



# Bulletin

ISSUE 4 | APRIL 2008

Stipa is named after the genus of grasses now called *Australostipa*—one of the most common *Stipas* is speargrass. Stipa Native Grasses Association promotes and demonstrates the profitable management of native grasslands for resilient ecological health.

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Central West  
catchment  
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## Stipa Native Grasses Association

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## 2008 PUBLICATION

### DEADLINES:

June Newsletter: 6 June  
August Bulletin: 4 August  
October Bulletin: 30 September

## Message from the Chair - Colin Seis



What a big difference a few years make! The interest in native grass and native grasslands has grown enormously since the early days of Stipa. When Daryl Cluff started running native grass identification field days about 10 years ago there was only limited interest in native grasses. But because of Daryl's good work and the further development of Stipa, the interest in native grass species and how to manage them, has grown to a point where it is now common to see 50 people attend some of the on-property native grass identification and management days we have been running through Stipa and the Central West Catchment Management Authority.

This same level of interest is also being shown interstate where I have been involved in similar days. Much of the interest has been helped by the fact that we have experienced

some of the driest years for a long time and people have at last become aware of the resilience and drought tolerance of our native grass species and associated grasslands. Couple this with the ever increasing cost of inputs such as fertiliser, herbicides and insecticides that are used with more conventional agriculture and introduced pasture species, and landholders are being forced to have a serious look at their bottom line and the drought tolerance of their existing land management techniques.

The big winners in this change of thinking will be landholders, and at last people are seriously looking at native grass plants and the eventual restoration of some of Australia's grasslands.

In our bid to provide members with relevant information about the use and management of native grasses, I urge you to continue supporting the Stipa workshop programme and to start planning to attend the national conference in Horsham in November.

## National conference program coming together - Sue Rahilly

This year, Stipa takes the highly regarded National Native Grasslands Conference to Horsham in Victoria. The Conference Committee is confident that this 6th conference will live up to the reputation of being at the forefront of our field. It is titled, *Regenerative Native Grassland Management for Social, Financial and Ecological Gains*.

Sheldon Atwood of Carrus Land Systems, Logan, Utah, USA, returns as plenary speaker. He will share his ideas of land management which are profitable and build conservation in an integral manner. Sheldon and his partners will also present a free one day seminar on the Wednesday, 12 November, following the conference.

Once again, land managers will feature strongly amongst the presenters. Norm Smith will travel down from Wellington, NSW to explain how he runs his Merino stud,

Glenwood Merinos, on native grassland pastures. Annabel Walsh of Wentworth, NSW, will describe her successful endeavours to regenerate native rangelands using her animals. Graeme Hand, who has a property near Hamilton, Victoria, will describe how he has turned an annual weedy pasture into a perennial grassland with many native species.

Dr Paul Gibson-Roy, Research Fellow, University of Melbourne, is well known to all Victorians interested in native grasses. He will describe his enterprise to re-establish native grasses.

A field trip is in the process of being organised, with more information on this in the next publication.

In the mean time, mark your diaries for 9 - 12 November, and complete an expression of interest form at [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au).

## Discussion of Stipa's purpose

- Graeme Hand & Sue Rahilly

Stipa's purpose is to promote and demonstrate the profitable management of native grasslands for resilient ecological health.

There are many Stipa members whose profitable grasslands are becoming more diverse with a greater component of native species. This has been brought about, principally, by grazing management, sometimes augmented by Pasture Cropping and/or No Kill Cropping.

The land management Stipa promotes does not involve seeding of native grass species. Many Stipa members feel that broadacre seeding of native grass species is unnecessary, very expensive and unproven. By the same token, we believe that "locking up" country is detrimental to grassland health.

As a distinguished speaker at the Mudgee Conference said of regenerative grazing, "We use animals to create what we want."

New Stipa Committee member, Sam Johnson, recently put his attitude to Stipa and grasslands very eloquently:

(Stipa is)....."a group that is at the forefront of developing regenerative land management. I have thought since about the role of Stipa and native grasses and feel that the description in the newsletter is about right. The description reads, 'Stipa continues to promote to all land managers the use of native grasses to achieve profit from a healthy landscape.' This links financial health with ecological health

and highlights the role of native grasses in achieving that goal. I think we are all interested in producing healthy, resilient landscapes which by definition are ones of diversity, relatively low input requirements, productive in any season and able to reproduce and develop. These are the qualities, in my opinion, where our native species have such a strong role to play. I personally have no qualms about non-native species being part of the mix if they are able to survive and reproduce and allow diversity to develop. We are finding that the improved non-native varieties are not as well adapted to the highly variable nature of our seasons and on their own produce a simple and unstable grassland which is not resilient. With the potential impact of climate change increasing variability and the inexorable rise of the costs of fertilisers and oil based inputs, native species are going to increase in their importance in attempting to achieve resilient and productive landscapes. I feel if we focus on the need to create resilient and productive landscapes then the role of native species (requiring few outside supports) becomes much easier to understand."

