



# GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF NSW INC.

## Newsletter

Welcome to the June-July issue of the newsletter. You may have noticed that our logo and banner has had a slight refresh. Still the same original logo just a bit sharper and the electronic version has been brought into the 21st century. The original logo was designed in 1986 by John Read and an artist with the NSW Department of Agriculture - so it was probably time for a bit of freshen up for a new lease of life.

Reflecting on the origins of the Grassland Society of NSW (GSNSW) logo, I recently re-read Malcolm Campbell's excellent summary of the first 25 years of the Grassland Society, published in the 27th Annual Conference

proceedings (2012). While a number of you will be familiar with the history of GSNSW, many new members may not. Malcolm's article is reprinted in this issue with a few additions to bring it up-to-date. The article can be found on page 8.

As we come to the end of another financial year it is time to once again thank our sponsors for the past 12 months. Without the support of these sponsors Grassland Society of NSW activities and services would not be possible.

Our sponsors in 2015/16 were;

*Premier:* NSW Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services South East.

*Major:* Incitec Pivot, Ag Innovations, Water NSW and Meat and Livestock Australia.

*Corporate:* Aus West, Commonwealth Bank Australia, Dow AgroSciences, Heritage Seeds, PGG Wrightson Seeds, Tableland Farming Systems, Upper Murray Seeds, Wengfu Australia.

*Pasture Updates:* Meat and Livestock Australia

Quick reminder that there is no annual conference this year, but if you are heading to LambEx 2016 and you are Grassland Society member - check out the great offer on page 3.

*Carol Harris, Editor*

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### Membership subscription due now for 2016/2017

Annual Grassland Society of NSW subscription of \$60 for 2016/2017 is due July 1 2016.

Payment methods: Cheque, Credit Card (Mastercard or Visa) or electronic\*

Account Name: Grassland Society of NSW  
BSB: 032 833  
Account No: 421 690  
Bank: Westpac  
Reference: 'Surname' and then 'first name'



\* If paying by electronic banking, don't forget to email the Secretary ([secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au)) with your details

*Grassland Society of NSW membership includes a four newsletters per year, copy of the Conference Proceedings and discounted registration fees for the Conference and other events held by the Society. The information archives on the website are available to members only – newsletters, articles and current conference proceedings stored in the "Member Access" area can be viewed by entering your username and membership number when prompted.*

## Pasture Updates - whats new?

The Grassland Society of NSW Inc. with funding from Meat and Livestock Australia has been developing and delivering Pasture Updates since 2012. The purpose of the Grassland Society of NSW Pasture Update series is to provide graziers with the latest information on current research outcomes and new pasture technologies which have a scientific focus. These regional events will better service the pastoral industry and Grassland Society members and address the historical ad hoc nature and often fragmented delivery and promotion of pasture research. The Pasture Updates enables pasture based issues and initiatives to be interactively addressed by industry participants on a localised basis. The Pasture Updates combine formal presentations on maximising red meat production and on-farm presentations by producers.

In 2016 the Grassland Society of NSW will be holding 6 Pasture Updates (see below), keep an eye on our website ([www.grasslandnsw.com.au](http://www.grasslandnsw.com.au)) for further details.

### Grassland Society of NSW Pasture Updates - 2016

Bega - July

Guandagai - August

Gloucester - September

Grafton - September

Tamworth - October/November

Manildra - TBC

More detailed information will be available of the website



Fan of Facebook - make sure you check out the Grassland Society of NSW Facebook page. You can either search for GrasslandNSW or access the Facebook page through our web site [www.grasslandnsw.com.au](http://www.grasslandnsw.com.au)

We will post relevant Pasture Update details on the Facebook page as well as the website. Please feel free to Like Us, as well as post questions, join discussions and post photos of pasture related articles in your area.

# LambEx 2016

**LambEx 2016 will be held at the Lauren Jackson Centre (229 North Street) in Albury NSW from August 10-12.**

LambEx is a world class event and attracts more than 900 delegates and 70 exhibitors. It is a great opportunity to promote NSW's world-class lamb industry. All sectors of the lamb industry will come together to build on the event's previous success and ensure the Australian sheep and lamb industry continues its proud tradition of showcasing its industry. The organizing committee represents every sector of the sheep and lamb industry and they have developed an interesting program with a mix of international and Australian speakers.

The event commences with field tours on August 10 (see details below) and a breakfast session on the morning of August 11 before moving on to the more formal proceedings. There are seven sessions covering;

## The Lambscape

- *The choice is ours – Farmers or Peasants*, Paul Higgins, Emergent Futures
- *The American perception of Australian Lamb*, Chef Neil Doherty, Director, Culinary Development, Sysco Corporation
- *Meeting the needs of our food services customers*, Peter Andrews, Andrews Meat Industries
- *The International traveller*, Lisa Sharp, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Meat and Livestock Australia

## Meat Science

- *The new world of carcase measurement is here*, Professor Graham Gardner, Murdoch University
- *A matter of taste*, Professor David Pethick, Murdoch University
- *Big lamb small cuts*, Dr David Hopkins, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Doug Piper & Sam Burke, Meat & Livestock Australia

## Bringing the Paddock to Life

- *The gaps between ewe and you*, Jason Trompf, JT Consulting

- *It's ewe time at Yallock*, Vicky Geddes, Holbrook, NSW
- *The true cost of best practice lamb survival*, Matt Browning, Borambil, NSW
- *A journey of change*, Phil Gough, Salamanca Pastoral Trust, Hotspur, NSW

