

# UNFS UPDATE



Upper North Farming Systems Newsletter

May 2014

## Pasture Production Zoning - Volunteer Wanted

Michael Wurst

We are currently looking for an additional case study property to complete the Pasture Production Zoning project. Two case study properties have already been completed Trevor Gum, Willowie and Rob Dennis, Baroota, but the third one we had planned has not eventuated.

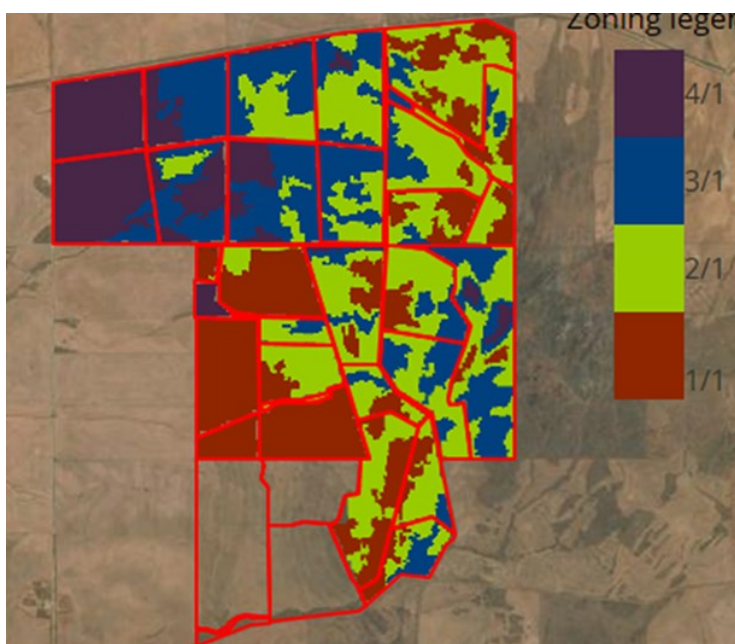
The UNFS received money from the Northern and Yorke NRM Board's Federal Government Funding Program, to deliver a project aimed at reducing the risk of erosion and improving soil condition on farms in the southern Flinders Ranges. The Pasture Production Zoning Project is aimed at encouraging the adoption of pasture production zoning as a tool for identifying areas of poor pasture and crop production and changing management of these areas to improve soil surface cover and biodiversity.

Production zones will be developed for the case study property using satellite data over a 10 year period and these can be used instead of or in conjunction with yield maps to identify areas of poor production and develop maps to undertake different management e.g. vary inputs, change production systems.

Once the zoning has been created a workshop will be conducted with other interested farmers in the district to discuss the options for implementing the zoning and the suitability of the technology for broader use. This project will be completed in June, so it is a short term time commitment with no commitment to implement the zoning. It is a great opportunity to access long term satellite imagery of your property and integrate that with yield maps if you have them available.

If you are interested, or know someone that may be, contact Michael Wurst 8664 1408, 0418 803 685.

**Map;** Production zone map from 6 years with medium to high levels of production at Trevor Gum's Property. A separate map has been developed from low production seasons. Brown - high production areas; green - medium/high; blue - medium/low and purple - low production.



The two paddocks in top left have had low production in most years and Trevor has taken these out of cropping and using for grazing due to the high levels of sub soil salinity affecting growth.

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# Establishing Perennial Native Grasses

Jodie Reseigh, Rural Solutions

The Upper North Farming System group received funding from the Australian Government, through the Caring for our Country Program in 2012/13 to implement the results and findings from an earlier project 'Best practice management grazing systems for native grass pastures in the low rainfall cereal zone'.

The trials of perennial pasture plants in the Upper North found the most suitable species for low rainfall areas of South Australia were: summer active/C4 grasses - Windmill grass (*Chloris truncata*) and Black-head grass (*Enneapogon nigricans*); winter active/C3 grass - Wallaby grasses (*Austrodanthonia* species); and the legume annual medic (*Medicago littoralis* cv. Angel). Seven demonstration sites were established with these species in the Upper North.

## Establishment

Native grass species are relatively difficult to establish, when compared with sowing cereals and other pasture seed.

Seeds are small so must be sown shallow. Following several establishment trials using a range of machines and techniques in the Upper North, spreading the seed on the soil surface has proven to be as reliable as most other techniques. It is important to get good weed control before sowing as seedlings are very slow to establish and can take 4 to 6 weeks to germinate. However there needs to be adequate soil cover to protect the germinating seed and stop the soil surface from drying out. Larger seeded species such as Wallaby grass and Redgrass can benefit from some soil cover (less than 1cm), however Windmill grass is best spread on the soil surface.

Native grass seeds don't germinate in the same predictable manner as cereals but will germinate later when conditions are more suited to the plant.

