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Natural Resources
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources
SA Murray-Darling Basin



The BIGG Bulletin

NOVEMBER 2016

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The complexity of managing root diseases in local pastures



Brett Nietschke demonstrating the sub clover root disease trials at Craneford which showed no response to fungicides to reduce root disease



Hugo Vander Moer, Carolyn DeKoning, Craig John and Brett Nietschke. Hugo and Carolyn host the Craneford site, a huge thanks to those that offer up their time and land, without them BIGG projects would not be achievable.

In September and October, BIGG held pasture walks for local producers that included visits to our sub-clover trial sites located at Moculta and Craneford. These trials, funded by [Meat & Livestock Australia](#) (MLA) through a Producer Research Site project, have investigated **management strategies to reduce the impact of root diseases in sub-clover based pastures.**

BIGG's 2016 trial results, along with those from The University of Western Australia (UWA) which co-located one of their national sub-clover root disease trial sites at Moculta, highlighted the complexity in managing the suite of root diseases that occur locally in pastures. These are the root diseases caused by the pathogens *Rhizoctonia*, *Pythium*, *Phytophthora* and *Aphanomyces* with their individual severity dependent on several environmental factors (e.g. soil temperature, soil moisture, soil type, soil nutrition).

The root diseases in pastures usually occur as a 'mix' of 2-4 pathogens, thus making fungicide management difficult. This is because the fungicides registered for sub-clover are not effective on all four diseases. For example, Apron XL[®] (Metalaxyl-M) controls *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* at the seedling stage, but has no activity on *Rhizoctonia*, which according to UWA is a particularly prevalent root disease of many pastures across South Australia. This may also go some way to explain why fungicide application (either as a seed or spray treatment) did not significantly improve sub-clover production in BIGG's 2016 fungicide trials.

This lack of response however is not always the case. According to Dr Mingpei You from UWA who spoke at BIGG's September pasture walk, fungicide seed or spray treatments can increase sub-clover germination and survival by up to 30%.

At the pasture walk Dr You also highlighted that good soil nutrition can help limit the impact of soil borne root diseases in sub-clover. Good nutrition also makes good agronomic sense as demonstrated by BIGG's 2016 fertiliser trial results at the Craneford site. The trial evaluated the effect of several fertilisers on sub-clover productivity and found the superphosphate treatment (autumn application at 150kg/ha) doubled late winter production. Given the Craneford trial site was low in phosphorous (17mg/kg, Colwell P) the result is also a 'reminder' for local producers of knowing the soil nutrition status of their paddocks and the benefit of maintaining these at adequate levels.

Producers may also increase pasture productivity by growing sub-clover cultivars best suited to the local environment. For example, the cultivar Clare has consistently performed well in the Moculta region. A long-term solution for managing sub-clover root diseases is to breed new cultivars that have tolerance and resistance to withstand the key root pathogens.

Barossa bushfire recovery program wins award



BIGG has received the Highly Commended Award in the 2016 State Resilient Australia Award. Georgie Keynes is showing BIGG's Recovery of Native Pastures after Bushfire Booklet, which was generated as a response to the Eden Valley bushfire.

The Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG) has received the Highly Commended Award for their Eden Valley bushfire recovery program in the 2016 State Resilient Australia Awards.

The program was coordinated by BIGG and jointly funded from the NRM levy by the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board, and the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

The awards recognise projects that support communities and individuals to be better prepared and more disaster-resilient.

BIGG's winning program assisted farmers to look at and ultimately improve the recovery of native pastures and livestock after the 2014 Eden Valley bushfire.

BIGG Chairperson, Mark Grossman says that the recovery of farms after bushfire had not been extensively studied in the past.

"Little was known, even by industry experts, about the recovery, particularly of native grasses that dominated the landscape of Eden Valley," he said.

"We found there is a small window of opportunity after a fire for land managers to use careful grazing to maximise grass recovery, protect soil and suppress broad-leaf weeds.

"The program has filled a gap in bushfire management for the livestock community, in terms of a coordinated response to help farmers with fodder, animal agistment, fencing, wood cutting and clearing for new fence-lines. This allows farmers to move forward, keeping their livestock safe and preparing their pastures for when animals can return."

Taryn Mangelsdorf, Acting District Manager, says Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges has been a supporter of BIGG since its inception in 2012, funding their first initiative, the winter pasture NRM project.

"BIGG's recent focus on building both people and land resilience following fires is a new approach to fire recovery that's certainly worthy of this award – it helps farmers so that they can have the best chance of returning their pastures, and therefore their businesses, to a pre-fire condition," Miss Mangelsdorf said.

Further details about the SA winners of the award can be found [here](#).

Native Grass Recovery after Bushfire Case Study Booklet is available from [Georgie Keynes](#).

New Springs Landcare Group- Pastures with Punch

Anthony Pearce talks to
graziers at the New



Springs Landcare Group
Perennial Pasture
Demonstration Site at
Charleston in the central
Adelaide Hills

The New Springs Landcare Group and Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges held a field-walk at their Charleston Perennial Pasture Demonstration Site recently that was very well attended by graziers from the central Hills. Anthony Pearce, pasture agronomist and ruminant nutritionist from Hills Farm Supplies talked through the yield and feed quality data from each of the pasture strips. The aim of the site is to demonstrate which dryland pasture mixes are most suitable for the central hills and will be persistent enough to cope with climate change, particularly dry springs, yet can produce quality pasture in the growing season.

So far the new CSIRO bred phalaris Advance AT, the red-legged earth mite resistant sub-clovers Narrikup and Rosabrook, chicory and the summer active cocksfoot Lazuly are proving to be a very compatible mix that shows very similar seedling vigour, therefore establishment is very even. The phalaris provides very good winter activity and the cocksfoot and chicory provides very good late spring / early summer and autumn activity to fill the feed gaps much better than mixes based on perennial ryegrass. These new varieties of phalaris, cocksfoot and chicory are also providing excellent feed quality throughout the growing season and do not have the animal health problems associated with the older varieties.

This demonstration site will be available for BIGG producers to observe in 2017. For more information contact Will Hannaford, District Officer Mid Torrens and Onkaparinga, Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges, 0419 037 303.

From the Inbox...

- Congratulations to our Comms Officer, Bec Barr (currently on maternity leave), who won Cellar Door Person of the Year Award for Australian Women in Wine. We welcome Miranda Kenny to the BIGG team while Bec is on maternity leave.
- Read more about our Soil Moisture Monitoring Project in a recent Landcare in Focus Article [HERE](#)
- Check out and 'Like' BIGGs Facebook Page, while you're there check out '[Heritage Seeds](#)' and '[Pasture Genetics](#)' Pages for up to date pasture information from our Producer Demo Site Partners.

Your BIGG Contacts

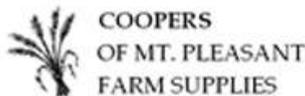
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Government of South Australia
Department of Environment,
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