



Clarence
Landcare

Kookaburra News

June/ July 2013



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Boost for Local Revegetation Projects



JIM KNIGHT Local Landcare legend hits 90

We're not talking cricket, or hitting runs—we're talking years. Jim Knight, founder of Clarence Landcare, recently passed his 90th birthday.

Jim has devoted much of his time over many years to a variety of environmental, social justice, and peace causes.

So Congratulations on MANY FRONTS, Jim.

Jim Knight, pictured at the 2013 Northern Rivers Landcare Awards.





DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

August 2013

2nd Aug.—Regional Achievement Awards



Jim Knight blows out the candles
at his 90th Birthday Party.



STOP PRESS!!!

Latest Clarence Landcare News of FUTURE!! See page 14

FROM THE CHAIR

Brian Dodd reports:



The current climate which Clarence Landcare has to work in is the most stressful in our history. The changes in the way funding is allocated, changes to our funding body and the frustration of not knowing our future has certainly been upper most in the thoughts and actions of Landcare on the North Coast.

Over recent years a strong partnership has been developed between Clarence Landcare Inc and the North Coast Regional Landcare Network (NCRLN) being pivotal in the delivery of community engagement, capacity building and in attracting and leveraging investment in NRM and sustainable agriculture across the region.

We have partnered with other Landcare Inc's to work across the region which has strengthened funding opportunities and the delivery of Landcare services.

In this transition year of our funding partner, the timing for the delivery of opportunities presents a great challenge for the Clarence Landcare. In order to be able to capitalise on them, the current level of baseline support needs to be maintained. Clarence Landcare is committed to delivering to our members the best support in their natural resource management and sustainable farming endeavours. Landcare has always been trusted by our community and has proved over the decades to be highly adaptable. We accept that change is inevitable but we believe the partnership model we have evolved is too valuable and effective to be discarded. We look forward to working with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority in evolution of a new and equitable model which builds on our joint experiences.

Our regional body, the North Coast Regional Landcare Network, has been working tirelessly to achieve equitable funding across the region in an effort to engage with our CMA to maintain levels of funding. The NCRLN has requested the CMA to work with us in future planning.

Our request has been to "provide our members with certainty in planning for the coming financial year, we ask you to recommend to the Board and confirm with us urgently that current funding levels with existing contractors to deliver community support projects will be extended at current levels until 31 December 2013"

Hopefully we will be able to survive as we have in the past and be able to supply the community of the Clarence Valley with the excellent level of NRM support that we have since 1996.

Brian
Early June 2013



OFFICE HOURS

It's always a good idea to RING THE OFFICE before attending, to ensure it is open. Even if the office is due to be or presumed to be open, staff may be out doing errands or site visits. During the next couple of months, the office will be open 3 days a week, but these may vary. Please, RING FIRST before coming to the office, to avoid the disappointment of finding it empty.



Boost for Local Revegetation Projects



Joy van Som, Nambucca, and Julie Mousley (author of the brochures), Clarence Landcare, pictured at the launch of new brochures at Regional Landcare Awards, Angourie.

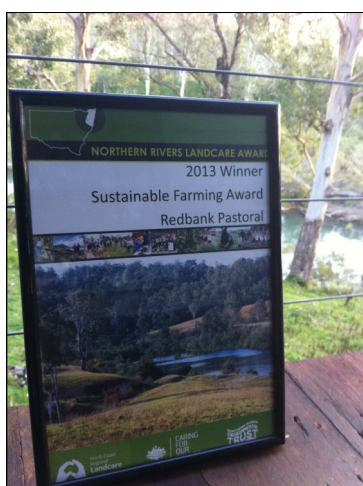
Clarence Landcare, with the Australian Governments *Caring for our Country* funding, has provided two new brochures to assist volunteers and professionals working at coastal and riparian sites. *Clarence Coast Dune Plants* and *Mid-lower Clarence Riparian Plants* have valuable information, explanation and “how to” steps for repairing areas requiring revegetation. Both brochures are available in hard copy from the Clarence Landcare office, or down-loadable in PDF from the Clarence Landcare website.



