



*NSW Grassland
Society*

Dubbo RSL Club
Brisbane Street, Dubbo

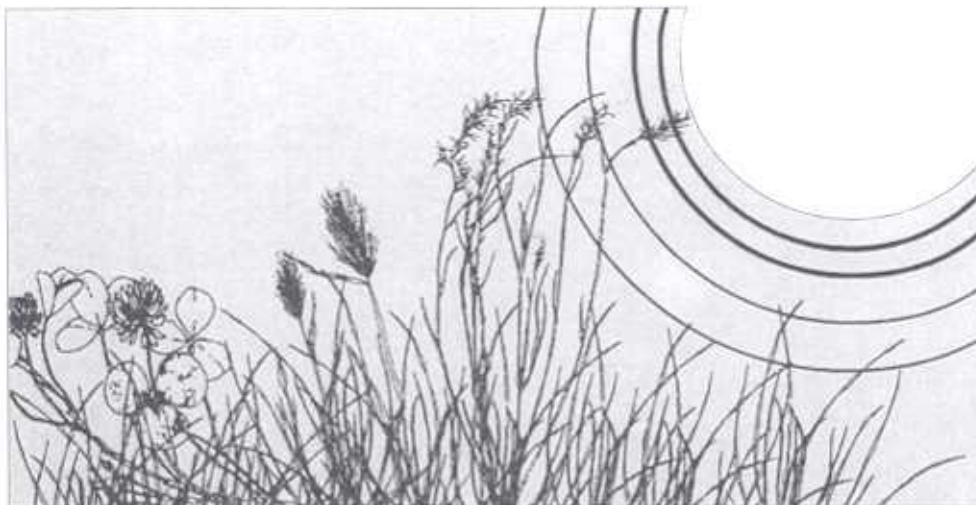
28th-30th July

Edited by Alison Bowman & David Michalk

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12th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1997



PASTURES UNDER ADVERSE CONDITIONS?

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWELFTH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE OF THE GRASSLAND
SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Invited Papers, Contributed Papers and Poster Summaries
from the Conference held at the Dubbo RSL Club
Brisbane St., DUBBO, NSW, 2830

July 28 - 30, 1997

Edited by Alston Bowman and David Michalk

Editorial review team: Pat Hulme, Di Foran, Cathy Waters and Hadyn Lloyd Davies

THE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

**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 1200 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 fertiliser, seeds, chemical 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 grasslands.

Other aims of the Society are to advance the investigation of problems affecting grassland 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 is establishing regional branches throughout the State.

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.

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PREFACE

Pastures under adverse conditions? is the theme chosen for the 1997 conference. Pondering on this theme from a southern tablelands perspective in this year's drought, I began to wonder when conditions are not adverse. The Dubbo conference committee have also made this point in that many of the situations encountered by our producers, and often considered normal by them, are in fact adverse. Soil characteristics, climatic conditions or the prevailing economic circumstances all cause adversity to the grazing industries. However, in the face of this adversity we can usually find a landholder somewhere who has the ability to utilise these conditions to make a living, or a scientist who can provide us with the technology needed to successfully manage the conditions encountered. It is this sort of information that has been the hallmark of our annual conferences where producers and scientists combine to bring up-to-date briefing on a wide range of topics to our members.

In 1997, we are again pioneering new territory as this is the first time we have held our annual conference in Dubbo, and this has resulted in a slightly more western flavour than normal. Perhaps it is perceived that conditions in this region are more adverse than the "high" rainfall zone!. One of the strengths of the NSW Grassland Society Conferences has always been the substantial contribution made by producers who speak from their own experiences and mesh this practical perspective with the expertise of scientists working in related areas. This year is no exception, and the Dubbo Conference Committee has managed to pair a producer speaker and a technical speaker giving their perspectives on each of the session topics. I'm sure that you will find the blend of practice and theory as interesting as I did when I was reviewing the papers.

A relatively new feature for 1997 is a session which emphasises the financing and economic returns from pasture improvement. These papers should prove valuable to most of our members. In these times of adverse financial conditions there is a small glimmer of light for our members with the recent improvement in wool prices - would that we see a similar trend in cattle prices in the near future.

It is important to note that the NSW Grassland Society is tackling issues that are important internationally as well as to Australia. I have just returned from the 18th International Grasslands Conference in Canada where a major area of discussion was grazing method and stocking rate effects on animal production from pastures. NSW Grasslands is discussing exactly those issues in a session at Dubbo. There were also impassioned pleas in Canada that grassland scientists and producers both inform and educate politicians and bureaucrats of the vital role that grassland research and extension plays, not only in meeting the food and fibre needs of the 21st century, but in protecting the global environment by reducing erosion and improving the quality of surface water. It is hoped that these same messages can be conveyed in the strongest terms to our own politicians from the papers presented at this Conference.

Congratulations to the local committee at Dubbo for the hard work they have put into organising what promises to be another successful Grassland Society of NSW Conference.

Haydn Lloyd-Davies
President