## Our Future, Our Life

- *Our future, safe hands, Part 1*, Caris Jones, Development Officer, MERINOSELECT
- *Our future, safe hands, Part 2*, Young Guns Competition finalists

## Survive & Thrive

- *From outback Australia to Central Park New York City*, Robert De Castella, AO MBE Founder and Director, Indigenous Marathon Foundation
- *The unspeakable white elephant*, Chris Wilson, Wantabadgery
- *Young people just won't listen. Or will they?*, Pip Job, Geurie, NSW

## Brighter Horizons

- *The odds of boom or bust spring*, Graeme Anderson, Agriculture Victoria
- *Planning for the worse and hoping for the best*, Mark Wootton, Jigsaw Farms, Vic
- *Grazing cereals with demanding sheep – maximise growth, health and welfare*, Gordon Refshauge, NSW Department of Primary Industries
- *Setting up ewe for the new horizon*, Phil Graham, NSW Department of Primary Industries
- *Would Warren Buffet buy your farm business?*, Paul Blackshaw, Agriculture Victoria

## A Matter of Trust

- *Becoming 'brand-intimate'*, David Maslin, NZ Merino
- *The havoc of generic*, Ed Fagan, Cowra, NSW
- *Pushing the boundaries for human endurance*, Cas and Jonesy, Adventurers

## Field tours

On Wednesday August 10, LambEx is offering three pre-conference tours for delegates to choose from. The

## Are you attending LambEx 2016?

Current financial members of the Grassland Society of NSW are able to claim a cash back of \$150 on their LambEx 2016 registration. Proof of receipt will be required to claim the cash back.

For more information email [secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au)

cost of each tour is \$30 per person (lunch will be provided on each tour).

**Tour 1 - Cobram:** Travel to Cobram to tour the JB processing plant, as well as enjoying a visit to Corowa Chocolate and Whisky factory and Cofield Wines. The Cobram facility processes up to 3 600 head grass and grain fed lambs plus hogget, mutton and goats per day.

**Tour 2 - Northern Bus Tour:** This tour will look at some new and innovative ways two local sheep producers have addressed their issues with labour and sheep handling. The day will be full of practical tips and tricks for people to take home including shed and yard design ideas, vaccination and drenching technique. The tour will also visit a local Poll Dorset breeder.

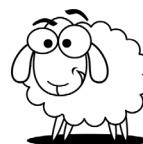
**Tour 3 - Greta East:** This tour will be full of practical tips on how to manage a high productivity sheep system that aims to drive pasture production and utilisation, whilst targeting feed resources and genetics to optimise animal production. This tour incorporates a visit to the famous Brown Brothers vineyard and cellar door at Millawa.

## REGISTRATION

Students and Farmers \$600  
Service providers \$700

Part Packages  
Welcome Function \$75  
Grand slam dinner ticket \$150  
Farmer – single day only \$300  
Service provider – single day only \$400

To register or for more information - [www.lambex.com.au](http://www.lambex.com.au)



## Three things you need to know when grazing crops

Charles Sturt University researcher Shawn McGrath worked on an MLA-funded project to measure how incorporating dual purpose crops (DPC) in the feedbase can impact meat production.

Here are three recommendations from the research, which producers planning winter grazing of DPCs need to consider.

**1. Serving it up:** Given the late start to the season in many areas, producers may be concerned that their crops will not have sufficient dry matter for grazing during the winter, when they need them most. However cereal crops can be grazed at much lower feed on offer (FOO; dry matter/hectare) than pastures. In 2013, we put ewes on the point of lambing onto a wheat crop with FOO of average 330 kg DM/ha. By using a moderate stocking rate (10 ewes/ha), crop growth rates exceeded ewe consumption rates and the FOO increased during the crop grazing period. As the ewes had been hand-fed prior to going onto the crop (due to inadequate pasture availability), we continued to give ewes access to some pellets during the transition phase to crop in order to reduce the risk of metabolic diseases.

**2. Nutritional needs:** When grazing late pregnant and lactating ewes on wheat crops, producers should note that calcium and sodium levels could be below ewe requirements. Magnesium levels could be marginal, and the high potassium and low sodium levels in wheat forage may also reduce magnesium absorption from the rumen. MLA-funded research is underway into the nutritional deficiencies encountered by ewes grazing wheat during late pregnancy (when calcium demand dramatically increases) and lactation (when magnesium demand increases). In earlier experiments we supplied a mineral supplement consisting of magnesium oxide, lime and salt in a 2:2:1 ratio. Ongoing research aims to identify the most effective mineral supplements. Ensuring ewes are in adequate condition score (CS) coming into lambing (CS 3) should assist to maintain ewe health.

**3. Canola considerations:** Calcium and magnesium levels in canola forage appear to be above ewe requirements, and we have not supplied mineral supplements to ewes grazing canola in our experiments. Fibre levels in canola forage are lower than wheat, however fibre requirements for sheep are not well-

defined. Experiments by CSIRO found no benefit in providing roughage to young sheep (in terms of increased growth rates), however we have not supplied additional roughage to sheep in any of our research.

Shawn added that, by reputation, DPCs can accumulate high forage nitrate levels, which can lead to nitrate/nitrite poisoning. Application of nitrogen fertiliser may elevate nitrate levels in plants, so the general industry recommendation has been to avoid pre-grazing applications of nitrogen to minimise the risk of nitrate toxicity in grazing livestock.

