



LANDnews

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR RURAL LANDHOLDERS IN THE ACT

February 2010

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RURAL PROGRAMS COORDINATION UPDATE

The Parks Conservation and Lands (PCL) Rural Programs Unit continues to work closely with all land managers within the ACT on rural and associated matters.

Recent issues include:

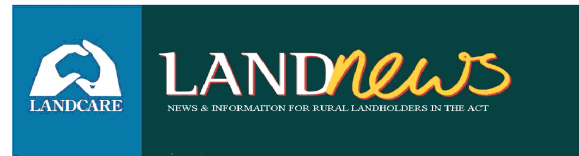
Review of Land Management Agreements (LMAs), Rural Programs is working closely with ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) to update the LMA proforma. The new proforma will simplify and remove confusion about the process of drafting an LMA. As all rural landholders are aware, their LMA is required to be reviewed every 5 years. Rural programs are currently looking at ways of streamlining this process. Landholders whose LMA is due for review will receive a letter from Julie Palmer explaining the process and offering any assistance required.

Rural Programs Coordination (RPC) is working closely with the PCL districts and the Fire Management unit in identifying parcels of unleased land where grazing would be an appropriate fuel reduction management tool. When areas are identified, Rural Programs coordinates the process of arranging the issue of a grazing licence. All current ACT rural landholders are notified and are eligible to apply for blocks when they become available.

Rural Programs recently engaged a private company to undertake a telephone survey of ACT rural landholders' attitudes towards kangaroo culling in the ACT.

This was primarily in response to concerns raised by landholders with the application process and requirements of licences issued.

On the 5 February RPC hosted an Eastern Grey Kangaroo workshop and BBQ dinner at the Stromlo Depot. The aim of the workshop was to inform rural landholders of the results of the



survey on attitudes towards kangaroo culling in the ACT. The workshop also provided attendees with important information relating to the 2010 culling season including an overview of the Kangaroo Management Plan, advice on undertaking an effective rural cull, an overview of licence conditions and process and the Code of Practice. There were 43 attendees participating in the workshop. The attendees provided positive feedback, finding the workshop both informative and worthwhile and the presentations were rated highly in the evaluation. Given the high attendance and success of the workshop, Rural Programs Coordination Unit is considering using this format for future workshops based on a theme e.g. weed management.



Don Fletcher, Senior Wildlife Ecologist giving some ecological advice for the best value reduction of kangaroos on rural properties.

Over the next three months Graeme Hirth PCL Rural Programs Officer will be undertaking a review of all grazing licences across the ACT. This review will allow PCL to review licence conditions, the estimated dry sheep equivalent (DSE) stocking rate and the overall viability of numerous agistment areas across the ACT. The review will also ensure that all grazing licences issued by PCL are updated to the new licence document to assist in the ease of administering. If you currently hold an agistment licence please be assured that you will be contacted shortly to arrange the signing of an updated licence.

For further information or enquiries relating to the day to day management issues within your area please do not hesitate to contact your relevant district Manager:

Brett McNamara, Rural District:
Ph: 6207 2900.

Peter Galvin, Canberra South:
Ph: 6207 2087

Daniel Iglesias, Canberra North:
Ph: 6207 2113

For assistance or advice relating to rural land management or specific rural programs please feel free to contact the Rural Programs Coordination Unit.

Sam Price, Acting Rural Programs
Coordinator
Ph: 6205 0855

Julie Palmer, Rural Programs Officer
Ph: 6205 9661

Graeme Hirth, Rural Programs Officer
Ph: 6207 5176



EUROPEAN WASP UPDATE

Last year, the European wasp problem reached an unprecedented peak in Canberra with more than 750 nests reported, a 50% increase on the previous year! All Canberra suburbs were affected and the number of stinging episodes peaked at 48, more than double the 2007 total. At least two dogs were killed as a result of eating pet food on which wasps were foraging.

Canberra residents are being urged to keep an eye out for tell-tale signs of European wasp nests: the queen regularly flying in and out of a hole in the garden or house structure.

For advice on identification and control of European wasps, contact the A.C.T Government European Wasp Hotline 6162 1914 which is manned by Dr Phil Spradbery, a world renowned European wasp expert.

Jenny Connolly
Weeds and Pests Officer
Parks, Conservation and Lands
Email: jenny.connolly@act.gov.au



NOXIOUS WEED (PEST PLANT) SEIZURE FROM ACT PLANT NURSERY

Broom is a highly invasive weed that has smothered large areas of bushland in south east Australia. Diligent follow-up control by Parks, Conservation and Lands (PCL) staff has ensured that this weed has been reduced to isolated infestations in the ACT. In other jurisdictions it is far more widespread.

