

The Leucaena Network would value an opportunity to submit to the Native Vegetation research.

Our details were forwarded to the Commission during the enquiry into the GBR. If they are not available, or if more details are needed, I will be happy to cooperate.

The attachments are samples of the stance we have made recently. The letter written as a contribution to the tree clearing debate has been endorsed by AgForce and the Einasleigh Uplands group. It is presently being assessed by the office of the Hon Stephen Robertson, Qld. Minister for Natural Resources.

The second attachment is self explanatory. Please bear in mind that this was a letter to the Fitzroy groups alone. Most of the five major catchments in Queensland could benefit in the same way as the Fitzroy.

If a fuller submission is needed, I would appreciate a call.

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THE LEUCAENA NETWORK

*"Promoting the responsible development
of Leucaena as a productive and sustainable
agroforestry system to build stronger rural communities."*

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A contribution to the tree clearing debate from the Leucaena Network

The Leucaena Network suggests that there may be opportunity to negotiate some trade-offs in the current tree clearing debate with Government agencies. In particular, there is the possibility of negotiating support for a leucaena planting program as part of the AgForce response to the clearing restrictions being imposed by Government.

We would argue that there is a need for some positive economic outcomes for graziers to soften the negative aspects of the tree clearing restrictions. It seems that Government initiated NRM reforms so often involve loss of productivity, income and farm value without offsetting benefits. Compensation is rarely sufficient.

The Leucaena Network has recently proposed a project for the planting of 250,000 ha of Leucaena trees to the Fitzroy Basin Association as a grazier initiated measure for salinity and erosion control. It is being seriously considered but unfortunately the proposal is mired in the overly complex bureaucracy and politics of the National Action Plan.

We suggest that the plan could be broadened and considered as a State-wide initiative as part of the tree clearing negotiations.

If we increased the target planting to 1 M ha of leucaena trees, to be planted over a 10 year period, for the whole of Qld, the benefits would be: -

1. C sequestration of 600,000 t/ha/yr
2. 50,000 t/ha/yr of biologically fixed N
3. 20-40% reduction in methane of cattle grazing leucaena compared to pure grass pastures
4. Salinity and erosion control outcomes
5. Proven drought control strategy implemented
6. Excellent \$ benefit for graziers, and an overall return to investors of \$30-60M/year
7. Private investment of around \$20 for every \$1 of government investment
8. One thousand trees planted per \$1 invested of Government funds

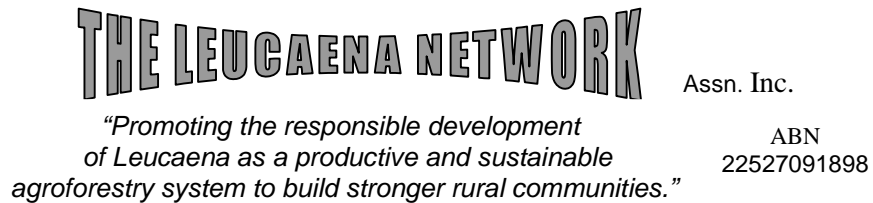
We argue that the lift in income of graziers from large-scale leucaena plantings will allow landowners greater flexibility i.e. they will be better able to afford unprofitable environmental measures such as protection of remnant forest areas or riparian zones. In brigalow areas, they would be essentially replacing one leguminous tree (Brigalow) with another leguminous tree (leucaena) that will mimic the environmental advantages of brigalow but deliver substantial profits to graziers.

The Leucaena Network suggests that AgForce might consider negotiating support for projects of this kind as a trade off in the clearing debate. Graziers would welcome such initiatives; it would lift incomes, and it would improve social stability of rural communities.