More information Shawn McGrath  
Email: [shm McGrath@csu.edu.au](mailto:shm McGrath@csu.edu.au)

*Editors Note: This article was sourced from the MLA website in June 2016 - <http://www.mla.com.au/News-and-events/Industry-news/Three-things-you-need-to-know-when-grazing-crops>*



# Russian wheat aphid

## What is it?

Russian wheat aphid (RWA) (*Diuraphis noxia*) is a major field pest of wheat and barley in many grain producing countries. Yield losses of up to 80% in wheat and 100% in barley have been reported overseas. RWA injects toxins into the plant during feeding which stunts plant growth. Heavy infestations may kill plants. RWA can spread by wind, movement of machinery and vehicles and on peoples clothing.

## Current situation in Australia

RWA was first detected in wheat growing regions of South Australia in May 2016, and has now been detected in Victoria. A national management plan for RWA is being developed to manage the pest in Australia. The plan will include a range of elements such as immediate control options, training to promote early detections and best practice management, as well as research and development to provide longer term control options.

## Hosts

RWA has a wide host range on grasses. Primary hosts for RWA support the entire lifecycle and allow reproduction to occur. These include wheat, barley and durum wheat. Secondary hosts are plants that support adults and final instars only. These hosts allow the aphid to survive, but not to reproduce. Secondary hosts include oat, rye and triticale.

While many grass species are considered hosts of RWA it is not known which native Australian grasses are suitable hosts.

## How can you help?

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) want to find out if RWA is present in NSW – to do this they need your help.

You can look for symptoms and presence of aphids in host crops and grasses. A RWA reporting sheet is available from the DPI website ([www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid)).

The reporting sheet asks for information about where, when and what crops you have looked at and if symptoms or suspect RWA were observed. A report of no RWA is just as important as it a report that finds RWA as it allows NSW DPI to know where surveillance has occurred.

## What to look for?

Initial detection of RWA is most likely to occur with the observation of symptomatic plants. Look for symptomatic tillers in host crops and for inspect for aphid presence. Symptoms associated with the presence of RWA include:

- Leaves with white, yellowish and red streaks
- Leaf rolling along the margins
- Awns trapped by rolled flag leaves
- Heads with bleached appearance

The aphids are very small (<2 mm) so a x10 magnification hand lens should be used to inspect the aphids when populations are low.

## Reporting

Suspect reports: If you think that you have found RWA or you have observed symptoms associated with the aphid, please report it to NSW DPI by calling Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881. Photographs of symptoms can be sent to: [biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

An aphid sample may be required for accurate identification – aphid sampling guidelines are available at: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid)

Negative reports: Email your negative RWA reporting sheets to: [biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## What if RWA is detected in NSW?

If chemical control is required, The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued an emergency permit [#82792] for the control of RWA. Chemical control should consider economic thresholds, insecticide resistance in other crop pests, natural pest enemies and beneficial insects as part of integrated pest management.

More information and photos of plant symptoms and RWA can be found at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/biosecurity/plant/russian-wheat-aphid)



## Research Update

Keeping you up-to-date with pasture and grassland research in Australia. Abstracts of recently published research papers will be reprinted as well as the citation and author details in you wish to follow up the full paper.

### Lucerne yield, water productivity and persistence under variable and restricted irrigation strategies

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**Abstract:** Lucerne (*Medicago sativa* L.) has the potential to be grown widely under water-limiting conditions in the dairy region of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales, Australia, possibly because of its greater water productivity and because irrigation management of lucerne can be more flexible compared with other forage species. A large-scale field experiment was conducted at Tatura in northern Victoria, over 5 years to determine the effects of limiting (deficit) and non-limiting irrigation management on the dry matter (DM) production, water productivity (irrigation and total water productivity) and stand density (or persistence) of lucerne. Nine irrigation treatments were imposed that included full irrigation, partial irrigation and no irrigation in either a single, or over consecutive, irrigation seasons. In the fifth year of the experiment, all plots received the full irrigation treatment to examine plant recovery from the previous irrigation treatments.

In any one year, there was a linear relationship between DM production and total water supply (irrigation plus rainfall plus changes in soil water) such that DM production decreased as the total water supply – due to deficit irrigation – decreased. Over the 5 years, annual DM production ranged from 1.4 to 17.7 t DM ha<sup>-1</sup> with the highest production occurring in plots that received full irrigation. Irrigation water productivity was inversely related to the amount of water used and was higher in the treatments that had only been partially irrigated for that year compared with the treatments that had been fully watered for that year. Total water productivity values were significantly lower only in the treatments that had not been irrigated for that year, and there was little difference between the treatments that were only partially watered during the year and the fully watered treatments (range 9.1–12.2 kg DM ha<sup>-1</sup> mm<sup>-1</sup> for Year 4). There was no significant reduction in plant density or plant persistence in those plots where

deficit irrigation had been imposed. However, the high irrigation regime and poor drainage in the fully irrigated border-check plots significantly reduced plant density and allowed weed infestation in the fifth year of the experiment. These results suggest that, although lucerne DM production is directly related to total water use and may be significantly reduced in the irrigation regions of south-eastern Australia in seasons when water is restricted, the lucerne stand is able to fully recover once a full irrigation regime is resumed. This makes lucerne an ideal forage species for situations when water is limiting.