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Northern Rivers Landcare Awards: CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Glenn Morris and Henry Sheehan of *Figtrees Organic Farms*, Grafton; and Sharon Sullivan and Malin Blazejowski, *Redbank*, Nymboida joint winners of the **Sustainable Farming Award** at the Northern Rivers Landcare Awards held at Angourie on the 7th and 8th March. And also to Jim Knight, Kangaroo creek Landcare, for his nomination in Individual Landcare award.



Glenn Morris and Henry Sheehan of Fig Tree Farms, with North Coast Regional Facilitator Jodie gager at the regional Awards dinner



Not the Weather for Horsing Around.

A series of workshops for horse lovers and owners was held across the region earlier this year during February. Funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program in partnership with Clarence Landcare, there were workshops held at Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Grafton and Casino.

Stuart Myers, internationally acclaimed author and sustainable horse property management expert from Equiculture, was principal speaker and educator at the workshops. He discussed how to develop and maintain pasture for horses, encourage biodiversity, and manage manure, water and vegetation.

Other guest speakers included a vet at the Bellingen workshop to discuss



Stuart Myers conducts workshop at Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare. Photo: Kara Smith

Hendra virus and at the Coffs Harbour and Grafton workshops council weeds officers gave a presentation about weeds, their role in management & education and discussed high risk pathways of weeds, how they infest and spread.

When is a good time to hold such workshops? Preferably, when the weather is conducive to good attendance and participation. Unfortunately this was NOT the case on the week-end of 24-26 February, when all venues were affected one way or another by wet weather and/or floods. This included the Facilitator himself, who managed flood-ways and wet weather affected vehicles that wouldn't start, in order to get to the workshops. While the weather reduced the number of intended attendees, those who did make it found the workshops very informative.

Workshops Lead to further Grant Success for Sustainable Horse Property Project

At the Grafton workshop participants were asked to fill out an expression of interest form to become eligible to obtain some funding if a grant were to become available to put into practice some of the property management principles covered in the workshop. On the 20th of March 2013 Debbie put in an Australian Government Community Landcare Grant application to do just that and more AND we have just found out that the submission was successful!!

The project includes another workshop by Equiculture, a workshop on managing soil and dung beetles, project planning and work on the ground for approved properties. More information to come in the next newsletter.



MAJOR ADVANCE IN MYNA CONTROL



CONGRATULATIONS

The Clarence Valley's leading Myna Warriors, Kevin and Laura Noble, continue to battle against this vicious avian threat to our biodiversity. They recently spread the word with presentations to Glen Innes, Stanthorpe and Tenterfield. Traps made by Nortec clients were delivered to Granite Borders Landcare. The word is spreading, as Glen Innes now has a program running, with Inverell and Armidale also now involved.

GOOD NEWS

Kevin and Laura's latest *Myna Newsletter* (No. 9, June 2013) proclaims the good news that, since the beginning of 2011, to April 2013, over 4,000 mynas have now been trapped in the Clarence Valley. (4,150 to be exact). This is an amazing effort, with several individual on ground warrior trappers each catching over 100 of these birds.

WIDESPREAD ACTION

While the Clarence and Coffs Harbour, and south to Nambucca are dedicated Myna trapping areas, it is heartening to see that the spread of this winged menace has attracted committed people willing to combat its spread in many other areas. This includes Victoria's North-east and Mount Macedon areas, the Sunshine Coast in Qld and many areas of Mid-west and western NSW.

INDULGE YOUR INNER HUNTER

A couple of generations ago, human hunting instincts were well taken care of. It was actually socially acceptable to collect birds' eggs, and not think twice about shooting birds considered pests. In a more enlightened age, there is less scope for these instincts to play out. However, trapping (and euthanising- if you have the capacity for it) mynas, are 21st Century variations where the individual can pander to a hunting instinct, and at the same time make a major contribution to the insidious effect mynas are having on the rest of the local fauna (birds and mammals). Mynas displace many other desirable species with their aggression and colonising of scarce nesting sites.

The Myna Newsletter can be obtained by emailing mynas@cvcia.org.au, or phoning Kevin/Laura 66494 712.