A tip-off from a PCL officer on leave led to the recent seizure of Broom *Genista* sp. plants being illegally sold by an ACT plant nursery. The store manager was very embarrassed and cooperative. The supplier is from Victoria – and PCL is liaising with the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment and Department of Primary Industries about the matter.

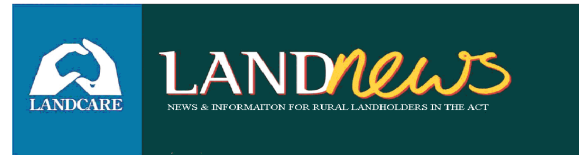
In the ACT all *Genista* and *Cytisus* species of Broom are prohibited from sale.

This plant seizure may well have stopped a new infestation of Broom in the ACT and saved taxpayers the future cost of weed control.

Steve Taylor
Weeds and Pests Coordinator
Parks, Conservation and Lands
Email: steve.taylor@act.gov.au



Jenny Connolly and Steve Taylor of Parks, Conservation and Lands Natural Resource Protection team seize illegal broom plants being sold in an ACT nursery.



LIVING WITH AFRICAN LOVEGRASS

After being approached by local landholders, the Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG) is organising a get together of all those interested in controlling African Lovegrass across the ACT.

African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* is a perennial tussock grass, probably introduced to Australia accidentally before 1900 but has subsequently been deliberately imported as a pasture grass. Four of the seven agronomic types are now naturalised in Australia. [Landcare Notes – African Lovegrass](#), Victorian Dept. of Primary Industries (*5.)

It is common in eastern New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, south-eastern Queensland and south-western Western Australia and has a more scattered distribution in Victoria and the southern parts of South Australia. African Lovegrass has the potential to impact severely on sustainable agriculture through reduced quality of pasture and can impact severely on the farm environment. It also has the potential to invade grassy woodland communities thus presenting the ACT with a serious biodiversity conservation issue.

There are a variety of ways of dealing with African Lovegrass, each of which is effective in specific situations.

In agricultural locations where the aim might be to weaken, kill and prevent seed set, or manage to minimise the impact of African Lovegrass the following methods can be used:

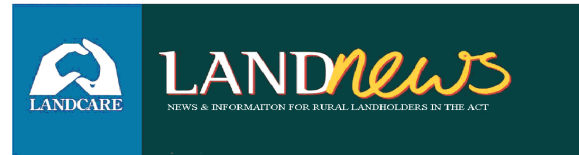
1. **Competitive pastures** to compete from spring to autumn. Complementary, winter growing pastures to fill the feed gap;

2. **Graze** intensively from spring to early autumn;
3. **Fertilise** to optimise pasture quality and palatability;
4. **Herbicide** treatment to prevent seed set – from spring to autumn; (Registrations of products can change from time to time, and it is therefore important for chemical users to ensure they refer to current information about chemical use patterns and legislative obligations. Two herbicide options are 'Round-up' used to kill or stop seed set – depending on rate and Fluproponate which kills African Lovegrass and provides residual control of seed bank for up to two years).
5. **Crop rotations** for 3-4 years with herbicide or cultivation to prevent seed set and plant competitive pastures to follow the final crop; and
6. **Feed supplements** including urea, bypass protein and high energy supplements to encourage stock to consume less palatable weed foliage.

Information from 3D Weed Management brochure – African Lovegrass (*4.)

Not all control methods will work in all situations. For example, managed grazing has shown good results in heavily infested paddocks but questions prevail relating to managing patches within paddocks, access to larger stock numbers and suitable fencing alignments.

African Lovegrass is regarded as a major environmental weed and currently causes significant problems in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. During a recent survey it was listed as a priority environmental weed in ten of Australia's Natural Resource Management regions (CRC 2006). African Lovegrass is an early coloniser of disturbed sites, grows rapidly,



and can form dense stands which crowd out and replace native species, also preventing their regeneration (Navie & Adkins 2007).