**Additional keywords:** alfalfa, deficit irrigation, *Medicago sativa*.

*Crop and Pasture Science* **67**(5) 563-573

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/CP15159>

### The impact of selecting for increased ewe fat level on reproduction and its potential to reduce supplementary feeding in a commercial composite flock

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**Abstract:** In southern Australian grazing systems, energy availability typically exceeds energy requirements. Grazing systems are likely to have higher profitability if ewes can utilise this relatively cheap feed by gaining more condition (muscle and fat) and then mobilising it when feed is expensive. The present paper focusses on the importance of genetic merit for fat on the lifetime productivity of the ewe within a commercial operation. The analysis was carried out on a maternal composite stud flock in Holbrook, New South Wales. Ultrasound fat and muscle depth were measured on 2796 ewes as lambs at post-weaning and as adult ewes, to determine the genetic relationship between young and adult

body composition. The hypothesis of the paper is that selection for increased fat at young age will improve body condition of adult ewes, which will lead to improved reproduction and potentially reduced requirements for supplementary feeding. Given that the difference in feed cost between times of abundance and shortage is likely to be larger, the system may become more profitable despite being less efficient (owing to increased feed intake). Our results indicated that selection for scanned post-weaning fat and muscle depth in lambs should lead to increased fat muscle and body condition in the breeding ewe because of strong genetic correlation estimates between the post-weaning and adult traits of 0.68–0.99. The influence of body composition

traits on reproduction (number of lambs weaned) within the stud flock was weak. However, it is hypothesised that by genetically increasing post-weaning fat depth in ewes, producers could improve profitability by reducing the demands for supplementary feeding.

**Additional keywords:** ewe efficiency, hip height, liveweight, muscle, quantitative genetics, sheep.

*Animal Production Science* **56**(4) 698-707

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/AN14579>

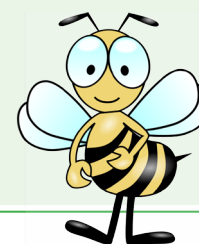
# Not just bees: the buzz on our other vital insect helpers

Romina Rader<sup>1</sup>, Manu Saunders<sup>2</sup> and Saul Cunningham<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> CSIRO



We hear a lot about bees and how important they are for growing our crops. Well they are - and we should also be concerned about recent declines in bee populations and their health.

But bees aren't the only pollinators. Our recent global analysis has revealed that the "non-bee" insects are playing much bigger roles than had been appreciated. These wild insect pollinators occur naturally in our crops and are not deliberately managed by growers. Among the most important insects are bees, flies, beetles, butterflies, moths and wasps.

We know that these other pollinators can be very important. For instance, the contribution by wild pollinating insects other than bees in oil rapeseed in Sweden varied from 5-80%. In Australia, we're not so sure. We need to make sure that in our focus on bees, we don't ignore our other pollinators.

## Pollination makes the world go 'round

Overall, about three-quarters of all the world's food crops and a third of the food we eat by volume comes from pollinator-dependent crops.

Different crops vary in their need for animal pollination. Some crops such as almonds, melons, and passionfruit need pollination in order to produce their fruits or nuts, while others like carrots and onions need pollination only for seed production.

In Australia we grow a huge range of crops in environments ranging from tropical to cooler climates. We are the world's second largest exporter of canola and grow this crop across much of the southern half of the continent (in every state except the NT) and we also produce tropical crops such as mango that can grow across much of the top half of the country. For every crop there can also be a range of different varieties, which can vary in how much they depend on pollinators.

Recent studies have shown that the ubiquitous European honey bee underperforms compared to other species when it comes to pollination. For example, research on blueberry in North America has found that some wild bee species visit more flowers and transfer more pollen between flowers, compared to honey bees.

## The 'other pollinators'

Most crop pollination studies focus on bees (domesticated and wild) because they have the strongest biological association with flowers.

Our recent study revealed that the contribution by pollinators other than bees varied a lot within and among crops and locations.

So what does this mean for Australian Crops?

Well, we don't know which pollinators visit every Australian crop in every growing region and we can't predict what the pollinator community will be. This is a huge knowledge gap considering that wild pollinators contribute so much to crop pollination generally.

We know a little about custard apples, almonds, mangos and canola and a few other crops, but have little idea of who are the pollinators for many other pollinator-dependent crops in Australia, let alone variation in what type of pollinators are found where and with which other pollinators.

## Looking after our pollinators

We know that bees need somewhere to make their nests, as well as flowers to feed their young. Because of these needs, natural habitats such as trees and other woody vegetation are often associated with more bees visiting crops and more different species of bees.

Yet we know very little about how habitat affects crop pollination from insects other

than bees.

Flies and beetles have quite different adult and larval stages, which usually have quite different resource needs.

For example, hoverflies can feed on aphids or decaying plant matter as larvae and then need nectar and pollen as adults. Understanding what these pollinators need will help us protect them and manage them better on farms.

In Australia, we have few measures for growers to protect habitats and manage biodiversity. Europe schemes provide payments to farmers in return for a service of benefit to biodiversity and conservation. These schemes include creating wildflower strips, reducing the use of chemicals, organic farming, converting farmland to grassland, cover crops, buffer strips, reducing water use, and maintaining landscape features (such as isolated trees, hedges, stone walls, allowing public access, set asides). Farmers sign a contract and are paid for the cost of meeting certain commitments, and compensated for any losses of income due to reduced production. Like most land management initiatives, these schemes have their share of challenges, but targeted schemes have positive benefits for crop yield and wild pollinators.

We still have a lot of knowledge gaps to fill, but we are also in a great position to do this. Australia's pollinator insect fauna is unique and diverse. Investing in building our knowledge of these species and their ecology will ease the pressures on our managed honey bees and have ongoing biodiversity and crop production benefits across Australia.