## Grazing Management

Management of established native grass pastures should be by a form of rotational grazing. Particular care needs to be taken in managing newly established plants, due to the low levels of soil cover, newly establishing roots and high palatability. One landholder endorses this cautious approach to grazing newly established grasses "both Wallaby grass and Windmill grass are preferentially grazed by livestock when green and actively growing. Redgrass is also highly palatable when green, but becomes less palatable as it starts to run up to seed."

Many thanks to the landholders who participated in the demonstration sites. The project was supported by Upper North Farming Systems through funding from the Australian Government Caring for our Country program.

**Photo:** UNFS Native Grass Seeder. This unit is available for hire for members of UNFS for a daily fee.



# GPSA to sponsor young growers at national conference

Grain Producers News, May 2014

## GPSA will sponsor two young grain producers to attend the Australian Grains Industry Conference (AGIC) from July 28-29 in Melbourne.

AGIC is hosted by Grain Trade Australia and is the premier, industry hosted conference for grain market participants and service providers. The sponsorship includes the conference registration, return airfares, travel and accommodation – all the recipients have to pay for is meals not included at the conference and travel to and from their nearest airport. GPSA chief executive Darren Arney says each conference sponsorship is valued at \$2500.

“This is a great opportunity for two of the industry’s young grain producers to gain a broader perspective of the industry’s key players and make some new contacts within the supply chain,” he said.

“GPSA wants to encourage the participation of young people in their industry and help build their skills by giving them exposure to the end users of their grain. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences with the wider grain industry through GPSA.”

### To Enter:

- Applicants must be 35 or under at the time of the conference and be available to travel to Melbourne on July 27 for the two-day event.
- Applicants must submit up to 400 words outlining their experiences, study or opinions on the grain industry supply chain and why they would benefit from attending the Australian Grains Industry Conference. This is very broad and could include on-farm operations, their own or tertiary related study, or other observations of the supply chain.
- Entries will be assessed by GPSA. The two applications that best articulate the entry question (above) will receive the conference sponsorship. >> Applications close at 5pm on Tuesday, June 17, 2014.

### More information...

Download an entry form at [www.grainproducerssa.com.au](http://www.grainproducerssa.com.au) or contact Trudy Huczko, 0499 734 001. Visit [www.ausgrainsconf.com](http://www.ausgrainsconf.com) for more information on AGIC.

## Calendar of Events

- May 26th/27th, Adelaide - Farm 300 and Project 2020 Advisor Workshops - Boost livestock production and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. [www.mla.com.au/FARM300](http://www.mla.com.au/FARM300)
- May 20/21st, Hawker/Orroroo - Wild Dog Workshops for Landholders - Northern and Yorke Natural Resource Centre 08 8841 3400 or [DEWNR.NYNRMBoard@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWNR.NYNRMBoard@sa.gov.au)
- July 20-25th - Bus Field Trip to visit Central West Farming Systems and Mallee Sustainable Farming Systems Groups
- July 9-11 LambEx - Adelaide Showgrounds. [Lambex.com.au](http://Lambex.com.au)
- August 7th - UNFS Annual Field Day on at Booleroo Centre
- September 11th - UNFS Spring Crop Walk

# Compatibility of chemicals – will this go with that?

By Dave Georg, Smith and Georg Training and Consulting

It's always tempting to add a number of different chemicals to the spray tank and spray an area once, rather than spraying the same area or crop two or more times with different chemicals. Tank-mixing different chemicals can save you time, as well as the expense of travelling over the same area twice – unless of course, the chemicals are incompatible, in which case you've wasted time and money, and you've possibly also damaged your crop.

There are two types of incompatibility that we need to be aware of; *physical* and *biological* incompatibility.

**Physical** incompatibility happens when two or more chemicals react and the spray mixture changes physically; for example, the chemicals dissociate into two or more layers in the spray tank; or one or more of the chemicals precipitate and settle on the bottom of the tank; or they react to form a gel, globules or strands like spaghetti that block filters and nozzles.



**Biological** incompatibility happens when different chemicals appear to be physically compatible, but the results are unexpected; for example one or more of the chemicals doesn't work, or maybe the chemical mixture damages the crop that is sprayed. The problem with this is that it may be up to several weeks before you realise that you had an incompatibility problem, and in that time the weed, pest or disease has continued to cause problems, or the crop yield or quality has been reduced.

**How can we check the compatibility** of different products before we mix them together?

1. Firstly, check the labels of the products that you want to mix for advice on compatible/incompatible products.

Be aware that label instructions may be brand specific. A farmer once told me that for years he had been spraying a tank-mix of trace elements and various glyphosate products pre-sowing, with no adverse effects. Then one year he tried a new brand of glyphosate herbicide and the spray mixture turned to a gluggy mess and had to be shovelled out of the spray tank

2. If there are no clear directions on the label(s), seek advice from a reputable agronomist or advisor, or from the manufacturers of the products.
3. If you still can't get the advice you need, you could try diluting small quantities of the chemicals to their normal application dilutions, then mixing them in a jar to see if they are compatible. Note there are some limitations to the 'jar test':

You need to wait long enough after mixing the chemicals in the jar to allow them time to react. This may be as long as 15-20 minutes.