We hope this article draws out more success stories of regenerative and profitable land management for discussion.

***Those who are inspired by a model other than nature... are labouring in vain. - Leonardo Da Vinci***

### CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

6th National Native Grasslands Conference  
**Regenerative Grassland Management for Profitable, Ecological and Social Gains**  
9-11 November 2008, Horsham Victoria

**Abstract submission deadline: 29 August 2008**

Download more information & guidelines from the 2008 Conference page at [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au)  
See flyer on page 5 of this Bulletin

### STIPA PUBLICATION CONTRIBUTIONS

**Due dates:**

**June Newsletter: 6 June**  
**August Bulletin: 4 August**  
**October Bulletin: 30 September**

Stipa has editorial guidelines. Contact Ochre Communications or the Stipa office for a copy. All contributions must abide by the editorial guidelines.

**Send contributions to Ochre Communications**  
**PO Box 933 Dubbo NSW 2830 or**  
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**T: 02 6887 2288 or 0419 439 923**

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**T: 02 6885 1925 F: 02 6885 5737 M: 0419 611 302**

## WeaLth Project reaches funding targets

- Xanthe White

The turnaround in the season and plenty of summer rain around the Central West has helped the WeaLth Project achieve its targets early and allocate 100% of the funding.

The WeaLth Project was able to fund 19 Wire and Water projects with a total project area of 13,108 hectares. We also funded 17 machinery conversion projects – specifically for perennial pasture establishment and/or pasture cropping with a total project area of 18,354 hectares.

We are now in the stage of setting up monitoring kits with all our applicants which is part of the agreement with CMA. Through the monitoring we hope to see an improvement in ground cover and perenniality. This monitoring will provide applicants with information that enables them to modify their management so that they can regenerate their grasslands, improve soil health and increase profit.

Tim Woods of “Mt Nanima”, Wellington has successfully completed the conversion of a second-hand Horwood Bagshaw combine, which he refitted with an undercarriage frame carrying 16 double disc openers. He used the expertise of Wellington farmer, Rick Maurice and local suppliers and fabricators to create the machine which cost about \$30,000. The WeaLth Project grant covered the cost of purchase of the second-hand combine.

Good summer rain on Tim’s property and low stock numbers is now allowing him to sow cereal rye into long red grass at a rate of 40kg/ha with no added fertiliser. He believes the cereal rye will still have enough light to come through the native red grass.

“We haven’t ploughed here in six years. With this machine we plan to increase our perennial base while giving us more grazing options, particularly in winter. We want to build up our system without taking anything away,” said Mr Woods.

Mr Woods is also looking to do contract work with the newly-converted machine.



Tim Woods & Graeme Hand inspecting the results of sowing cereal rye into red grass on “Mt Nanima” with a converted Horwood Bagshaw combine, using double disc openers with press wheels on 12” spacings.



### News in brief

#### Stipa grass identification pages now on website:

Members of Stipa may have noticed some changes on the Stipa website of late, with updates occurring regularly and improvements being made to some popular features of the website, including the grass identification information. Pages from the new Perennial Stipa Calendar are now available on the website, along with PDF downloads for many of the listed grasses. Have a look at [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au).

#### Biodiversity Incentive Program funding now available in Central West NSW:

The Central West Catchment Management Authority (CWCMA) in NSW is currently seeking expressions of interest (EOI) in funding of biodiversity projects in the Central West catchment. EOIs are needed by 9 May. Further information is available by contacting the Dubbo CWCMA office or by downloading fact sheets from [www.cw.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cw.cma.nsw.gov.au).

