A Journey Into Leucaena

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Leucaena in Australia

• 1976...Cunningham variety released
• 1994...Tarramba variety released
• 2000...The Leucaena Network officially formed and a Code of Practice adopted by the Network
• 2010 ...Wondergraze variety released
• 2015...Redlands (psyllid resistant) variety released
Grazing Benefits of Leucaena

• Produces a very palatable, nutritious, high protein leaf for cattle
• Provides live weight gains of 250-300 kg per head per annum
• Provides live weight gains of 125-150kg per hectare
• Twice live weight gain of grass only pastures
• Ability to meet all premium domestic and export grass-fed market specifications
• Long term, drought tolerant fodder
Environmental Benefits of Leucaena

• Nitrogen fixation reverses nitrogen run-down and improves soil fertility
• Planted in a leucaena-grass system, it helps to prevents soil erosion
• Deep rooting habit of leucaena can extract water from the soil to a depth of 3 – 5 metres, preventing rising water tables and salinity
• Can act as a carbon sink by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere
• Lower cattle methane emissions from cattle grazing leucaena
My Journey Thus Far....

• Graingrower for 30 years prior to planting leucaena
• 1999 attended first meeting regarding leucaena. Planted leucaena instead of sorghum as seed costs were the same
• November 1999, planted 100 acres of Taramba
• Continued with other crops – millet, sorghum, wheat for another 12 months
• Leucaena cash conversion ($/kg) out weighed other crops
My journey thus far...

• Planted 100 acres Cunningham
• Planted 3rd lot without Spinnaker – some losses due to heat in sandier soils
• April 2006 – water injection at planting. Good strike within 3 days (usual 7 days)
• Importance of Beetle Bait
Our findings....

- Results of trials and weights on our own property – fact sheet
The Benefits.....

• Using leucaena-grass to assist with fattening cattle (heifers) in dry conditions.
• High frost area – leucaena keeps coming back
If I had my time over......

• Started earlier and given up cropping
• Recognise the high upfront costs have a long term result and increasing returns.
The Beginnings…..

The Leucaena Network commenced in July 2000 to

1. counter mis-information regarding the potential weed problems of leucaena;
2. to establish a Code of Practice for responsible growing; and
3. to strengthen the research, development, extension and adoption of leucaena.

Statement of Purpose

“Promoting the responsible development of leucaena in productive and sustainable grazing and agroforestry systems to build stronger rural communities.”
Aims of the Best Management Code of Practice

• Avoid planting leucaena near potential weed risk areas
• Minimise seed set in grazed stands
• Diminish the risk of live seed dispersal
• Control escaped plants for grazed stands
Our Achievements

• Facilitated over $1 million in research projects in the field of palatability; weight gain; establishment

• Undertaken 15 Successful Leucaena Conferences with more than 500 attendees

• Education

• Collaborated with the University of Queensland to deliver Leucaena Training Courses

• Excellent links with research and industry bodies

• Active website
Current Issues

- Weed Issue / Perception
  - Promotion of Code of Practice; potential Leucaena BMP
  - Front foot – Queensland Local Government Leucaena symposium
  - Whitsunday requirements

- Inoculant Unavailability
  - Continued information / update provision to members

- Seed Unavailability
  - Continued liaison with seed producers and member updates
2017 and beyond..

• New [www.leucaena.net](http://www.leucaena.net) launch imminent providing ‘one-stop’ information on all things related to leucaena.

• Coordinating all of Queensland local Government Council’s symposium in early 2018.

• Significant presence at Beef 2018

• Weight gain case studies

• Facilitating research projects through MLA (MDCs) / DAF / $$

• Redlands establishment and palatability trials

• Potential research project on non-inoculated leucaena

• Extensive focus on bringing ‘sterile’ leucaena to fruition
Welcome to the Leucaena Network

The Leucaena Network is a leading producer group in the grass-fed beef industry of Queensland. Its members include livestock producers, leucaena and pasture seed growers, researchers and extension personnel.