



THE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*"Getting the Best from your Farm"*



Tuesday 13th July  
Wednesday 14th July  
Thursday 15th July  
1999

*Bicentennial Function Centre  
253 Crawford Street, Queanbeyan NSW*

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 14TH CONFERENCE**

## **Getting the best from your farm**



### **PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW**

Invited papers, contributed papers and poster summaries  
from the Conference held  
at the Bicentennial Function Centre  
Crawford Street, Queanbeyan, NSW  
on 13-15 July, 1999

Edited by  
Denys Garden, Haydn Lloyd Davies, David Michalk and Hugh Dove



## 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 fertilisers, 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 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.

### OFFICER BEARERS OF THE NSW GRASSLAND SOCIETY -1998/99

#### STATE EXECUTIVE

**Haydn Lloyd Davies** (President)  
**Don Arnott** (Vice President)  
**Malcolm Campbell** (Secretary)  
**Jim Dellow** (Treasurer)  
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*North Western Branch Representative:*

Stephan Millar

*Northern Tablelands Branch Representative:*

Mick Duncan

*Central Branch Representatives:*

Frank McRae

*South West Slopes & Riverina Branch Representatives:*

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*Western Slopes & Plains Representative:*

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**Mike Keys, Chris Houghton** (Pre-conference tours)  
**Fiona Leech, Mike Keys, Katie Hollingsworth** (Pasture competition)  
*Committee:* Peter Simpson, Sari Glover, Lori McGarva  
Noel Teys, David Gregory, Andrew Nixon

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## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### Day One - Tuesday 13th July

- 12.00 pm Elective bus trips (NB. 12.00 pm start Yass, 1.00 pm start Queanbeyan).  
Registration booth open 12.00 to 1.00 pm.
- 6.00 pm Happy hour & pre-conference registrations, Bicentennial Function Centre, Queanbeyan.

### Day Two - Wednesday 14th July

- 8.00 am Conference Registration.
- 9.20 am Welcome and conference opening - *Haydn Lloyd Davies*, President of the Grasslands Society of NSW Inc.
- 9.30 am Major landscape issues and developments affecting the high rainfall southern zone of the Murray-Darling Basin  
*Don Blackmore*, Chief Executive, Murray-Darling Basin Commission, Canberra.
- 10.10 am Kyoto Greenhouse Agreement - an action agenda for the farming community - *Ian Carruthers*, Executive  
Manager, Greenhouse Policy Group, Australian Greenhouse Office.
- 10.45 am Plenary discussion.
- 11.00 am **Morning tea**
- 11.30 am Recognising and managing landscape and pasture diversity - *Peter Simpson*, NSW Agriculture, Goulburn.
- 12.00 pm Managing landscape diversity on a whole farm basis - *Rob Lance*, "Stillwater", Collector via Goulburn.
- 12.20 pm Plenary discussion.
- 12.30 pm **Lunch plus trade and poster displays**
- 1.45 pm Poster presentation session.
- 2.15 pm Supplementation as a strategy for sheep and cattle producers - *Geoff Robards*, University of New South Wales.
- 2.45 pm Drought management of pasture, stock and people - *David Mitchell*, "Bimbimbie", Delegate.
- 3.05 pm Plenary discussion.
- 3.15 pm **Afternoon tea**
- 3.45 pm PROGRAZE and PROGRAZE PLUS - *Phil Graham*, NSW Agriculture, Yass.
- 4.10 pm On-farm implementation of PROGRAZE and PROGRAZE PLUS - *Malcolm Peake*, "Bogo", Yass.
- 4.45 pm Annual General Meeting of the Grasslands Society of New South Wales Inc.
- 7.00 pm Conference Dinner.  
Speaker - Professor Derek Tribe, "Agriculture in the nineties; likely trends into the 21st Century"