Yours Sincerely,

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An Open Letter to all Catchment Groups

Leucaena Grass Pasture System for Salinity and Water Quality Control

The Leucaena Network has submitted a detailed proposal to the Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) to achieve the planting of 250,000 ha of the Leucaena and Grass Pasture System (LGPS) on cattle and grain properties as part of the NAPSWQ Fitzroy Basin Project. We have called the proposal the "*Leucaena Module for Salinity and Water Quality Control in the Fitzroy Catchment*"

The aim of the proposal is to prevent long-term dryland salinity in high risk dryland salinity areas. For this aim to be achieved two fundamental requirements must be met:

- a. The planting of deep-rooted perennials in the recharge areas where heavy rains soak below the shallow root zone of pastures and crops into ground water. This process leads to future salty areas where the water and salt reappear on the surface. Approximately 25-50% of recharge slopes will need to be replanted with deep-rooted vegetation in high risk areas.
- b. Treatments must be profitable to be sustainable so that landholder investment also occurs. LGPS is the only widespread option for the Fitzroy that combines effective salinity prevention, effective sediment control and profitability, and is compatible with current land use.

Who benefits from the project?

- As 84% of the Fitzroy Catchment is grazing land, graziers are key stakeholders, potential growers of leucaena and therefore important implementers and beneficiaries of the proposal.
- Since, leucaena generally can only be planted on better class soils, there is scope for alternative environmental measures on remaining lands. Remnant native vegetation can be retained along rivers and creeks, on steep slopes, and on poorer areas.
- The enhanced profitability achieved with LGPS can offset losses from vegetation retention and add flexibility to applications for clearing of regrowth areas. There must be a whole property approach.
- The Leucaena Grass Pasture System represents one of the few deep-rooted tree systems that can reverse salinity, improve water quality and provide very important public protection from future dryland salinity, while at the same time being profitable to landowners.

Why do we need research and extension?

- The target of 250,000 ha was chosen because it is small enough to be achieved in 7 years and affordable under the NAP program, but just large enough to have an impact on salinity and water quality in the Fitzroy Basin.
- The target of 250,000 ha is just a start if dryland salinity is to be overcome.
- To achieve successful plantings of 250,000 ha there needs to be a dedicated, effective extension component (3 officers) to give face to face, on property, practical assistance with machinery, land preparation, spraying, planting, etc. This cannot be supplied by DPI.

- For extension to be successful, there needs to be a parallel research component to give technical assistance, solve problems, monitor and evaluate, and prepare for the future. Again this cannot be supplied by existing agencies without support.
- Without the extension/research component, leucaena would still be planted but at a slower rate of uptake, maybe 40-50,000 ha over 7 years. And not it will not necessarily be planted in the high risk locations.
- Leucaena plantings can be promoted in high salinity hazard locations, however, property owners must be free to choose who plants leucaena, how much and where (subject to the Code of Practice for Leucaena).
- If half the extension/research component is funded, much less than half the target would be planted. The extension/research component would be too small to operate effectively.

Is leucaena a serious weed threat?

- Leucaena planted for fodder purposes is not a serious weed threat because:
 - a. Most of the present areas of weed infestation are a different sub-species to pasture leucaena.
 - b. Over the last 50 and more years weed leucaena spread has been very slow. The total area of weedy leucaena is estimated to be only about 6-8,000 ha.
 - c. It is easy and cheap to eradicate. The Livingstone Shire weed control team sprayed out all feral leucaena along main roads between Rockhampton, Yeppoon and Emu Park with one man in one week.
 - d. There is a component in the LGPS Project to eradicate most of the feral leucaena in the Fitzroy Basin. There are also measures in the Project to ensure plantings are responsibly managed, e.g. the Code of Practice.
 - e. The Departments of DNRM, EPA and DPI have officially approved LGPS as a viable development option given the Code of Practice

What we are asking

The Leucaena Network asks for your support of this proposal. The Network is a highly recognised Organisation with a track record of achievement for graziers interested in leucaena. It has one hundred members and membership is expected to escalate during Beef 2003.

This proposal has the support of the following groups:

Agforce CQ
 Australian Salinity Action Network
 Landcare
 Landholders for the Environment
 Meat and Livestock Australia

NABRC
 Queensland Department of Primary
 Industries
 University of Central Queensland
 University of Queensland

Sincerely,

Wally Peart
 President, The Leucaena Network