Editors Note: This article is reprinted from The Conversation (<https://theconversation.com/not-just-bees-the-buzz-on-our-other-vital-insect-helpers-52373>)

# History of Grassland Society of NSW - the first 30 years

## Malcolm Campbell and Carol Harris

Editors Note - the article "History of Grassland Society of NSW - the first 25 years by Malcolm Campbell was first published in the Proceedings of the 27th Annual Conference of the Grassland Society of NSW 2012 pp 124-127. Any additions to the article to bring it up-to-date were provided by Carol Harris.

In 1968, an organisation, 'Men of the Land', initiated the first Grassland Society of NSW (Read *et al.* 1995). Their initial activity was a field day at Ingleburn on 1 December 1968. Chairman of the Society was Professor Hector Geddes and his committee: F. A. Varley, P. Gardiner, O. Carter, T. Atkinson, W. Paton, R. Hart, and A. Fleck. Although 'Men of the Land' had 970 members it could not sustain the Grassland Society of NSW and it failed sometime between 1968 and the 1980s.

### Birth of our Society

In 1983, Drew Wright, Principal Agronomist with the Department of Agriculture, canvassed support in country NSW and as a result an investigative committee met in Orange on 7 June 1984 and commissioned a survey of 270 landholders to ascertain whether a Grassland Society was a worthwhile venture and whether they would join, pay a membership fee of \$20, attend a two-day conference once a year and stand for election to committees. A brave 42 landholders expressed their interest and were invited to the inaugural meeting at the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) showground in Sydney on 30 March 1985 (Read *et al.* 1995).

At this meeting chairman Hugh Ross, "Glengarry" Orange, supervised a successful motion from Drew Wright to form the Grassland Society of NSW and to elect the following: President, Peter Wrigley; Vice President, John Read; Secretary, Malcolm Campbell; Treasurer, Jim Dellow (elected later); Editors, Warren McDonald and Ray Ison; and committee, Hugh Ross, Drew Wright, Jack Warner, Roger Dance, Sam Stephens, Frank Crofts and Stephen Millar.

The objects of the Society were to promote: the transfer of innovative information from leading landholders to other producers; the investigation of pasture problems; the incorporation of research findings into practice; the transmission of information in plain English (Hugh Ross and Jack Warner were keen on this) and the publication of pertinent information.

The Grassland Society of Victoria (25 years service and 800 members in 1985), the New Zealand Grassland Association (54 years service and 1000 members in 1985) and the Tropical Grassland Society assisted the birth of our Society by providing images to copy and practical guidance. Of these, the Grassland Society of Victoria was closest to our concept because it was geared to landholder interest (65% producer members in 1985) whereas the other two Societies were concerned more with publication of scientific papers. The constitution of the Grassland Society of Victoria was used by John Read and Drew Wright as our model. The RAS, mainly through Hugh Ross, provided encouragement, meeting venues, our first President Peter Wrigley, as well as later help.

The first activity of the Society was a field day south of Orange and an inaugural dinner on 17 October 1985 both attended by 90 members. Guest of Honour at the dinner was Sir Laurence Street, Acting Governor of NSW and guest speaker was Roy Watts, Director General of the Department of Agriculture, both organised by the RAS. Roy Watts, taking a veterinarians aspect, provided a graphic account of the poisonous qualities of an avalanche of our best pastures species which challenged the very substance of our new Society and from which we only just survived.

### Personnel

The Society has been sustained by volunteers on the executive (Table 1), conference and branch committees since the beginning. Outstanding service has been recognised by the endowment of six Life Memberships (Table 1). Every endeavour was made to enlist producer Presidents and to that end Peter Wrigley, Graham Brown, Stephen Millar, Haydn Lloyd-Davies (25% producer, 75% CSIRO scientist and professor at University of NSW) and John Coughlan were elected. John Read and Frank McRae were from the Department of Agriculture and Mick Duncan and David Harbison from industry. Originally the President's term was for three years, but in 2008 the constitution was amended to lengthen it.

### Logo

Our logo was designed by John Read and professionally fashioned by an artist in the Department of Agriculture in 1986. In 1989, in response to an impassioned conference paper by Frank Crofts on the value of subterranean clover, a

delegate at the AGM 'moved' that our logo and title be changed to represent the "Subterranean Clover Society of NSW".

The logo had a freshen up in 2015, but "Subterranean clover" is still central to the design.

### Conferences

Our first conference in 1986 at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, Richmond was attended by 180. Since then we have held 29 conferences in 15 locations (Table 2) substantiating our aim to involve as many producers as possible in the Society. We held a joint conference with the Victorian Grassland Society at Albury in 2003 and our first coastal conference at Taree in 2009. In 2013, no conference was held to allow members and sponsors to focus on the International Grassland Congress held in Sydney that year. There will be no conference in 2016 to allow the Society to concentrate on the more regional based Pasture Updates.

Conferences are our shopfronts and provide leading producers the opportunity to deliver papers detailing their methods of running their properties. This is our most important contribution to agriculture as no other organisation provides this invaluable information. The producer papers deliver practical and proven information that can be readily adapted by other producers to their properties. They have proved a major attraction, not only in substance but also in the entertainment provided by talented speakers. Papers from research and extension personnel and from industry augment these deliveries.