African Lovegrass
Photo: Molonglo Catchment Group



African Lovegrass
Photo: Molonglo Catchment Group

African Lovegrass is seen as a threat to natural temperate grasslands throughout the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. African Lovegrass is also one of a group of exotic perennial grasses that have been listed as being a "key threatening process" in New South Wales. In locations where African Lovegrass poses an environmental problem because of its potential impact on biodiversity:

1. Stop seed set – spot spray (Plant sets seed from October to May);

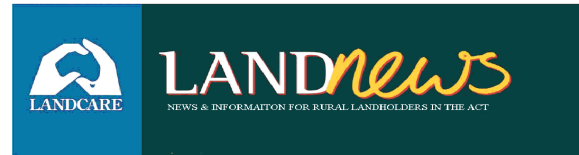
2. Quarantine – clean vehicles, spray perimeters, limit movement of visiting vehicles;
3. Destroy new outbreaks – Dig out and destroy seed heads, or spot spray;
4. Neighbours – encourage neighbours to adopt similar weed management.

African Lovegrass competes very effectively with other grasses, annuals and perennials, and can form dense pure stands excluding other species. Because of its high seed production, high germination rate and the difficulty of controlling it by herbicides or management practices, it is important to keep African Lovegrass off clean properties or to recognise and destroy new infestations before they become established (*Navie & Adkins 2007*).

One thing is certain, and that is, to deal with a problem, you have to know the extent of the problem.

Living with Lovegrass - Learning from each other on how to manage African Lovegrass will be held on Saturday 22nd May 2010, 9.30am to 1.30pm followed by a BBQ lunch at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. The purpose of this meeting is to identify how the ACT community (including farmers, reserve managers, Park Care volunteers, landcarers, roadside managers, etc) can minimise the effects and spread of African Lovegrass within our region. The forum will be designed to assess the extent of the problem, examine the likely detrimental effects of continued spread of African Lovegrass on native grasslands, woodlands, conservation areas and grazing enterprises and determine how to mobilize a range of resources to implement some of the existing technical solutions. Speakers will discuss:

1. What is African Lovegrass (ALG) and why is it a land management problem?
2. How to tackle the problem (some local experiences)



3. Panel discussion and comments from the floor on where to from here (Action Plan for ALG)

To register your interest or for information on the forum contact

Steve Welch
Southern ACT Catchment Group
 Coordinator info@sactcg.org.au
 Ph: 6296 6400

***References:**

As this forum is not until May you have plenty of time to think. If you want further information on African Lovegrass check out:

1. Molonglo Catchment group Weed Fact Sheet – African Lovegrass
<http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au/Weeds/Documents/Factsheets/AfricanLovegrass.pdf>
2. Land Protection (2006) African lovegrass. Eragrostis curvula. Natural Resources and Water Facts - pest series, PP63. Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water, Brisbane. Available at <http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/factsheets/pdf/pest/pp63.pdf>
3. Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) African lovegrass info at
http://www.k2c.org.au/ALG_Info.htm
4. 3D Weed Management brochure – African Lovegrass
http://images.wool.com/pub/3D_Weed_Guidelines_AfricanLovegrass_June2009_lowresFINAL.pdf
5. Landcare Notes – African Lovegrass - Victorian Dept. of Primary Industries
[http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DPI/nreninf.nsf/v/6A63B9BA821EDC90257409007D998D/\\$file/LC0189_Sep07.pdf](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DPI/nreninf.nsf/v/6A63B9BA821EDC90257409007D998D/$file/LC0189_Sep07.pdf)

MANAGING NATIVE PASTURES TO MAXIMISE PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY

The management of native pastures to maximise rural profitability throughout the ACT relies largely on the ability of producers to recognise different pasture species through the identification of key characteristics and maintaining an understanding of the life cycle of common species.

Being able to identify pasture species while possessing an understanding of the plant's life cycle will allow land managers to make production decisions based on the establishment of pastures, expected pasture growth and the palatability of pastures at certain times throughout the year.

Within the ACT, rural lands can maintain high densities of both summer and winter dominant native pasture species. Summer dominant species (often referred to as C4 grasses) regularly include species such as Kangaroo Grass *Themeda australis*, Red Grass *Bothriochloa macra* and Wire Grass *Aristida ramosa*. Winter dominant species (often referred to as C3 grasses) regularly include species such as Wallaby Grass *Austrodanthonia spp*, Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* and Tussock Grass *Poa spp*. A sound knowledge of identification characteristics of these basic six pasture species is beneficial to ensure effective and profitable grazing practices.

As native grasses within the ACT can be divided into the above two classes (C3 and C4) based on their growing season, a knowledge of the individual species growing season can assist producers not only in providing livestock with more palatable feed at specific times throughout the year but will also assist producers to encourage the long term persistency of these desirable pasture species.

Species such as Kangaroo Grass are a long lived perennial pasture and are often hard to develop commanding populations through seedling establishment. Hence the implementation of rotational grazing



strategies allowing these species to replenish root reserves and will assist in maintaining pasture health.

