Leucaena: Challenges and Opportunities in Queensland

Stuart Buck
Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
Rockhampton
Outline

Who am I?
Current situation
Challenges
Opportunities
Who am I?

Senior Agronomist (Sown pastures)
DAF for almost 20yrs
Technical, extension, research, project management roles
Agronomic background
• Grain cropping systems
• Pasture systems, especially legumes
Now work on sown pasture RD&E projects
Current situation

Leucaena is successfully used for finishing stock in sub-tropical and tropical environments 600 – 800mm

Leucaena long history of RD&E

Leucaena perceived to be the best perennial grazing legume available

Area sown is probably less than 3% of the potential

• Recent DAF analysis indicates 125,000ha in central and southern QLD (Beutel et al. 2018…in review). Area suited is >8million ha
Current situation

Adoption of Leucaena has been ‘slow’ (50+yrs), and there is still ‘resistance’ today

- Weed potential
- Cost of and risks of establishment (including foregone grazing)
- Difficulties with on-going management
- Aesthetics!
- Current state of existing landscapes
- Perception – generally through a lack of knowledge
Challenges

1. Production issues
   • Poor grazing management
   • Low soil fertility
   • Leucaena : grass balance

2. Environmental issues
   • Weed risk - perception and reality
   • Vegetation laws restricting further expansion

3. Industry issues
   • Seed and rhizobium supply – current issues!
   • Strong industry advocate – TLN
   • Knowledge gaps & RD&E dollars
Opportunities

New varieties will be of significant benefit
• Redlands (psyllid resistant)
• WA special (sterile)

Animal performance advances through improved rumen bug management???

Agronomy advances

Holistic management
From here....

All the best with the project

A sterile leucaena will provide huge industry and environmental benefits – and not just in Australia!

I’m keen to keep abreast with the development of this project as a member of the Industry liaison group.
Thank you

Stuart Buck
DAF Rockhampton
07 4843 2605
0427 929 187
stuart.buck@daf.qld.gov.au