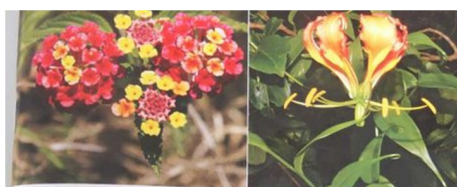


NEW WEED ID BOOKLET for Northern Rivers Landcarers

A new publication, ***Weeds of the North Coast of NSW*** is now available. This new benchmark publication has a brief but comprehensive guide to identification, origin, and control of more than 80



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Weeds of the North Coast of NSW
a guide to identification and control 2013



weeds that occur on the North Coast. Researched and written by Pia Dollmann, coordinated by Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare, and funded by the Federal Governments Caring for our Country, the booklet also contains excellent photos of each weed. It is available **free of charge** from the **Clarence Landcare** office while stocks last. So, HURRY in, and get your copy!!

Footnote: this publication replaces *ATTACK of the KILLER WEEDS* booklet which is now redundant. (But, if you still have a copy of this flagship North Coast weed booklet that was first published 15 years ago, don't throw it away. It has already become something of a collector's item!)



Nymboida River Biodiversity Field Day

Nymboida River Project

Clarence Fish Track Project

On May 10th 2013 Nymboida Community Hall was the venue for the presentation of four government funded projects aimed at understanding and protecting the biodiversity of the Nymboida River. There was an excellent attendance of interested people, with a delicious morning tea and lunch provided by local caterers Joan and Sean Smyth.



Gavin Butler demonstrates and explains equipment used in fish catching and tracking to the Nymboida Field Day attendees.

Nymboida River Project Manager Debbie Repschlager presented an overview of the three current projects funded by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (NRCMA), Clarence Valley Council, NSW Environmental Trust and an Australian Government Community Action Grant (Caring for our Country) from Nymboida Landcare.

Debbie showed pictures and discussed the work done in controlling weeds such as privet and lantana along the river over 30 different sites, many of them now inter-connected. The importance of healthy vegetation adjoining the river to ensure prime water quality was also highlighted.

Gavin Butler, Scientific Officer with the DPI, presented the Clarence Fish Track Project. This included research findings linking riparian vegetation and management. Fish such as bass are known to swim hundreds of kilometres to spawn away from fresh water. In contrast, cod are so relatively sedentary there is evidence that they are developing separate gene pools distinct from other populations.

NRCMA Catchment Officer Nigel Blake, -who has spent time away from the Clarence Valley- commented on how incredibly fortunate we are here in the Clarence, having "amazingly intact

Nymboida River Biodiversity Field Day (Continued)

biodiversity with pristine environments such as the Nymboida River". He also answered claims that the endangered Eastern Fresh Water Cod is now "so (locally) common that it is eating out the other fish." To the contrary, Nigel explained that all healthy systems have an "apex predator" and when that prime predator disappeared, the system becomes overrun with "an overabundance of particular species" affecting the biodiversity and health of that environment. In the context of the Nymboida River, without competition from Cod, there would be- and in some parts *is* -an overabundance of turtles and eels.

Gavin also had a display of equipment used in catching, tagging, tracking and recording fish movements.

The afternoon was rounded off with a site visit to look at contracted riparian weed control work done at *Redbank*, on the other side of the river. The direct route was taken, with the novelty of provided inflatable rafts for workshop participants. (A nice "local touch", as Rafts is synonymous with the Nymboida River, especially in the higher white water reaches.)

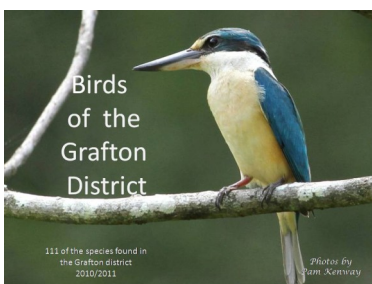


Participants arrive at *Redbank*, where landholder Malin shows how grazing can be successfully integrated with riparian management.

By Alastair Maple



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Birds of Grafton DVD

One of our Common Myna team Landcare volunteers, Pam Kenway is also a birdo and the most amazing bird photographer. Pam has put together a DVD of photos of 111 of the bird species found in or around Grafton. They are all named and the slideshow is set to music. A list of the species is also on the back of the DVD cover. The cost of this beautiful bird gift is just \$10 plus \$3 to cover postage if posted out. Purchase of this DVD raises funds to directly assist with the Common Myna trapping program in the Clarence Valley. You can organise purchase by emailing pam@cvcia.org.au directly. Thank you for supporting CVCIA Landcare and thank you Pam for your generous contribution in so many ways. DVD's are also available from the Landcare Office to purchase.



