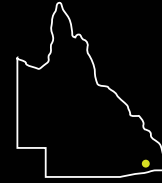




Case studies

James and Susie Milson, 'Alfalfa', Leyburn Qld.



PROPERTY DETAILS

Location: 15 kms north of Leyburn, southern Queensland

Catchment: Canal Creek, Condamine River catchment

Property area: 1,600 hectares, 800 hectares cultivation

Main enterprises: Beef cattle, sheep (fat lambs), grain and cotton production (dryland)

Where lippia is a problem: Pasture paddocks, riparian areas



James Milson checking a lippia patch in a Bambatsi paddock

(Photo by P. Crawford)

General information and lippia infestation

James and Susie Milson purchased the property in 1998 and lippia was evident at the time of purchase. Lippia is present on all country that is not cultivated, and the lippia coverage ranges from 1% to 50%. The worst lippia areas are on the heavier soils, however it is becoming established on the lighter country as well. There are some good paddocks of Bambatsi (planted around 1997), and James thinks the pasture is better now than it was when they purchased the property.





James Milson is concerned with lippia encroaching on the Bambatsi

(Photo by P. Crawford)

Future control options

James is considering ploughing strips (2.5 to three metres wide) just to level the ground enough to enable a ground spray rig to be used. This would make chemical application much cheaper and more efficient.

By missing a year of spraying, James believes they have got behind in lippia control, hence spraying should be completed every year. The recommendation of a double hit will also need to be considered, especially in wetter years.

Methods of lippia management

James has been using aerial applications of Amicide® 625 as the main lippia control method. The country that is being treated is very rough due to the Bambatsi and Floren bluegrass planted on the floodplain areas. These grasses tend to be very clumpy and tussocky, especially the Floren, making it almost impossible to use a ground rig. The country is generally lightly timbered, making aerial applications possible.

James has only sprayed the lippia three times so far, missing 2006 due to the drought. He has sprayed twice in autumn, and once in the spring. James has observed that the best results have been from a late autumn application, which contradicts most advice. James thinks it may have something to do with the lippia starting to become dormant for winter, possibly taking more sap and therefore more chemical down to the roots.

The application rate is 2.5 L/ha, costing around \$30 per hectare (including application cost). With approximately 400 hectares being treated, it is a very expensive operation, but James believes that he has no other option except to see his grazing country lose productivity very quickly. James has not used Agricrop Lantana® 600 as he considers it to be too costly over an area this size.

James has ploughed some country to control lippia, growing a couple of crops of barley before letting it revert to grass. This country will probably be planted to Bambatsi because James doesn't think the local native grasses will be competitive enough with lippia.

James considers Floren to be a fantastic grass, as it is very palatable and is a good lippia competitor due to its extreme drying effect on the soil. The problem is that soils where Floren is growing become so dry and fractured that James has lost lambs down the cracks. Floren country is very difficult to muster, due to the tussocky nature of the grass and the cracks in the soil. Therefore the pasture of preference for James is Bambatsi.

James says that the only problem with Bambatsi is that it does not like long periods of flooding. A few days to a week of inundation is okay, but some parts of the property may be under water for three to four weeks during some floods, which can have a detrimental effect on Bambatsi.

