



Case studies

Bill, Marcia and Angus Moore, 'Nowley',
Burren Junction NSW



PROPERTY DETAILS

Location: 70 kilometres west of
Narrabri, north-west New South
Wales

Catchment: Pian Creek, ephemeral
un-named watercourses, Namoi
River catchment

Property area: 6,227 hectares

Main enterprises: Grain, cotton and
beef cattle production

Where lippia is a problem: Floodplain
grazing country, irrigation channels
and water storage infrastructure



Coolibah regrowth on 'Nowley'

(Photo by P. Crawford)

General information and lippia infestation

'Nowley' is predominantly flat grassland and Coolibah woodland plain. The property was historically a mixed sheep and cattle farm, with 8,000 to 10,000 sheep run in the past. Currently 6,000 sheep are run, a 40% reduction from the potential stocking rate. Cotton has been added to the enterprise mix with 405 hectares being developed for irrigation in an effort to maintain production from this area of land. Irrigation water is harvested from overland flows as well as being provided from a bore.

In large floods, 80% of the property is inundated. Water flows in a broad front from the Namoi River (approximately 35 kilometres from the property) in times of major floods. Coolibah regrowth became a significant land management issue following floods in the early 1970s and paddocks were subsequently grazed more heavily than previously in an attempt to manage the rapid regrowth.

The regrowth of the Coolibah is now so dense that where there was once a good cover of native grasses, the soil is basically bare in most places, leaving the area wide open for lippia invasion. Under the NSW Native Vegetation Act, Coolibah is listed as an endangered ecosystem, and therefore cannot be cleared.

Lippia was first observed on the property following the widespread flooding in 1998 and subsequent localised flooding over the months that followed. At that time, lippia was present on more than 200 hectares, predominantly in low-lying melon-holes.

The density of lippia has increased markedly since 2000. It is prolific across an area of 810 hectares of heavily flooded country, which is thick with Coolibah regrowth and therefore cannot be controlled with the use of herbicides because the area is not accessible with machinery.



Methods of lippia management

In the initial stages, a knockdown herbicide was applied without any effect. The difficulty of accessing the areas of Coolibah regrowth makes effective lippia control with herbicides impossible in this country.

The Narrabri Rural Lands Protection Board carried out some trial work in 2005 on the travelling stock route adjoining the property. Small areas (0.5 to one hectare) were cleared of trees and the regrowth was sprayed in the cleared areas when it appeared. Bill has observed a return of native grasses in these blocks, as well as some lippia. However the grasses appear to be competing well with the lippia.

Future control options

If the Coolibah country could be accessed with conventional spraying equipment, Bill would definitely be implementing a lippia control programme using herbicides. However, the areas able to be accessed are only very small so a spraying programme would not be very successful.

The Moores are interested in cell grazing concepts and could introduce this grazing management system in the near future, both for production outcomes and lippia control.



Lippia establishes readily in bare areas beneath Coolibah trees

(Photo by P. Crawford)

