reduce enteric methane emissions from NSW beef and dairy herds – RS Hegarty ......................................................... 40
  The challenges in managing cattle herds for growth and reproductive efficiency on pastures in north-coastal New South Wales – DW Hennessy ............................... 46
  Higher production from Creebank pasture – D Williams ............................. 55
  Treechangers - 50% and increasing the beef supply. Growing big, healthy and happy Angus cattle on the NSW Mid-North Coast – R and E Elphick ......................................................................................... 60
  Impacts and implications of climate change for the pastoral industries – AL Cowie and RJ Martin ................................................................................... 65
  Pasture production at Budgeree Holsteins – C Cowan .............................. 69
Contributed papers .................................................................................... 72
  Selection of a seeding Swazi grass – TA Campbell and Dl Officer .................. 73
  Soil carbon sequestration potential under perennial pastures in the mid-north coast of New South Wales – KY Chan and D McCoy ......................................................... 75
  A lime movement experiment, Walcha NSW – C Edwards, M Duncan, C Harris and A Burgess ........................................................................ 79
  Pasture growth from poultry litter. Part 1 – N Griffiths and S Richards .................. 82
  Pasture growth from poultry litter. Part 2: Comparing the cost of poultry litter – N Griffiths ... 84
  Suppression of kikuyu grass to allow oversowing in autumn – N Griffiths, T Cook and P Beale ........................................................................ 87
  Seed yield, dormancy and seedling survival of some perennial tropical grasses in northern New South Wales – GM Lodge, LJH McCormick and BR Roworth ......................................................... 90
Producers dealing with problem pasture species that cause seed contamination and production losses in lamb production systems – J Mason and K Behrendt

94

Simple rules to use when buying seed of tropical perennial grasses
- LH McCormick, GM Lodge, SP Boschma and S Murray

97

Potential production of irrigated dairy forages on coastal NSW – JS Neal

101

Effect of fertilisers on pasture growth in carpet grass dominated pastures
- C Rose and H Rose

103

Effect of fertiliser and rest period on legume abundance in carpet grass dominated pastures – C Rose and H Rose

105

Effect of fertiliser and rest period on grass composition in carpet grass dominated pastures – C Rose and H Rose

107

Effect of rest period on growth rates of carpet grass dominated pastures
- C Rose and H Rose

109

Growth rates of water couch (Paspalum distichum) and spike rush (Eleocharis sphacelata) in two wetland grazing systems on the North Coast
- C Rose, H Rose and P Hirst

113

Feed quality of water couch (Paspalum distichum) and spike rush (Eleocharis sphacelata) on the North Coast of NSW – C Rose, H Rose and P Hirst

115

Producing 'greener' grass with legumes enhances Sustainability – JM Scott

117

Productivity and nutrient availability on a Ferrosol: biochar, lime and fertilise
- K Sinclair, P Slavich, L van Zwiets and A Downie

119

GPS livestock tracking: a pasture utilisation monitor for the grazing industry
- MG Trotter, DW Lamb and GN Flinch

124

Differences in intrinsic water-use efficiency between four Austrodanthonia species
- CM Waters and J Virgona

126
Preface

I extend a very warm welcome to all members attending this 24th Annual Conference of the Grassland Society of NSW. I would also like to welcome those who are not members of the Society and I encourage you to join us. The benefits of membership are well worth the annual subscription of $50.00.

This is the first conference of the Grassland Society to take place at Taree. The Manning Valley offers so much to primary producers involved in cropping, pasture and animal production and this conference is an ideal venue for everyone to discuss and see 'cutting edge' technology in a relaxed environment.

Plant and animal production depend on new technologies to complement sound agricultural science. The Grassland Society brings together producers, agronomists, agri-business firms, animal scientists and teachers of agriculture to review and exchange high quality information relevant to grassland farming. One important objective of the Society is the promotion of animal and plant production systems that embrace improved efficiencies and environmental responsibility. Pastures, both native and introduced, are the powerhouse of agriculture in all forms across Australia. They sustain grazing animals and importantly, provide for microbial activity under the ground. Pastures both depend on and improve soil health. In turn, they produce forage for animal production, suppress invasion from unproductive species and protect otherwise bare ground from erosion.

This conference examines the very topical subjects of soil health, pasture production and animal performance. As well, the emerging challenges of climate change and its effect on animals and soils are discussed by prominent scientists.

The organising Committee has put much time and effort into selecting expert speakers who will bring delegates up to date with current aspects of pasture and animal technologies. The conference convenor, Ray Johnston and his team are to be congratulated and thanked for putting together such a stimulating program of formal sessions and farm tours.

I would like to acknowledge our many sponsors representing corporate and government sectors who regularly support the Grassland Society. Conferences of this nature do not happen without the substantial assistance of our sponsors. Furthermore, I encourage all conference delegates to visit the well-prepared commercial displays and exhibits. They are full of current information on new pasture varieties, fertiliser products, herbicides and management strategies to assist producers and their advisers. Please take time to talk with representatives of the trade exhibits. They are a valuable source of information and are always happy to discuss product developments with conference delegates.

Finally, I thank all of you who are here to enjoy and learn from this conference. The Grassland Society is keen to maintain the high standards of previous years, and we invite suggestions to improve future activities. Please feel free to let any member of the Organising Committee know your thoughts in this regard. After all, the Grassland Society is only as effective as its members and depends on them for continued existence. I also encourage non-members to join and enjoy the many benefits of membership. Application forms can be printed from our internet site: www.grasslandnsw.com.au and are available from the registration desk at this conference.

Best wishes for a most enjoyable conference.

Mick Duncan
President