Ticking off Lyme Disease (Borreliosis)



*NB: The following information, while it may be potentially worrying, is provided to ensure Landcarers are **aware of risk** rather than discouraged from continuing work on their sites!*



There are 36 known species of *Borrelia*. Twelve of these species are known to cause Lyme Disease or Borreliosis, and are transmitted by ticks.

Lyme Disease is the number one tick borne illness in the world, and is the fastest growing vector borne illness. Lyme disease was first reported in the United States in the town of Old Lyme, Connecticut, in 1975.

Lyme Disease is usually transmitted through the bite of a tick, and can cause mild, moderate or severe symptoms, and if left untreated can be fatal. Not everyone infected with these bacteria gets ill. If a person does become ill, the first symptoms resemble the flu and include: Chills, fever, headache, Lethargy, and Muscle pain. There may be a "bull's eye" rash, a flat or slightly raised red spot at the site of the tick bite. Often there is a clear area in the center. It can be larger than 1 - 3 inches wide.

Officially, Lyme disease still does not exist in Australia. While this may or may not be true, what cannot be in dispute is that tick-borne diseases resembling Lyme disease **do** exist in this country.



Lyme Links members, (left) Dan and Steve and Clarence Landcare Secretary Alastair at the Clarence Landcare General Meeting.

Minimising contact with ticks is the best method of prevention for any bite. This is most readily done by wearing a broad brimmed hat (at least 10 cm brims) and full length clothing. Pyrethrum treated clothing is now also available. Insect repellent should be sprayed on the inside and outside of collar, cuffs of shirt and long pants, and on the underside of the hat brim. First Aid kits should include Hydrogen peroxide, to put on the tick before removal, and *Lyclear* for grass ticks and scrub itch. Immediate removal of tick upon discovery is

essential, as is using the above first aid contents. This helps ensure the tick(s) does not release toxins before removal.

Further information on Lyme Disease can be found by using your search engine to look up Karl McManus Foundation.

While we'd love to ban ticks, we just have to live with them, and prepare ourselves to minimise their effect.



TALKING ABOUT TICKS

at the Clarence Landcare General Meeting

Bush ticks, Grass ticks, shellbacks Borreliosis, and Q Fever; ... these were just a few of the terms that were aired on Saturday afternoon 29th June, at the Clarence Landcare office.

Steve Young, from Lyme Links delivered an attention grabbing presentation on Lyme and other Tick-borne diseases, prior to the general meeting agenda.

Steve is well qualified to speak on the subject. Along with his former National Park Ranger wife Natalie and their young daughter, they all suffer from a variety of tick-borne diseases. This has caused them considerable stress and expense (\$600,000 over several years). It has also required adapting to a new diet and lifestyle.

SCARY STUFF

When the Young family were afflicted with the acquisition of tick borne diseases, not a lot was known about Lyme Disease. Officially Lyme Disease did not exist in Australia. It still doesn't, despite increasing evidence and testimonials to the contrary. According to Steve, because of this lack of recognition; —coupled with the battles sufferers go through to get correct diagnosis and treatment,— many people with diseases acquired from ticks are convinced there is a conspiracy of continued silence and denial. The suspicion is that this is for economic reasons of funding for health and fear of restricted trade. *Officially, Australia and the Antarctic are the only countries in the world that “enjoy” the status of being free of tick borne diseases.*

NOT ALL DOOM AND GLOOM

The overwhelming message from the presentation was that with ticks, you can't be too careful. However, following a few simple procedures can greatly reduce your chances of becoming afflicted by ticks

Working in areas known to contain ticks involves risk minimisation. Clothing: This includes proper protective clothing—hat, pants tucked into socks, sleeves buttoned at wrist. Chemical use on clothing:—spray with *Bushman's*, *Aerogard* or similar products.