Conferences are also a platform for enlisting new members and for industry and government representatives to extend their information through posters and static displays. The conferences are organised by local committees that include: convenor, secretary, treasurer, editors, sponsorship, competitions, venue, catering, publicity, trade displays, tours, master of ceremonies and general committee, usually a team of 30 which means over our 30 years we have had 900 helpers.

A survey conducted at the 1997 conference in Dubbo revealed that 46% of the delegates were producers, 37% extension and research personnel, 11% teachers and students and 6% environmentalists. Delegates obtained details of the conference from: the newsletter 53%, the conference brochure 17%, word of mouth 16% and the media 14%.



Most conferences are profitable, but in 2000 we lost \$23,000 which emphasises the need for reserve funds to cover contingencies. In 2002, Haydn Lloyd-Davies rewrote David Kemp's 1988 instructions on how to run our conferences into 'Guidelines for Grassland Society of NSW Conferences'. Over the past 10 years this document has been added to by each committee and is now a vast document.

### Other Societies

In 1989, it was resolved that the President of the Victorian Grassland Society, the NZ Grassland Association and the Tropical Grassland Society attend our conferences free of registration and dinner fees and proposed that membership fees be waived for members of those organisations. This arrangement was reciprocated by the three societies. In 1989, the Australian Wool Corporation invited eight of our members to a conference at Ballarat on weeds, insect pests and diseases of sheep pastures.

### Poster presentations

In 2002, Haydn Lloyd-Davies instigated a scheme that allowed authors of posters a one-minute slot on the dais to present their case. Jim "Banjo" Virgona presented his Caucasian clover case in a one-minute rhyme, the last stanza reading 'Now it's come to the end of my ditty; I hope you're not bored, sleepy or upset; I'll tell you some more if you come over to chat; at my little poster, it's just up the back'.

### Proceedings

Conference proceedings are circulated to members, libraries, Universities, TAFEs, schools and grassland organisations. In 1993, we had proceedings lodged in 27 libraries. In 2001, it was resolved that the Society keep two copies of each proceedings. Complete sets are now secure at Agricultural Research Centre, Orange, the National Library, Canberra, the State Library, Sydney and with the Secretary. In 2000, the proceedings from 1985-2001 were indexed by the secretary on a subject and author basis. Editor Carol Harris has redone this indexation and extended it to cover 1985 to 2015. A number of publishing houses, e.g. the

Kondinin Group, reproduce papers from our proceedings.

### Newsletter

Seven editors have produced the Newsletter since 1985 (Table 2). Between 1993 and 2001, Drew Wright edited copy and then forwarded it to David Michalk for presentation. Full sets of newsletters are held at Agricultural Research Centre, Orange and with the Secretary.

### Branches

In the late 1980s, Jack Warner insisted that we establish as many branches as possible and to that end branches started or sustained were: southern and northern tablelands; central, north-western and south-western slopes; central-western plains; Hunter and Lachlan Valleys, and Albury-Wodonga. Active branches held field days on a multitude of topics, e.g., the North-western slopes branch held one on tropical grasses at Purlawaugh in March 2010 which 150 people attended. Branches operating in some capacity in 2016 are; Central, Southern Tablelands, Northern Tablelands, Central West Slopes and Plains, North West Slopes and South Western Slopes & Riverina.

Committee members that ran these branches included: Peter Simpson, Noel Teys, Mike Keys, Hugh Dove, Col Langford, Ian McLean, John Coughlan, Warren McDonald, Stephen Millar, Lester McCormick, Mick Duncan, Rob Eccles, Alison Bowman, Jim Virgona, Carol Harris, Jeff Howe, Nigel Phillips, John Ive, David Harbison, Nathan Ferguson, Helen Burns and many others. Peter Simpson led the southern tablelands branch for 16 years after predicting in 1986 that such an organisation would not work; so, in effect, he laboured for 16 years to disprove his own theory. The presidents of branches were ex-officio members of the executive.

Since 2012 the branches have been instrumental in organising and running Pasture Updates sponsored by MLA. The purpose of the Grassland Society of NSW Pasture Update series is to provide graziers with the latest information on current research outcomes and new pasture technologies which have a scientific focus. These regional events will

better service the pastoral industry and Grassland Society members and address the historical ad hoc nature and often fragmented delivery and promotion of pasture research. The Pasture Updates enables pasture based issues and initiatives to be interactively addressed by industry participants on a localised basis. The Pasture Updates combine formal presentations on maximising red meat production and on-farm presentations by producers.

### Membership

The founding membership of 28 (Read *et al.* 1995) increased to 80 by August 1985, to 250 by July 1986 and to 1200 in 1996. Thereafter there was a steady decrease to 350 by 2016.

### Sponsorship

For all of our 30 years we have had immense assistance from sponsors in producing our conferences (e.g. 32 and 23 sponsors, respectively, in 2009 and 2010) and in subsidising our membership fees of \$60 per year (2016).

The then Treasurer Linda Ayres analysed, that in 2006, sponsorship contributed 41% of our income compared with 49% from membership fees. Over the years sponsors have promoted competitions for: direct drilling, pasture quality and establishment, hay and silage, pasture and weed identification, and many others.

### Specialties

The Society is non-political, but presented a balanced case to authorities in such negotiations as: the Native Vegetation and Conservation Act; lack of funding for research and extension; sustainment of aerial agriculture, and a number of other issues. The Society also sponsored publications such as: pasture species booklets; weed control in lucerne; pasture legumes and grasses, tropical perennial grasses and others.

