



Bulletin

ISSUE 5 | AUGUST 2008

Stipa is named after the genus of grasses now called *Austrostipa*—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 management authority



Together We're Making a Difference
LACHLAN CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Program



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Chair: Colin Seis
Treasurer: George Taylor

2008 PUBLICATION DEADLINES:
October Bulletin: 30 September
December Newsletter: 17 November

Contributions & enquiries should be directed to Xanthe White at xanthe.stipa@bigpond.com

Message from the Chair

- Colin Seis



Things have changed a lot since my last report. We have received funding to employ Xanthe White for 12 months, which will keep the Stipa flag flying. This funding will also enable us to run workshops to encourage the use

and regeneration of native grasslands.

The interest in native grass and grasslands continues to grow with increasing interest in Northern Victoria where I have been involved with several farming groups. The high cost in maintaining introduced pastures being driven by fertiliser, herbicide and fuel prices has been the main catalyst for the interest in native grass.

I see Stipa's role in the resurgence of interest in native grass and associated grasslands as education of the benefits and how to restore grasslands.

Stipa moving forward

- Graeme Hand, CEO

Following on from the good news reported by Colin in his column, regarding the funding Stipa has received to allow Xanthe White to continue with us for 12 months, I'd like to thank the Central West CMA (NSW) for making this possible. As Colin pointed out, it includes funds to run farmer groups that will investigate the regeneration of grasslands, especially native grasslands, in the Central West of NSW.

These groups will receive detailed planning and support on planned grazing, pasture cropping and biological soil health to implement a trial on their farm. Anyone interested should contact Xanthe to register your interest. Numbers are limited to ensure that those involved have direct access and advice to achieve measurable improvement in profit, grassland function and soil health.

Stipa has applied for funding through the *Caring for our Country* open grants to spread the above project into other areas of NSW, Victoria and SA. *Caring for our Country* provides \$2.25 billion in federal funding over five years from 1 July 2008 to June 2013. It will integrate a number of existing natural resource management measures

into a consolidated initiative. These include the Natural Heritage Trust, the National Landcare Program, the Environmental Stewardship Program, and elements of the Working on Country program.

Stipa was unsuccessful with an application for funding through the NLP Sustainable Practices Grants to fund the CEO position and our administrative position. Other funding sources are being investigated.

Stipa is keen to shape its future with the assistance of members. Drop me an email if you would like input into Stipa's future direction.

Graeme Hand

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Xanthe White

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NEW STIPA CONTACT DETAILS

Effective immediately

Postal address: PO Box 224, Wellington NSW 2820

Xanthe White
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xanthe.stipa@bigpond.com

Coonamble family farming success

- Matt McKenzie, 2008 Central West & Lachlan Conservation Farmer of the Year & Stipa member

We can't keep doing the same things over and over again and expect a different result each time. We need to change and grow.

Look at other peoples farm businesses and ask the questions 'What have they done differently to me?' and 'Will that work on my place?'

These questions have been a driving force in the transformation of our property "Loyola", located 32km North West of Coonamble, NSW, into a progressive and sustainable no-till cropping and rotational grazing business. We were surprised and honoured this year to be acknowledged with the Central West and Lachlan Conservation Farmer of the Year Award for 2008.

Our farm business operates as a family team involving myself, my wife Kim, and my parents Ruth and Ian.

Our usual cropping rotation is chickpeas, wheat and barley with opportunity summer cropping of grain sorghum and millet. Sheep and cattle of different classes are traded depending on profit margins at the time and what fits with the rotational grazing program. Livestock are taken on agistment when it is more profitable than purchasing

our own stock.

Since the early 1990s my father has been progressing towards a no till cropping enterprise: from minimum tillage, to trialling direct drill with a converted chisel plough, to the purchase of a purpose built direct drill parallelogram tyne implement in 2006.

A real impetus for change occurred in late 2003 when my wife and I decided to return to the farm. With two families to support in continuing drought, we needed to ensure the business operated profitably and efficiently. The drought forced us to look closely at what we were doing.