On the other hand species such as Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia spp*), generally have high seedling establishment rates. Hence the implementation of a rotational grazing program focusing on achieving maximum seed set and regeneration will assist in maintaining a dense, competitive and productive pasture.



A healthy stand of Kangaroo Grass.

These are important considerations in relation to the grazing management of native pasture species within the ACT. Possessing a knowledge of when individual pastures require rest periods to enhance flowering and seed set or replenishing root reserves. Alternatively the establishment/invasion of poorer pasture species or weeds such as Paterson's Curse and spear grass can be discouraged by developing grazing plans to coincide with their flowering and establishment periods.

For more information contact
Sam Price
Rural Programs Officer
Parks, Conservation and Lands
Email: samual.price@act.gov.au

ACTEWAGL FUNDING – FENCING, STOCK WATER AND REVEGETATION - PADDYS & NAAS RIVERS

Greening Australia is undertaking a scoping study on behalf of ActewAGL to identify landowners on the Paddys and Naas Rivers who are interested in receiving funding assistance to fence off their section of the river, install alternative stock water and revegetate. This information will assist ActewAGL develop an incentive funding scheme to be delivered by Greening Australia.

Interested landowners on the Paddys and Naas Rivers should contact:

Angela Calliess at Greening Australia Email: acalliess@act.greeningaustralia.org.au

Ph: 6253 3035 or 0413 921 281 before 5 March



PEST ANIMAL INFORMATION PACK

The Molonglo Catchment Group has produced a *Pest Animal Information Pack* to compliment the group's *Weed Information Pack*. The pack addresses seven pest species from the Molonglo catchment; the pest species included range from well established pests such as foxes and rabbits to the emerging pest species in the catchment such as deer. The urban environment has not been forgotten as the pack also includes domestic cats and dogs and the steps owners can take to ensure their pets are not roaming bushland and harassing wildlife.

The need for the pack was first identified in 2005 during community consultation for the group's catchment strategy (www.molonglocatchment.com.au/catchment_planning.htm). That consultation identified a need in the community for education material on weeds and pest animals specifically tailored to their catchment. In 2008 the group delivered the *Weed Information Pack* addressing the major weeds in the Molonglo catchment and now thanks to generous funding from the NSW Environmental Trust, the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and the ACT Government, the group is able to offer the Molonglo



Catchment *Pest Animal Information Pack* to the community. The pack outlines the species impacts on the environment, their distribution locally and nationally, control methods and what you can do to help in the fight against these pests. If you would like to receive a copy contact:

Andy Westcott,
Molonglo Catchment Coordinator
coordinator@molonglocatchment.org.au
Ph: 6299 2119



Congratulations
to Greening Australia Capital
region and the Natural
Resource Management team,
who last year celebrated
ACT Land keepers win in The
Banksia Awards, Australia's
most prestigious
Environmental Awards.
ACT Land keepers took out
the Land and Biodiversity
section of the Banksia
Awards, well done to all
involved!



A.C.T LAND KEEPERS FUNDING

There is still a small amount of funding available to ACT rural landowners through the ACT Land Keepers program. Incentive funding is available for fencing and revegetation of riparian areas, establishing shelter belts and protecting remnant woodland.

Contact: Angela Calliess at Greening Australia
acalliess@act.greeningaustralia.org.au,
Ph: 6253 3035 or 0413 921 281



ACT LANDCARE COORDINATOR

Esther Duffy has been working as the ACT Landcare Coordinator since May 2009. Her background is in environmental science and after finishing a Bachelor of Science, she studied a Graduate Diploma in Science Communication. Esther has worked with Australian National University, Actew Corporation, Greening Australia, Conservation Council and University of Canberra. Originally a Canberra girl, she's also lived in Canada and Perth where she worked in local council facilitating environmental programs.

The first major task that Esther had as the ACT Landcare Coordinator was to organise the ACT Landcare Awards. The role also involves:

- assisting the Catchment and Landcare Association and the Rural Landholders Association
- helping Landcare groups, including supporting the formation of new Landcare groups
- coordinating News of Our World newsletters and the ACT Landcare website
- helping groups apply for funding
- organising workshops, training events and field days.



Esther Duffy

Esther is looking forward to working more with rural landholders in the ACT. She's assisting in organising *Farmers Learning from Farmers* field days. The first one held in October last year was a great success with over 50 people attending.

If you would like to talk directly to Esther, receive the electronic News of Our World newsletter, or find out more about the *Farmers Learning from Farmers* field days, please do not hesitate to contact Esther.