### Scholarships

In 1996, President Stephen Millar announced that the Society would award a four-year scholarship to a member's son or daughter who was accepted by a University to study agriculture or veterinary science. There were few applications over the ensuing years, but those received were outstanding. Our first scholarship of \$1500 per year was awarded to Bruce Watson in 1997 to study agricultural science. Bruce had a stellar university career and was offered three jobs at graduation in 2000, taking one at Price Waterhouse, before returning to his property. Our second scholarship was awarded to Bruce's sister Katrina in 2000 to study agricultural

Table 1. State Executives and Life Members over the first 30 years of the Grassland Society of NSW

Presidents	Peter Wrigley 1985–1988, Graham Brown 1988–1991, John Read 1991–1994, Stephen Millar 1994–97, Hayden Lloyd Davies 1997–2000, Frank McRae 2000–2003, John Coughlan 2003–2004, Mick Duncan 2004–2013, David Harbison 2013 onwards
Secretaries	Malcolm Campbell 1985–2002, Nicolle Griffin and Rosemary Sweet 2002–2004, Dianne Smith 2004–2008, Janelle Witschi 2008 onwards
Treasurers	Jim Dellow 1985–2001, Howard Sinclair 2001–2002, Greg Condon 2002–2005, Linda Ayres 2005–2009, Frank McRae 2009 onwards
Newsletter Editors	Warren McDonald 1985, Ray Ison 1985–1989, Alan Andrews 1989–1993, Drew Wright and David Michalk 1993–2001, Haydn Lloyd Davies 2001–2009, Carol Harris 2009 onwards
Life Members	Hugh Ross, Peter Wrigley, Malcolm Campbell, Haydn Lloyd Davies, Warren McDonald, Jim Dellow

Table 2. Conference venues over the first 30 years of the Grassland Society of NSW

Venue	Year
Richmond	1986
Orange	1987, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1998, 2005
Tamworth	1989, 1992, 2008
Queanbeyan	1990, 1994, 1999, 2007
Armidale	1995, 2000
Wagga Wagga	1996, 2006, 2012
Dubbo	1997, 2010
Gundagai	2001
Forbes	2002
Albury	2003
Gunnedah	2004
Taree	2009
Bathurst	2011
Inverell	2014
Goulburn	2015

Notes: Conference at Albury in 2003 was a joint conference with the Grassland Society of Southern Australia. There was no annual conference in 2013 and 2016.

production courses and many others. Recipients of travel grants were contracted to write a report for our conference proceedings and to present a verbal report at a conference. In 2005, Hugh Dove and his committee rewrote the by-laws governing travel grants originated by Jack Warner and his committee.

#### Fellowships

The first and only Grassland Society of NSW Fellowship was presented on 18 October 2000 to outstanding CSIRO scientist Alf Anderson fittingly, at the Boffin's Restaurant in Canberra. Alf discovered the effects of molybdenum on pasture growth.

#### Internet site

The first mention of establishing an internet site was made in 1997 and by 2000 Rob Eccles had organised an operator in Armidale to establish a site and provide upkeep. By 2001, our site was finished and incorporated with that of the Victorian Grassland Society. It was planned to set all papers and contents of proceedings on the site and sell papers for \$5 and proceeding for \$10. In 2005, Linda Ayres and Leah Lane organised a new site where, by 2010, papers or proceedings could be obtained through the secretary. In 2010, credit card facilities were established for paying subs and conference fees. In 2012 a Grassland Society of NSW Facebook page was also established - currently the page has a 120 Likes. If you haven't checked out the website visits [www.grasslandnsw.com.au](http://www.grasslandnsw.com.au)

science at Sydney University. After transferring to Marcus Oldham College she graduated with a Bachelor of Business in 2002.

#### Travel grants

In the first 30 years of the Society, over 30 grants were awarded on a budget of \$4000 per year with a maximum grant of \$2000 to an individual, but many of \$250 were awarded. Most grants were given to members to attend the Victorian Grassland Society or the NZ Grassland Association conferences, but other grants were made for International Grassland, Asian-Pacific Weeds and RAS conferences, study sojourns on pasture species, specialist pasture and animal

#### Future

Our Society has been sustained for 30 years by volunteers from government, industry and producers. An estimate of the numbers involved in the executive and branch committees might come to 300. When added to the conference committee numbers of 900 (see above) it is evident that a large number of volunteers have supported the Society and its aims over this period.

It is essential that this support continues for our Society to prosper. However, with the demolition of personnel in the agricultural section of the Department of Primary Industries (previously Department of Agriculture), such support may be in jeopardy. In 2009, President Mick Duncan stated that, 'although it has been a tremendous partnership, we can't keep relying on the above department to the same extent as in the past'. Thus economies such as biennial conferences and other labour-saving strategies may have to be adopted.

Taking into account the above, there is now a greater need for the Grassland Society of NSW than ever before. So here's to the volunteers that will carry the Society to even greater heights over the next 30 years and beyond.

#### References

Read JW, Wright WA, Campbell MH, McDonald WJ (1995) The birth of the Grassland Society of NSW. In 'Proceedings of the 10th Annual Conference of the Grassland Society of NSW'. p. 8. (NSW Grassland Society Inc.: Orange)



## From the President

What a beautiful week it has been for much of NSW. From Bourke to Broken Hill, Tamworth to Talbingo, and nearly all areas in between. Such a great spread of rain is rare, and while we are still thinking of those who did miss out, for many this rain has been critical. Soil temperatures, while decreasing now, will still allow growth over the next 2-4 weeks, before some tableland areas really do get too cold. Snow on the alps means Winter is not far away.