## Winona Native Seeds

### FOR SALE

- Warrego seed—*Paspalidium distans*(graded)
- Armgrass Millet—*Brachiaria milliiformis*(graded)
  - Cotton Panic—*Digitaria brownii*
  - Red Grass—*Bothriochloa macra*

Contact: Colin Seis  
02 6375 9256

[colin@winona.net.au](mailto:colin@winona.net.au)

## 2008 calendar of events

More information & updated events at [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au)

### April

- 14 **Native Grass Identification Workshop**, Trangie Agricultural Research Station, 9.30am—3.30pm., with Colin Seis
- 15 **Combined Water Supply Planning with Brent Bannister (Water Dynamics) and Pasture Identification & Management with Colin Seis Workshops**, Coonabarabran, 9.30am—3.30pm
- 18 **The Road Ahead Workshop**, Anula Healing Centre, Canobolas Road, Orange, 3.00pm—7.00pm, various presenters
- 21 **Grazing Management Workshop**, Bathurst, with Graeme Hand
- 22 **Combined Financial Options for Drought Recovery & Soil Management Workshop**, Bathurst, with Mark Gardner (Vanguard Business Services), Graeme Hand and Eric Harvey
- 24 **Pasture Identification & Management Workshop**, Bathurst, with Colin Seis
- 30 **Combined Saltbush Establishment & Management with Andrew Sipple (Grazing Management Systems) and Pasture Identification & Management with Colin Seis Workshops**, “Merryanbone”, Warren, 9.30am—3.30pm

### May

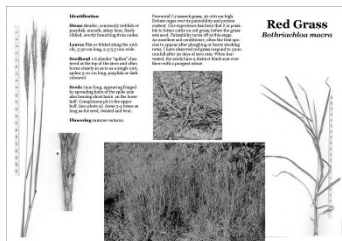
- 7 **Saltbush Establishment & Management Workshop**, Narromine, with Andrew Sipple (Grazing Management Systems), 9.30am—3.30pm
- 12 **The Road Ahead Workshop**, Gilgandra, 10.00am—3.00pm, various presenters
- 14 **Combined Water Supply Planning with Brent Bannister (Water Dynamics) and Financial Options for Drought Recovery with Mark Gardner (Vanguard Business Services)**, “Loyola”, Quambone, 9.30am—3.30pm
- 15 **Native Grass Identification & Management**, Coonamble, 9.30am—3.00pm, with Colin Seis

**All Drought Preparedness Workshops are free—workshops include morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea. RSVPs are essential as places are limited. Call Angela on 0424 228 725 or 02 6845 1044 or email [angela.stipa@bigpond.com](mailto:angela.stipa@bigpond.com)**



**Perennial Stipa Calendar available now!**

**Only \$20.00**



A grass or grassland plant is featured each month, with identification, growth habits and grazing information. A great document to keep all your annual events and dates in.

To purchase, download an order form from [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au) or call the office on (02) 6845 1044.

## Looking for options?

Stipa can offer you information about financial planning, grazing management, pasture identification & management, succession planning, depression, family health & water supply planning.

**Contact Stipa today on (02) 6845 1044 and ask about Drought Preparedness Project workshops or look at the workshops listed above or at [www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au)**

## Around the paddocks...



**WeaLTH Project Officers: Xanthe White & Angela Roberts**



**Stipa Executive Officer: Graeme Hand**



*Native Grasses Association Inc*

**Sixth National Native Grasslands Conference**  
***Regenerative Grassland Management***

*For Profitable, Ecological and Social Gains*

**Horsham Town Hall, Horsham, Victoria, Australia**  
**9th to 11th November 2008**  
**(First of annual conferences.)**



**Conference Convener: Sally Brown, [sally.brown@uq.net.au](mailto:sally.brown@uq.net.au)**

**Interim Program: Sunday 9th November: Welcome drinks and Poster Presentations, 5.30pm-7.30pm.**

**Monday 10th November: Presentations 8.30pm to 5.30pm.**

**Invited presenters include: Sheldon Atwood, USA; Annabel Walsh, Grazier, Wentworth NSW; Norm Smith, Glenwood Merinos, NSW; Graeme Hand, Grazier, Hamilton, Vic. , Dr Paul Gibson-Roy, Uni of Melb, School of Resource Management.**

**Monday evening: Conference Dinner at Ye Olde Horsham Restaurant.**

**Tuesday 11th: Field trip visiting regenerated native grasslands.**

**Wednesday 12th: FREE Workshop: "Doing Well by Doing Good", Sheldon Atwood, Carrus Land Systems, USA**

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS AND EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE**

**[www.stipa.com.au](http://www.stipa.com.au)**