Esther Duffy
ACT Landcare Coordinator
Email: esther.duffy@act.gov.au
Ph: 6205 2913



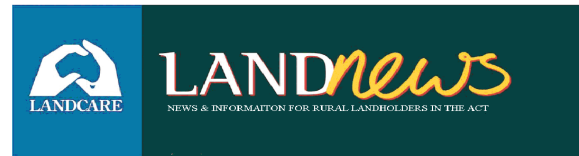
PREVENTING HERBICIDE RESISTANCE

Herbicide resistance is defined as a weed's ability to survive an application of a herbicide that would normally be lethal.

Since the early 1970's there have been numerous reports of herbicide resistance throughout Australian agriculture, namely Annual Ryegrass, Barley Grass, Capeweed and Wild Oats (S.B. Powles and J.A.M. Holtum).

Although the initial resistant plants may be present as the result of a genetic variation even before the herbicide is applied to a pest population, herbicide resistance has evolved throughout Australian agriculture as a result of the increased reliance of herbicides for weed control.

When herbicides are applied to populations containing these resistant



plants, these plants survive, allowing the plant to reach maturity and set seed, while susceptible plants are killed. The continued use of the same herbicide or herbicides with the same Mode of Action (MOA) has resulted in larger populations of these resistant plants.

Of most concern to producers within the ACT is the recording of resistance in the following species,

1. Patterson's Curse against Group B herbicides eg. Brush-Off, Broadstrike
2. Barley Grass against both Group A & L herbicides eg. Fusilade
3. Annual Ryegrass against Groups A, B, C, D, Q & M.

Preventing/ reducing herbicide resistant populations in the ACT should be a priority of all producers with particular attention paid to herbicides with modes of action A & B considered to be at a high risk of plants becoming resistant to these modes of action.

Guidelines for Group A herbicides:

1. Populations can develop from a small area of resistant plants one year to a whole paddock issue within one season.
2. Where a group A herbicide has been used on any paddock for the control of any grass weed, avoid using a Group A herbicide to control the same grass the following season, regardless of the previous control success.
3. Where resistance to a member of a group A herbicide is suspected, there is a strong possibility of cross resistance to other Group A herbicides. Therefore the use of other MOA herbicides should be combined with an integrated control program.

Guidelines for Group B Herbicides:

1. Apply no more than two group B herbicides on the same paddock in any four year period.

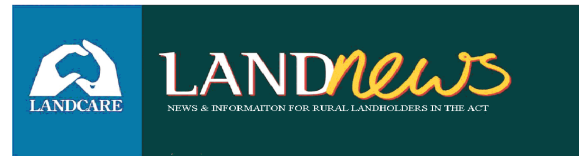
2. Do not apply more than one application of a group B herbicide in a season.
3. For post emergent application of a Group B herbicide on broadleaf weed species, and APVMA approved tank mix with another MOA should be used.

Outline of an Integrated Weed Management Strategy (IWMS). IWMS are designed and implemented in order to prevent the occurrence of resistance weed species. IWMS will include numerous control techniques such as:

- Rotation of Herbicide MOA group.
- Crop rotation.
- Identify and monitor surviving plants.
- Selective grazing.
- Spray topping.
- Encouraging pasture competition.
- Participation in training courses.
- Prevent weed introduction through poor quality fodder.

For more information regarding herbicide resistance and the implementation of integrated weed control programs feel free to contact

Sam Price
Rural Programs
ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands
Email: sam.price@act.gov.au
Ph: (02) 6205 0855



RURAL LANDHOLDERS ASSOCIATION RECEIVES COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT

The Rural Landholders Association (RLA) has received funding from the Australian Government to work with farmers in the Majura Valley. Working with Molonglo Catchment Group, the project *Sustainable Farming in the Majura Valley* will aim to develop, support and provide information on sustainable farming practices to landholders in the region.

Sherry McArdle-English, a farmer in Majura Valley and a member of the RLA, was a key driver in the application for the grant. “The catalyst was the proposed Majura Parkway and redevelopment plans for the Valley,” says Ms McArdle-English. “The parkway is unavoidable, but if we work with the developers we can hopefully minimise the impact of the parkway on the farming community and the endangered ecological communities in the region”.

The 8000 ha includes 800 ha of Yellow Box-Red-Gum Woodland and 209 ha of grasslands. Both of these ecological communities are listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* as ecosystems that need conserving.

