



THE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Pastures Revisited: Getting The Management Right



PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Wednesday 19 July,
Thursday 20 July,
1989

Tamworth Workmen's Club
Tamworth, N.S.W., 2340

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 4TH CONFERENCE OF
THE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

PASTURES REVISITED - GETTING

THE MANAGEMENT RIGHT

INVITED AND CONTRIBUTED PAPERS AND POSTER SUMMARIES FROM
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THE GRASSLAND OF N.S.W. INC.

The Grassland Society of NSW was formed in March 1985. The society now has 500 members, 75% of whom are farmers and graziers. The balance are agricultural scientists, farm, advisors, consultants, and executives and representatives of organizations concerned with fertilizers, seeds, chemicals and machinery.

The aims of the society are to provide opportunities for members to meet in conference, at field days or socially, to exchange information, ideas and experiences relating to grassland.

Other aims of the society are to advance the investigation of problems affecting grassland husbandry and to encourage the adoption into practice of results from research and practical experience. The society holds an annual conference, publishes a quarterly newsletter, holds field days and is establishing regional branches.

Membership is open to any person or company interested in grassland management and the aims of the society. Ordinary (including family or farm units), student and corporate membership is available.

The corporate members of the society are:

Australian Fertilizers Ltd.,

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PREFACE

Agriculture involves manipulation of the ecosystem in order to produce a commodity which may be used directly by the farmer and his family or sold for profit. Human beings by interfering in the balanced, stable ecosystem have in some cases brought about instability. Producers may only act in good faith according to the best knowledge at the time but occasionally changes may occur that are not immediately apparent. It may take a generation or longer for them to be manifest. An increase in soil acidity, caused by excessive nitrate and organic matter build up associated with the wide adoption of legume based pastures without lime input during the past forty years, illustrates the point. Changes can also be seen in the increased spread of weeds, decline in soil structure and increase in soil salinity. The other side of this argument is the fact that agriculture has made enormous increases in productivity by implementing change and this must be weighed against adverse consequences.

Once any process of change has commenced, increased effort must be given to researching and monitoring the situation to show how any adverse change can be minimised and to discover technologies that will ensure a sustainable agricultural system in the future. It is critical that agricultural research is encouraged and financed adequately. The results of research must also be communicated in order to have an effect.

Pastures are the most important component of a sustainable agricultural system for the future. Their management, to ensure sustainability whilst meeting the need for food, fibre and products used in modern living, is of critical concern. Farmers, as a group, have the greatest respect for the environment in which they operate. Yet their activities towards conservation largely go unheralded and are glossed over in the mass media. A false impression of farmers as exploiters is promoted by many who are ignorant of the facts. This problem must be addressed. Science has an important part in showing the way to sustainability.

The Grassland Society of N.S.W., by organising this conference, which concentrates on the theme of pasture management, is endeavouring to provide a forum for frank exchange of information gained from practical experience and formal research.

I congratulate the organising committee convened by Warren McDonald, for arranging topics for discussion which cover all the important aspects of managing pastures.

John Read
President

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