

sustainable
agriculture



Planting tagasaste to improve and protect 'gutless' sands



Project Snapshot

Land Manager Names:	Rod and Neil Carter
Property Size:	3800 ha
Location:	Meckering
Annual Rainfall (mm):	350 mm
Enterprise Mix:	Cropping 65% and sheep 35%
Soil Types/Vegetation Types:	Deep sands, sand over gravel, sand over clay



Key Messages

- Keep tagasaste a suitable height that is manageable for sheep to graze and keep the wind erosion minimal.
- Ensure you choose the correct fodder shrub for the site; take into consideration the soil type, future use of the site and management of degraded areas before planting.

This project is supported by Wheatbelt NRM, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

The story so far

Rod and Neil Carter initially became involved in the Soil Conservation Incentives Program following contact with the local Environment Officer and Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Project Officer to discuss alternative management options for a highly wind eroded site.

The site chosen for revegetation is situated over deep yellow and grey sand plain country that has in the past been overgrazed by stock resulting in significant wind erosion and poor productivity. Based on recommendations received in the initial project consultation phase, it was decided that tagasaste (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*) would be a viable option to improve the grazing capacity, productivity and soil health within the 94 ha paddock.

The tagasaste was planted in 2012 in alleys 110 m apart with 4 rows in each alley facing north-south. Weeds were controlled prior to planting using a knockdown herbicide and rabbits were controlled with 1080 poison. The seedlings were planted using a Chatfields tree planter and sheep have been kept off the paddock since planting to reduce the grazing pressure on the new seedlings. The establishment of the site is still in the early stages, however, the site has proved to be challenging for the tagasaste as a result of the dry season and degraded nature of the soil.

Rod and Neil plan to increase the number of fodder shrubs within the paddock in upcoming years to increase the grazing capacity at the site. "Production is limited so we hope the tagasaste will provide a feed source while improving the soil", Rod said. They plan to do more research on suitable fodder shrubs that would suit deep sandplain country to improve the establishment rate of seedlings in the future. "It is important for this paddock to be managed in a more sustainable and productive way", Rod mentioned.

Lessons Learnt

In hindsight, more research on the species chosen may have assisted in achieving better establishment of the seedlings, which only had about a 50% to 70% survival rate at the site. In addition, placement of the alleys in the paddock could have been planned better as some seedlings were planted on highly wind eroded and degraded areas within the paddock which hindered establishment.

Below: Rod Carter



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