“We are planning on developing collaborative dialogue between all stakeholders to prepare an options paper to identify baseline knowledge and willingness to adopt sustainable agriculture and protection of endangered ecosystems,” said Ms McArdle-English. “The intention is to develop a plan of management for Majura Valley.”

“The first step is to talk to all the stakeholders to make sure everyone who’s keen to support the project is involved from the very beginning,” she said. “This includes farmers, people who use the

valley for recreation, ACT Government and developers.
“The valley is one of the main gateways to our Parliamentary Triangle, and with positive and transparent dialogue between all stakeholders, the valley has the potential to become a model of sustainable farming, mixed with broad-acre industrial zoning, into the future.”

The project will also involve field days and community engagement activities with the hope of forming a Landcare group in the valley.



If you would like to know more about the project, you can contact:
Sherry McArdle-English on mceng@ozemail.com.au or
Andy Westcott, Molonglo Catchment Group, 02 6299 2119 or coordinator@molonglocatchment.com.au

LANDSCAPES UNDER FIRE

Greening Australia has been undertaking monitoring on fire affected sites since the 2003 bushfires. Monitoring has been carried out on areas direct seeded or tubestock planted before the fires, as well as pine plantation and remnant native vegetation. The monitoring program was established to determine the level of recovery in each of these vegetation types. We have now put together a brochure outlining the results. If you would like a copy please contact Greening Australia on 62533035



VERTEBRATE PEST UPDATE

Rabbit control season

Late summer and early Autumn is the best season to carry out rabbit management as pastures dry off and rabbits finish breeding. Rabbit numbers are increasing as rabbits develop immunity to Rabbit Haemorrhagic (Calici) Disease so it is very important to manage their numbers with conventional techniques. These include poisoned baiting, fumigation, and then destruction

of harbour by warren-ripping wherever terrain permits. Shooting can be used to follow up remaining rabbits but is not recommended for primary control unless you have unlimited hours and nothing better to do at night! Coordinating rabbit management with your neighbours is the best way to prevent rapid recolonisation from adjoining land.

Staff from Parks, Conservation and Lands can provide advice on the most appropriate rabbit control methods for

your property, and supply pindone or 1080 poisoned carrot bait at cost price. Instruction will be given on safe and effective bait use.

Rabbit control programs are being conducted at the following nature reserves this season: Mount Ainslie and Majura, Mount Painter, Pinnacle, Callum Brae and West Jerrabomberra Grasslands, Red Hill and Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Land holders adjoining these areas should have been contacted by now but if you haven't heard anything and wish to conduct a cooperative rabbit management program please contact Nick Webb as soon as possible.

For advice on rabbit management or to order poisoned bait please contact:

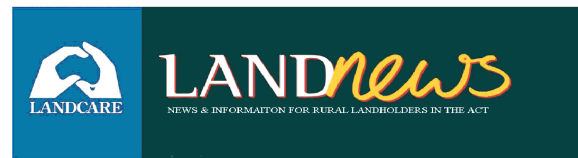
Nick Webb,
nicola.webb@act.gov.au.
Phone 6207 2135



Although not as effective as trail baiting, poisoned bait can be laid under baiting cages to reduce the risk to non-target animals. Some rabbits become very relaxed about use of such cages!

National Wild Dog Management Advisory Group

ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands has a representative (currently Nick Webb) on the National Wild Dog Management Advisory Group (NWD MAG). The Advisory Group is made up of representatives from industry (National Farmers Federation, State farmer's organisations and wild dog management groups, Australian Wool Innovation, Wool Producers Australia, Cattle Council), State Primary Industry agencies, Public Land wild dog managers, and researchers. It was formed in 2007 with the aim of tackling the problem of wild dogs with a



national control strategy rather than the previous state-by-state approach.

The NWD MAG form the steering committee for the National Wild Dog Facilitator, Greg Mifsud. Greg's role involves promotion of the 'nil tenure' approach to wild dog management where landholder groups map wild dog impacts, wild dog movements and coordinate wild dog management activities at a landscape level. Greg has been involved locally with the Shannon's Flat/ Michelago/ Bredbo Wild Dog Management Group.

The NWD MAG also develops and oversees research projects aimed at providing better on-ground control of wild dogs. When available, the latest research findings will be summarised for ACT stakeholders via the regular e-mail newsletter - **ACT Wild Dog Update**. As the ACT representative, Nick Webb's role is also to communicate the diverse views of the ACT community on wild dog issues back to the Group at its biannual meetings.

If you wish to receive **ACT Wild Dog Update** or provide feedback to the NWD MAG please contact Nick Webb (see contact details above).

