



Case studies

Vic Melbourne, 'Yarral', Wee Waa NSW



PROPERTY DETAILS

Location: 30 kilometres west of Narrabri, north-west New South Wales

Catchment: Namoi River

Property area: 8,100 hectares

Main enterprises: Grain, cotton and beef cattle production

Where lippia is a problem: Floodplain grazing country, river riparian zone



Floodplain country that has been ploughed and cropped and now returning to native pasture

(Photo by P. Crawford)

General information and lippia infestation

'Yarral' is located on the floodplain of the Namoi River. There is 1,620 hectares of grazing land, including 1,000 hectares of river country. The total area of grazing country is affected by overland flow from watercourses.

Each paddock is stocked to match pasture growth rates using a rotational grazing system. The property usually runs 800 to 900 head of cattle at a stocking rate of one cow and calf unit to 0.8 hectares.

Lippia was first observed on the property following the flood in 1998. Approximately 600 to 800 hectares is now covered with about 60% lippia. In drainage areas, pasture plants are dying out due to the combined effects of drought and lippia and in these areas lippia now provides 100% of the groundcover. Some areas of the property have recorded a 75% reduction in stocking rates.

Vic fenced off the entire length of river frontage (25 kilometres) in 1995 to prevent stock access to the river. Due to the very good grass cover and native tree cover on his side of the river there is very little lippia. This can be contrasted with the bank on the other side of the river, which has not been fenced and where cattle have continuous access to the river. Here lippia is very abundant and there is evidence of bank slumping and erosion. When the river is very low the cattle can move across to Vic's side, but this does not happen very often.





Comparisons between the fenced river bank on Vic Melbourne's side (no lippia) with the unfenced bank directly across the river. Uncontrolled cattle access has resulted in increased lippia, leading to bank slumping

(Photo by P. Crawford)

Methods of lippia management

After poor control with various knockdown herbicides, Vic decided that farming the country to suppress the weed was the best option.

A 73 hectare paddock of native pasture that was heavily infested with lippia has been cultivated to control lippia in accessible and badly affected areas. The paddock was farmed up to about 1995 but was left to return to grass. Under the NSW Native Vegetation Act, authority to plough the paddock needed to be granted. The authority to cultivate is based on the percentage cover of non-native species, in this case over 70%.

After a couple of years of cropping to oats for grazing, the paddock is being left to return to a native grass pasture. The only lippia remaining is around the base of the trees and in some low-lying areas unable to be cultivated.

Vic says there needs to be a minimum of two years of cropping before allowing the paddock to revert back to grass. There seems to be a very good seed bank of the native grasses, which regenerate readily when cultivation ceases.

Future control options

Vic will continue to plough other grazing paddocks as it becomes necessary. This control option is reasonably expensive to carry out, especially when there is a significant amount of flood debris that needs to be cleared beforehand. These costs are recouped over a couple of years by the increased productivity of the country and compared with chemical control is still reasonably cheap. Being so close to the river also limits chemical control for environmental reasons.

Vic believes that the native species present are good enough to compete with the lippia and is not planning to plant any introduced pasture species at this stage.

