



Key Messages

- It is important to be vigilant during the post seeding period, to ensure insect control;
- Aim to get maximum seed set in the first year, this will set up the site for life; and
- Weed control is paramount.

Project Snapshot

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Land Manager Names: | Angus Cooke |
| Property Size: | 2400 ha |
| Location: | Southern Brook |
| Annual Rainfall (mm): | 400 mm |
| Enterprise Mix: | Crop 60%, Sheep 30 %, Cattle 10% |
| Soil Types/Vegetation Types: | Red soil, white clay and duplex soil |

Getting involved

Angus Cooke is a member of the Southern Brook Landcare Group and found out about Wheatbelt NRM funding for projects aimed at preventing wind erosion through the group's coordinator at the time. "I was keen to try out some improved pasture species for a site on the farm that has had low production in the past", said Angus. "It was a great opportunity to try out sandalwood along with pastures and then the grazing management associated with this".

The plantings

The 10 ha project area has clay to clay-loam soils that are found just above a creek bed in the landscape. The site was first sprayed with a knockdown. Not long after it was sown with 5 kg/ha of Prima Gland clover, 2 kg/ha of Hykon Rose Clover (with Group C inoculant) and 5 kg/ha Yellow Serradella (with Group S inoculant). Angus also applied an insecticide after the annual pasture legumes had emerged. Then in mid July the sandalwood hosts were planted in wide-spaced belts by volunteers who were on a team building exercise.

Originally the site was volunteer pastures that were set stocked; however Angus' involvement in the project has brought about some positive changes. "I have better ground cover over the trial area and there is less soil compaction which is good too", Angus explained. "It looks like I will get more production from this bit of land now with the improved pastures".

Lessons Learnt

Angus has made a few changes to his management of the site since the pastures were established. Now he mainly rotationally grazes the site instead of set stocking by managing the stocking rate to the pasture production.

According to Angus there have been many unexpected changes during the life of the project. He explained saying, "Firstly we had an extremely dry year in 2010 (total of 170 mm), the year that

the pastures were sown and sandalwood hosts planted. In saying this though, the legumes still set seed and regenerated even though it was one of the driest years on record".

If Angus was to do something similar again he would try some other annual legume pasture varieties and be more vigilant during the post seeding period. "I would monitor the site for insects, they gave it a good hit", stated Angus. Angus' future plans for landcare at 'Stoney Ridge' involve block sowing saltbush and salt tolerant fodder shrubs and then fencing them off for controlled grazing.

Acknowledgements

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Below: Angus Cooke inspecting his trial site.



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