Livestock Guardian Dogs

The NWD MAG has secured funding to develop a best practice manual for the use of guard dogs to protect livestock. These dogs including breeds such as the Maremma, Central Asian Ovcharka, Pyrenean, and Anatolian Shepherd are largely independent of humans and aggressively repel predators from the stock with which they associate. The manual is being written by Linda van Bommel from the Australian National University, and has a series of case studies that provide information for landholders on what needs to be considered before deciding to use guard dogs on their property including; how the animals work, appropriate bonding

techniques, ratio of guard dogs to livestock numbers, scale of paddocks, animal husbandry requirements and breeding. The manual will be available after March this year. Further information contact: Greg Mifsud on (07) 4688 133 or via email on Greg.Mifsud@deedi.qld.gov.au



*A Maremma livestock guardian dog with sheep to which it has been bonded.
Photo: Linda Van Bommel*

ACT Wild Dog Update

The increased baiting effort in Namadgi National Park over the last 12 months has reduced stock losses south of the Namadgi border since July 2009, but losses have continued at Naas (18 sheep killed, 5 injured) and also at Booroomba (16 sheep killed and 6 injured). PCL is investigating further areas that can be baited and trapped on park and private land in an attempt to address wild dogs in these areas.

Staff from Namadgi National Park have now taken on the majority of on-park baiting enabling PCL's dog trapper Mick Clarke to concentrate on pro-active trapping in the Park and surrounding leases. Thanks are due to land holders for reporting dead and injured stock promptly. This has meant that sign from wild dogs is still fresh and permits trappers to be far more strategic with their trap placement.

A trial bait run established on Blue Range Road in Autumn and Spring to complement baiting undertaken by the Brindabella and Wee Jasper cooperative



program in NSW was a success with a number of bait takes attributed to wild dogs over the two eight-week baiting periods. Baiting of this road will now continue each Spring and Autumn, subject to careful public notification and signage, as this former ACT Forests area around Blue Range Hut is open to people with domestic dogs.

Over the next 6 months, Nick Webb and Mick Clarke will be contacting ACT land holders to discuss the drafting of a cooperative wild dog and fox management plan similar to the plans for neighbouring areas of NSW. The plan will contain maps of wild dog habitat, dog movement corridors and historic and current wild dog attack sites. This information will be used to plan coordinated wild dog management including baiting, trapping and M44 ejector locations across wild dog habitat on all land tenures.

Wild dog meat baits are available free of charge to all ACT land holders who wish to participate in coordinated baiting. The next cooperative baiting is planned for April to coincide with peak dog movements associated with the dog mating season. Contact Mick Clarke or Nick Webb if you wish to order baits.

Feral deer on the increase

Fallow Deer have been established and increasing in numbers in the ACT since the early nineties following release or escape from deer farms in surrounding areas of NSW. However, Parks staff are now also reporting more frequent sightings of both Red and Sambar Deer. Feral deer should be regarded as a potentially serious pest, and as their numbers increase impacts will be similar to those occurring in areas of NSW and Victoria: competition with livestock for pasture and water, damage to fences, tree plantations and crops, grazing/browsing of threatened plant

species, tracking and wallowing leading to erosion, and increased incidence of potentially serious motor vehicle collisions.

Deer are also a reservoir for a range of endemic and exotic stock diseases many of which are important to the viability of the export and domestic trade. Examples of diseases deer are known to transmit are Ovine and Bovine Johnes Disease, Bluetongue, Foot and Mouth and Tuberculosis.

Feral deer are a declared pest animal in ACT under the *Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005* in recognition of their potential negative impacts. However, being mobile and largely cryptic animals their management poses significant challenges. Parks, Conservation and Lands held a feral deer workshop in September 2009 to improve staff knowledge of deer and encourage accurate reporting of deer species.

ACT land holders are encouraged to cull any deer observed on their properties. Firearms approved for kangaroo management are an appropriate calibre for shooting small deer such as Fallow which are the main species that will be observed grazing pasture on rural land. PCL would welcome reporting of any deer observed or culled by land holders to gain information on distribution and abundance of these emerging pests. In the absence of actual sightings, one of the most obvious signs of deer presence is damage to saplings and small trees where males rub their antlers to remove velvet, and display during rutting in Autumn.