There has been much talk of handfeeding and agistment through many parts of the state for some time now, and while the very recent rain wont alleviate the need to keep feeding, it has at least buoyed the livestock markets back up again. The far south of the state and Victoria appears to have had terrific rain. Falls of 75 mm and above are common place, even venturing

into the 150 mm plus range in spots. It will be interesting to see what the coming weaner sales do now.

It is fantastic news to be able to pass on that MLA have agreed to fund the "Pasture Updates" program for another three years. While final contracts are being done, planning is well underway to deliver again in 2016. At this stage, "Pasture Updates" are being planned for Bega, Guandagai, Gloucester, Grafton, Tamworth and Manildra. Dates are yet to be finalised, so please keep an eye on the web site for the next "Pasture Update" near you.

Reported in earlier newsletters, I just wish to reiterate that the society will not be holding a conference in 2016. This is in response to member feedback, and the success of the pasture updates. We look

forward to hosting a 2017 conference, most likely in the central region of the state.

Here's hoping that mother nature finds a few spots she hasn't been to for a while, and everyone can get a bit of relief. To those that have it, enjoy it and make the most from it. I look forward to talking with members and guests at some of the pasture updates later this year.

All the best,  
Regards,

David Harbison,  
President.



## App Alert - Emergency + Smartphone App

Australia's Triple Zero Awareness Working Group has developed a smartphone app for iOS, Android and Windows devices to:

- provide the caller with information about when to call Triple Zero
- provide the caller with information about who to call in various non-emergency situations

State Emergency Service (SES)(132 500), Police Assistance Line (131 444), Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000)  
Health Direct Australia (1800 022 222), National Relay Service

- assist the caller to dial the relevant number display the GPS coordinates of the phone's location that the caller can read out to the emergency operator.

The app is free of charge and available for download from iTunes, Google Play and Windows Stores.

### *Other emergency-related apps*

There is a range of other publically available apps that claim to assist callers in an emergency. Some of these apps simply provide information about who to contact, while others claim to assist callers in requesting emergency assistance or to provide information about the caller's location to an emergency service organisation.

If you are considering using one of these apps, be aware that:

- not all of them can do what they claim and could delay emergency assistance; the only way of contacting Triple Zero (000) is with a voice call—you cannot use SMS, email, instant messaging, video calling or social media to contact emergency services via Triple Zero (000). Apps are not able to automatically provide details of your location to Triple Zero (000) or an emergency service organisation—however, you can read out your GPS coordinates to the emergency operator if they are provided on your smartphone.

### Disclaimer

While every effort is made to publish accurate information the Grassland Society of NSW does not accept responsibility for statements made or opinion expressed in this newsletter.

Inclusion of an advertisement in this publication does not necessarily imply an endorsement of the company or product of the Grassland Society of NSW.

***The Grassland Society of NSW Inc is a unique blend of people with a common interest in developing our most important resource - our Grasslands***

The Grassland Society of NSW was formed in March 1985. The Society now has approximately 500 members and associates, 75% of whom are farmers and graziers. The balance of membership is made up of agricultural scientists, farm advisers, consultants, and or executives or representatives of organisations concerned with fertilisers, seeds, chemicals and machinery.

The aims of the Society are to advance the investigation of problems affecting grassland husbandry and to encourage the adoption into practice of results of research and practical experience. The Society holds an annual conference, publishes a quarterly newsletter, holds field days and is establishing regional branches throughout the state.

Membership is open to any person or company interested in grassland management and the aims of the Society. For membership details go to [www.grasslandnsw.com.au](http://www.grasslandnsw.com.au) or contact the Secretary at [secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au) or at PO Box 471 Orange 2800

***Office Bearers of the Grassland Society of NSW - 2015-2016***

**State Executive**

David Harbison (President)  
Keith Garlic (Vice President)  
Janelle Witschi (Secretary)  
Frank McRae (Treasurer)  
Mick Duncan (Immediate Past President)  
Carol Harris (Editor)

**Committee:** Helen Burns, John Coughlan, Clare Edwards, Nathan Ferguson, Chris Houghton, John Ive, Lester McCormick and Luke Pope.

**Branch Representatives**

Lester McCormick (North West Slopes)  
John Coughlan (Central)  
John Ive (Southern Tablelands)  
Mick Duncan (Northern Tablelands)  
David Harbison (Central West Slopes and Plains)  
Nathan Ferguson & Helen Burns (South Western Slopes & Riverina)

If you are interested in reactivating an old branch or forming a new branch please contact the Secretary at [secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au) or by mail at PO Box 471 Orange NSW 2800

***Grassland Society of NSW News***



**Next Newsletter:** The next edition of the newsletter will be circulated in September 2015. If you wish to submit an article, short item, a letter to the Editor or a photo please send your contribution to the Editor - Carol Harris at [carol.harris@nsw.dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:carol.harris@nsw.dpi.nsw.gov.au) or DPI NSW 444 Strathbogie Road Glen Innes 2370. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is August 12 2016.



**Electronic newsletter:** Don't forget you can receive the Grassland Society of NSW newsletter electronically. Just email your details to Janelle ([secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@grasslandnsw.com.au)) and you will be added to the list. Next newsletter you will receive an email notification with a link to the newsletter on the website.

***Grassland Society of NSW - PO BOX 471 Orange NSW 2800, [www.grasslandnsw.com.au](http://www.grasslandnsw.com.au)***

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