

TUSSOCK TIMES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PREVENTING FUTURE SEED
SPREAD EVENTS

AUTUMN SERRATED
TUSSOCK CONTROL

GEELONG LANDCARE
NETWORK EDUCATES
COMMUNITY LEADERS ON
SERRATED TUSSOCK

NEW SERRATED TUSSOCK
EXTENSION AREAS



VICTORIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING PARTY CONTINUES TO WORK HARD ON COMMUNITY LED ACTION

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) has reflected on its achievements over the past two years at its recent annual general meeting.

Chairman Jim Seager highlighted the many accomplishments of the group in his address at the annual general meeting of the working party in November, including the development of a new five year strategy and the implementation of dedicated serrated tussock Extension Officers.

Since Serrated Tussock Extension Officers have been engaged by the VSTWP, then Executive Officer Ivan Carter said "over 480 properties have been visited and inspected for serrated tussock with landowners given valuable assistance on developing long term management plans."

Read more about the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party's achievements on page 2.



VICTORIAN SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING PARTY CONTINUES TO WORK HARD ON COMMUNITY LED ACTION

Continued

Strategic areas are targeted by the Extension Officers to align with the work DPI is doing to contain serrated tussock within the core infestation area around Melbourne.

The launch of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Strategy 2012 – 2017 in March this year gives Victoria strategic actions to control the spread of serrated tussock to reduce the impacts on the economy, society and the environment.

The VSTWP has put significant effort into developing and maintaining partnerships with

Landcare Groups, local government, Catchment Management Authorities, state government and landholders to enhance the capacity of communities to lead the action on serrated tussock management.

The VSTWP also supports communities through providing grants for serrated tussock education, visiting field days around Victoria educating on serrated tussock and its management, producing educational material, and this newsletter, the Tussock Times.

This year also saw the VSTWP working alongside the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to tackle infestations of serrated tussock in and around the proposed Western Grassland Reserves.

Working in partnership with the Western Melbourne Catchments Network, the proposed reserve sites and a buffer area were mapped for serrated tussock and other invasive grasses and a management report developed for DSE. Initial treatment of infestations at some sites has occurred based on management priorities.

Mr Seager thanked the hard work and commitment of the volunteer community members, the staff and extension officers. "Without your hard work, we would not have achieved as much as we have" said Mr Seager.

SUPPORT FOR LAND MANAGERS WITH VSTWP EXTENSION PROGRAMS

New target areas for serrated tussock support are in the works with the VSTWP currently planning for this year's extension programs.

Extension officers work in strategic project areas, offering support, guidance and mapping of infestations to land managers.

The support and management advice is provided free of charge with the aim of developing

strong community-led action on serrated tussock control.

The working party currently runs extension programs within the core infestation area, aligning with the DPI containment zone.

Extension programs in three target areas will begin in the next few months.

TREAT TUSSOCK TODAY: PREVENTING FUTURE SEED SPREAD EVENTS

Serrated tussock seed storm events were experienced in a few areas of the state late last year, affecting properties, health, and wellbeing.

Large quantities of seed were transported by wind onto properties causing distress to land owners and managers who are faced with the large clean-up of serrated tussock seed heads.

Seed heads can collect around buildings and structures on a property, limiting access, creating a fire risk, and significantly increasing the soil seed bank, leading to new infestations.

As this example shows, a serrated tussock infestation can not only negatively impact the property it is located on, but has the potential to seriously affect neighbouring properties.

In order to prevent these events occurring again, work has to begin before serrated tussock flowers. Now is the time to get active on your serrated tussock management.

If chemical control is part of your management of serrated tussock, Autumn is a good time to use flupropanate-based herbicides. Spraying flupropanate on the vegetative stage of growth allows time for the herbicide to take effect before flowering.

Autumn is also a great time to begin thinking about cultivation of land and creating healthy pastures. Continued cultivation kills serrated tussock plants. When sufficient moisture is available, work on sowing crops or pasture to provide strong competition against serrated tussock.

Trying to solve the problem of seed head dispersal while it is happening is too late. Work needs to be done early in the season to prevent these events.

Remember to source targeted advice on chemical use and pasture or crop management for your particular situation from a chemical reseller or agronomist.



Serrated tussock seed heads were blown onto a property causing access issues to the house and driveway. These seed heads also posed a fire risk. *Source: T. Prowd*

AUTUMN SERRATED TUSSOCK CONTROL

Work on establishing or renovating strong, competitive pastures.

Cultivate arable areas with suitable crops to out-compete serrated tussock.

Chip out isolated serrated tussock plants.

If using flupropanate, apply with enough time for it to take effect before flowering.

GEELONG LANDCARE NETWORK: EDUCATING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Twenty community group leaders from around the state witnessed successful integrated serrated tussock management in practice recently.

The Geelong Landcare Network promoted active management of serrated tussock during a visit to a focus property as part of a tour for the 2012 Victorian Landcare Forum.

The tour visited the Barabool Hills area where serrated tussock infestations have been an issue. Participants were able to see and discuss the effectiveness of different management approaches and how they integrate together.

Participants were shown how planting trees along stony barriers in the area has significantly reduced ongoing management efforts on some properties. Other management options such as chemical control and grazing were also discussed.

Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party Chair Jim Seager was present, giving an overview of the role and responsibilities of the working party. Mr Seager also led a discussion on the control of *Nassella* species in the region.

The Geelong Landcare Network ran this serrated tussock portion of the tour with the assistance of the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party Community Action Grants made possible through Caring for our Country funding.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party works hard to support community groups with the resources required to increase the capability and willingness to manage serrated tussock.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

Thank you to those who contributed to this edition of the Tussock Times.

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party welcomes your contributions and feedback at any time.

For contributions, feedback or to be added to or removed from the mailing list, please contact:

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In our efforts to reduce the number of newsletters being printed if you currently receive a hardcopy of this newsletter but have access to email please send your email address to Alison .

More information on serrated tussock can be found on the Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party website: www.serratedtussock.com or at DPI online: www.dpi.vic.gov.au or by contacting DPI on 136 186.

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