For those interested in learning more about deer identification and sign, the South Australian Government have produced a great leaflet available by internet searching "SA deer identification" or at:

http://www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au/Portals/7/Deer%20Final_MDB.pdf



Young male Sambar Deer. Photo Oliver Orgill



A eucalypt sapling rubbed by Fallow Deer. Photo Mick Clarke

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STOCK ALERT IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE OR HEAT WAVE

In the event of a fire alert or fire the following steps may be taken to minimise harm or suffering to stock:

Preventative Action	<p>Open all gates.</p> <p>Release penned or stalled stock into larger areas.</p> <p>Place stock in fire safe areas e.g. bare or short well grazed paddocks</p> <p>Prioritise valuable males and breeding stock</p> <p>Slash grass around all buildings including hay sheds & stock facilities but guard against slasher starting fires. Alternatively short term heavy stocking of these areas.</p> <p>Plough or scarify fence lines or natural fire breaks e.g. roads</p>
Stock Assessment	<p>Injuries due to fire.</p> <p>Lung damage due to inhalation of hot air and smoke – difficult breathing, nasal discharge, cannot walk or down.</p> <p>Burns to the feet – poor prognosis if the coronary band (where skin joins the hoof) is cracked and weeping fluid. High probability that the hoof will fall off. Poor survival option</p> <p>Burns to the teats - prognosis guarded but survival if not severe. Future reproduction and rearing problems. Possible future cull</p> <p>Burns to the skin and face. Possible recovery if mild to moderate and < 15% of their body surface.</p>
Stock Disease Alert	<p>Pneumonia from lung injury. Antibiotic therapy</p> <p>Septicaemia and internal organ failure associated with burn wounds. Can take up to 6 weeks before clear</p> <p>All burnt animals require antibiotic therapy plus access to feed and water.</p> <p>Starvation and dehydration</p>
Management Issues	<p>Post fire:</p> <p>Cull to reduce stock needs for food and water</p> <p>Agistment</p> <p>Move burnt stock to shaded paddock</p>

	<p>After initial inspection of burnt stock. Reassess in 2-3 days then 5-7 days after initial inspection. Some types of burn injuries are not immediately apparent.</p> <p>Fly strike to all burn wounds</p> <p>Secure at least the boundary fence and one other holding for breeding males</p> <p>Map exposed rabbit warrens for later control activities</p>
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In the event of a heat wave the following steps may be taken to minimise harm or suffering of stock:

Preventative Action	<p>Place stock in shaded paddocks. Make this decision early.</p> <p>If need to work stock. Preferable to do so only in the morning. Less preferable in the late evening. Avoid all other times</p>
Stock Assessment	<p>Monitor dark skinned animals and young as most susceptible</p> <p>Monitor wildlife - Kangaroos lick their paws and forearms when overheated. Birds spread their wings, drooping posture, open mouth panting, and get closer to the ground</p>
Stock Disease Alert	<p>Dehydration: Sunken eyes, dry muzzle.</p> <p>Heat stress: High respiratory rate (panting) with laboured breathing, slobbering trembling and incoordination.</p> <p>Give water and cool body with bathing</p>
Management Issues	<p>Check water supplies. Heat stress can increase the water intake by 2-5 times.</p> <p>Average adult requirement: Cattle - 40-100L/hd/day Sheep - 4-10L/hd/day Horse - 40-50L/hd/day</p> <p>(One cubic meter 1x1x1m equals 1000 Litres)</p>

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FARMERS TEACHING FARMERS

As part of Caring for Our Country funding from the Australian Government, the ACT Landcare Coordinator is working with the Rural Landholders Association to organise a series of *Farmers Learning from Farmers* field days.

The first *Farmers Learning from Farmers* was held on Saturday 24 October 2009 and hosted by French Black Truffles of Canberra in the Majura Valley. The field day was a great success, with over 50 people attending. The program included information about soils, including soil carbon under pastures and soil microbes and an introduction to truffle farming by Sherry McArdle-English.



Sherry McArdle-English. Exhibiting the quality of soil where the truffles are planted.

Feedback indicated that one of the most popular aspects of the field days was the practical learning by being in the field and learning about what other farmers in the ACT community are doing on their property.



Susan Orgill NSW Department of Industry and Innovation demonstrating how to test the health of soils.



Future field days will likely include information about:

- Biodiversity and the importance of on-farm biodiversity.
- Organic farming.
- Management of weeds including *Weeds of National Significance* and African Love Grass.
- Whole of Paddock Rehabilitation.

The next field day will be held at Pialligo Apples, the recipient of the 2009 Landcare Primary Producer Award at the ACT Landcare Awards.

If you would like more information about the *Farmers Learning from Farmers* field days, or would like to participate, please contact Esther Duffy, ACT Landcare Coordinator, on 6205 2913 or esther.duffy@act.gov.au.

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