As a result we have developed a simple whole farm goal which guides the decision making in our business and is based on a three pronged approach of considering *People Goals, Business Goals, and Land Goals*. This has given everyone a sense of direction and prevented us from feeling overwhelmed in the adverse

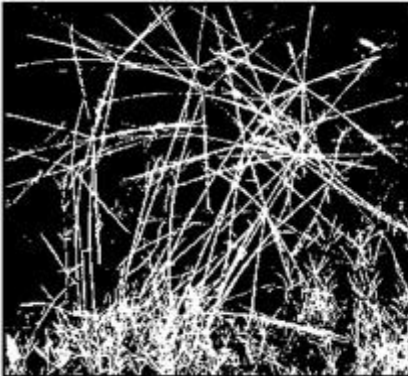
conditions of the continuing drought.

Our family farm goal is to grow a profitable dynamic business, improve our natural resource base and maintain a happy family unit while adapting to our highly variable climate.

- **Location: "Loyola" 32km NW Coonamble, NSW**
- **Farm size: 3328ha**
- **Soil types: red and grey medium clay soils**
- **Cropping program: wheat, barley, chickpeas with opportunity summer crops**
- **Rainfall: 475mm a year, slight summer dominance**
- **Livestock: sheep and cattle trading**



Matt McKenzie & family



WANTED

Native grass seed suppliers

ALL SPECIES NEEDED

Also need collectors of Acacia and Eucalyptus seeds

Contact: Gary Bridge, Seedworld Australia Pty Ltd
02 4423 0894

FOR SALE

Warrego Summer Grass (*Paspalidium jubiflorum*)

■ 1st grade \$44.00/kg (GST incl.) ■ 2nd grade \$38.50/kg (GST incl.)

Supplied with laboratory seed test analysis

Enquiries: Stevenson Family Partnership
Margaret, Rodney and Scott Stevenson

T: (02) 6887 1160 F: (02) 6887 1512 E: rmstev@gmail.com

Stipa, Macquarie 2100 and the CWCMA have all been very important in providing funding and information to allow our farm to change our grazing system from a traditional set stocking system to a rotational cell grazing system.

Field days and seminars, held by organisations like Stipa and CANFA, and belonging to farmer groups have been pivotal in providing the seeds of thought to contemplate change. Being able to see a technology or system operating at a field day on another farmer's property provides the proof that new ideas can work.

It is early days yet, but improvements which we have observed since the introduction of pasture cropping and rotational grazing include:

- more ground cover,
- an increase in perennial grass numbers,
- improved carrying capacity
- better water infiltration which allows us to maximize the use of every mm of rainfall.

Last year we sowed a Curly Mitchell Grass seed block in a cropping paddock. The results were very encouraging and we were able to harvest seed from this block and other areas where the Mitchell grass has regenerated. We are planning on sowing the seed to speed up the native grass regeneration and we also have a quantity of Curly Mitchell Grass available for sale.

For more information on the grass seed for sale please contact Matt or Ian McKenzie on 02 68241512.



Above: caption please

Below: Pasture cropping at "Loyola" ??? Please confirm

Stay in touch with Stipa @ www.stipa.com.au

With a few changes occurring at Stipa recently, it is important that members are still able to communicate with the organisation and stay up-to-date with events and information as it happens.

The Stipa website—www.stipa.com.au—is where members can stay up to date with field days, workshops and other events of interest, as well as articles of interest and important information about the upcoming National Conference.

New information for presenters and authors preparing materials for the 2008 conference has just been posted on the website on the 2008 conference page.

The new contact details for Stipa are also on the contact page, as well as copies of the membership form and recommended reading lists.

Keep an eye out in the near future for interesting reports from Sue Rahilly's recent trip to the United States, where she did a short course with Professor Fred Provenza, Department of Animal Behaviour, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

Kim Goldsmith of Ochre Communications will no longer be working as the Member Communications Editor for Stipa. However, all contributions and enquiries can be directed to Xanthe White. If you have any information you think is of interest to other Stipa members, send your contributions to Xanthe for inclusion in future publications or on the website.

Contribution dates for upcoming publications are:

October 08 Bulletin—30 September

December 08 Newsletter—17 November

Winona Native Seeds

FOR SALE

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

Contact: Colin Seis on 02 6375 9256 or colin@winona.net.au



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.)



 **GLENWOOD**
MERINOS
www.glenwoodmerinos.com.au

Conference Convener: Sally Brown, 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