This procedure only tests for physical incompatibility, and gives no indication of whether the products are biologically compatible.

**Be aware** that it isn't just the obvious situations where incompatibility can be an issue. For example, tiny amounts of Group B sulfonylurea herbicide (such as found in boom end-caps, recirculation/agitation systems, and nozzles filters) may have a 'synergistic' effect on Group A herbicides, causing crop damage where you wouldn't normally expect it.

**Mixing order** is important. Check the correct mixing order with your advisor or a chemical manufacturer.

For many tank mixes, it is important to **keep the mix agitated**, so that it doesn't settle on the bottom of the tank.

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## Bangor Fire Community Grants 2014

These Community Grants are being offered to help support the recovery from the impacts of the Bangor Fire and subsequent flooding and erosion experienced within this specific area of the Northern & Yorke region. The maximum grant for any project is \$10,000.

The applicant organisation must be based within the Northern and Yorke region and have been affected by the Bangor fire or subsequent flooding events.

The project must relate to or be linked to natural resources management issues in the Northern and Yorke region and must be carried out within the Bangor Fire Impact Zone.

### Projects need to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Improving native vegetation condition
- Improving the condition and biodiversity of native habitat
- Rehabilitation and protection of rivers and waterways
- Rehabilitation and protection of coastal areas
- Reducing the impact of pest plants and animals
- Building the capacity of land managers Reducing the risk of wind or water erosion and other land management priorities

### The following items/projects could be considered for funding:

- Natural resources management activities (e.g. revegetation projects, fencing of remnant vegetation, erosion control)
- Natural resources management skills development (including skills development of group participants, professional demonstrations/training, workshops)
- Equipment purchases for project implementation and follow-up control (e.g. hand tools, herbicide spray units, tree guards and stakes, erosion control materials)
- Local community celebrations relating to natural resources management (e.g. flyers, brochures, signage, displays, celebrations).
- Minor infrastructure (e.g. barriers to restrict vehicular access).
- Production of management plans for long term project planning
- Production, distribution and/or installation of educational material and interpretive signage

Applications close on the 23rd of May at 5pm. For more information contact Kevin Teague, 0428 99 06 75, [Kevin.Teague@sa.gov.au](mailto:Kevin.Teague@sa.gov.au) or Sarah Voumard, 0429 36 20 04, [Sarah.Voumard@sa.gov.au](mailto:Sarah.Voumard@sa.gov.au)

If you have a project that you would like assistance in developing, our would like to do through UNFS please contact one of the UNFS Staff of Committee.

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## Scholarships for Women to Attend Board Training

A partnership between the State Government and the Australian Institute of Company Directors aimed at helping women strengthen their leadership skills is set to continue. Last year, 25 scholarships were offered to women from across the state to attend a training course run by the AICD, with Minister for the Status of Women Gail Gago confirming the program will again be run this year.

“There was a fantastic response to last year’s scholarship program,” she said. “This year, a further 25 scholarships will be on offer for the one-day course on governance for directors – offering a valuable insight into leadership, governance and the boardroom environment.”

Ms Gago said priority would be given to South Australian women living in regional areas, Aboriginal women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women living with a disability.

This year’s round of scholarship applications opens on May 23. For more information, contact the Office for Women on 08 8303 0961, or email [officeforwomen@dcsi.sa.gov.au](mailto:officeforwomen@dcsi.sa.gov.au)

## Snails Survey

From the AgEx Alliance April E-News

South Australian grain growers are being invited to participate in a survey about the impact of snails in their farming systems and the practices they employ to reduce the risk of snail contamination at harvest.

The electronic survey, being undertaken as part of the Grains Research and Development Corporation-funded “Improved management of snails and slugs” project, is being run by the SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI) Entomology unit with assistance from the University of SA, SA Grain Industry Trust (SAGIT), Yorke Peninsula Alkaline Soils Group (YPASG), MacKillop Farm Management Group, Ag Excellence Alliance and other grower groups.

SARDI entomologist Helen DeGraaf says the “Snails at harvest: grower experience and innovation” survey aims to identify elements of the harvesting and post-harvest processes that could be improved to better manage snails, and identify existing grower-generated innovation that could be distributed to the wider broad acre cropping community. Ms DeGraaf says the survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete and she encourages growers to share their snail management at harvest experiences so that others might benefit.

The survey can be accessed via <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sardisnailharvest>. Further information about the survey is available from Helen DeGraaf at SARDI Entomology, phone (08) 8303 9543 or email [helen.degraaf@sa.gov.au](mailto:helen.degraaf@sa.gov.au)

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