### Day Three - Thursday 15th July

- 8.30 am Balancing off-site impacts of agriculture, community aspirations and economic reality - *Anna Ridley*,  
Agriculture Victoria, Rutherglen.
  - 9.00 am The Acid Soil Action program for Southern NSW - *Sari Glover*, NSW Agriculture, Queanbeyan.
  - 9.20 am Whole farm management of acid soils - *Bruce Clements*, NSW Agriculture, Bathurst.
  - 9.45 am Living with and managing acid soils - *George Elliot*, "Oak Hill", Binalong.
  - 10.05 am Plenary discussion
  - 10.15 am **Morning tea plus trade and poster displays.**
  - 11.00 am Pasture selection and management for water use - *Geoff Beale*, DLWC, Wagga.
  - 11.30am Productive management of saline soils - *Andrew Southwell*, "Glenflesk", Rye Park.
  - 11.50 am Plenary discussion.
  - 12.00 pm **Lunch**
  - 1.15 pm Poster presentation session.
  - 1.45 pm Sown temperate pasture decline - fact or fiction? - *Keith Hutchinson*, UNE, Armidale.
  - 2.15 pm Managing native grass-based pastures for sustainability - *John Fleming*, "Marinka", Ben Lomond.
  - 2.40 pm Developing and maintaining productive pastures - *John Nixon*, "Merryvale", Roslyn.
  - 3.10 pm Conference review. *Peter Orchard*, Program Leader, Pastures, NSW Agriculture.
  - 3.30 pm Conference Close
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## Preface

This 14th Conference of our Society has a more traditional format than the one at our successful 13th Conference at Orange, where we visited mid-conference properties owned by some of the presenters and we had the privilege of seeing the prize winning pasture in our pasture competition. However, the committee has again set a very high standard, and I encourage you to enjoy the conference and take from it the many important points raised by the speakers.

This has again been a difficult year for our members. Despite the weather being kinder to them than in 1997, both wool and cattle prices have been abysmal. Allowing for inflation, compared with 1930's prices, the price we are getting for wool is the equivalent of eight pence a pound. With prices like this and rising costs it is very difficult to consider practices which may or may not necessarily increase production, but are environmentally highly desirable. An example of what I mean is liming to correct soil acidity. Another would be tree planting to prevent salination of streams.

As we approach the end of this century, there are some issues of importance which may not have concerned a similar conference in 1899! There is an old saying that I heard in Britain in the 40's which is relevant to us today. That saying was, "Farm as if you are going to live forever; live as if you are going to die to-morrow". It concerns me that there is an increasing separation of outlook between metropolitan based and country based people. There seem to be perceptions among some vocal minorities in the city and reported in the media that farming activity is removing all native vegetation (particularly trees), poisoning plants with chemicals and ill-treating our grazing stock. We know that these perceptions are far removed from the truth, and some of the papers at this conference address these issues.

Several papers deal with avoiding soil degradation, whether it be salinity, acidity or erosion. The theme of the conference is 'Getting the best use of your farm'. This certainly does not mean maximising your returns regardless of future harm, but responsibly carrying out sustainable practices.

The papers at this conference will be given by producers, scientists, and people with responsibility for relating farm practice to environmental problems. The standard of papers is again very high. I want to mention particularly the papers being presented by farmer speakers. Truly, the ideas and enthusiasm of our rural producers are outstanding, especially given the difficult problems they have to deal with.

On your behalf, I want to take the opportunity to thank our sponsors, without whose support we would have to charge very much more, or at worst be unable to hold a conference. In particular, and again on your behalf, I want to thank NSW Agriculture for their tremendous input into the Society and the Conference. The local committees have toiled magnificently and way beyond the call of official duty to put on what we consider a worthy conference.

This is my last conference as your president. It has been an unqualified pleasure to be associated with such a dynamic and committed group of people for three years both at central office in Orange and at the branch level at Goulburn/Queanbeyan. Enjoy the conference, and every good wish for the future of the Society.

**Haydn Lloyd Davies**  
President