Alternative control means: Instead of crawling under a large lantana bush to cut and paint the trunk, consider using herbicide as a spray. Regular checking of yourself and work partner. Regular tick checks. Lymelinks recommends that You and your work partner check each other every 2 hours. Fast and correct removal of ticks using fine pointed tweezers to grab the *head*, while use of products such as *Lyclear* (chemists) removes “scrub itch” or the rash from larval ticks. (see previous page for more details)

At the end of the presentation, Clarence Landcare was pleased to donate to the Karl McManus Foundation. More info: www.lymedisease.org.au

By Alastair Maple



Urging Responsible Dog Owners

NOROC Dog Education Project

Seven Northern Rivers councils have partnered with National Parks and Wildlife, the Livestock Health and Pest Authority and the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre to implement a dog education campaign.

Roaming domestic dogs and wild dogs are both having a negative impact on wildlife and livestock in the northern rivers. The main aims of this project are to improve the level of responsible pet ownership and to increase active wild dog management.

Newly appointed Wild Dog project officer, Wendy Gibney, said "There are 72,000 dogs registered across the seven councils in the Northern Rivers so it is important that all of these dogs are managed responsibly." Responsible dog owners should ensure that dogs are always under competent control or contained in a secure run. It is also important that dogs are micro chipped and desexed.

It is quite possible for domestic dogs can be the perfect pet during the day, but if left unchecked at night, may run amok with other dogs, causing considerable stock loss and injury. The Clarence Valley has numerous recent sightings and evidence of wild dogs.

To ensure adequate resources are available to manage the wild dog problem all sightings need to be reported. If you see or hear wild dogs, call the Livestock Health and Pest Authority at Lismore (6621 2317), Casino (6662 3166) or Grafton (6642 3699).

Incidents with domestic dogs should be reported to your local council.

[Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils](#) (NOROC) is an association representing the local government areas of Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Tweed Shire.

Photograph by Jim Rogers



Grafton Wild Dog and Fox Accredited Baiting Workshop

On the 19th of June 2013 Livestock Health and Pest Authority ran a well attended short training course which has trained 13 landholders to use 1080 and Pindone baits on their properties. Participants now can use these poisons for the control of wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs and rabbits where allowed by the conditions for use. This workshop was run as part of a series across the North Coast in partnership with NOROC's wild dog education project and local Landcare groups.

The three-hour course will give landholders a clear understanding of 1080 and Pindone use and their legal obligations. 1080 is the common name for Sodium monofluoroacetate which is used to control vertebrate pests in Australia. Monofluoroacetate occurs naturally in over 30 Australian plants therefore many Australian animals have a higher tolerance of 1080 than pest species.

The training course covered baiting techniques, toxicity, storage, transport, legislation and OH&S. Those completing the course will be issued a certification card and will remain accredited to use 1080 and Pindone for five years. Property owners need to be accredited to use 1080 baits. The AQF3 course is expensive therefore the LHPA offered this as much cheaper and specific course.



Combating Tropical Soda Apple (TSA) at Endless Creek



Clarence Landcare's Debbie Repschlager assisted Geoff Woods with an application to the NRCMA "Small Projects" Incentives Program round in April 2012 to address Tropical Soda Apple on his Endless Creek property. This infestation is considered a priority as TSA is a Class 2 or 3 noxious weed throughout NSW. Endless creek is at the head waters of Chambigne Creek and therefore Orara River. The application was successful and Geoff has been working in conjunction with CVC weeds Officers to control this weed. On a recent inspection of the works on 29th May 2013, Reece Luxton (CVC) and Lachlan Stace from Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority confirmed that on a number of sites where there had been dense infestations only a relatively small number of regrowth plants could be seen. This property and adjoining properties will require considerable follow up control works in forthcoming years. CVC has an ongoing program to control TSA on their adjoining "Rockview" property.



Pictured: Geoff Wood shows a bucket of collected soda apple pods



REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENT & COMMUNITY AWARDS

Stand Up and Be Counted

Regional Achievement Awards

Nominations Close August 2nd 2013

This year individuals and groups can be recognised in **The Peabody Environment and Landcare Award**. There's heaps of categories! The Award is open to people who are implementing landcare practices on their own properties or with in their local community, land owners who have shown increased commitment to raising awareness, as well as groups who are promoting the need for environmental awareness in their community.

It's a virtual shopping list of categories, so consider your chance to nominate and showcase the amazing work that environmental volunteers make in their community.

- The Crown Lands **Crown Reserve Trust Community Manager's Award**.
- The Crown Lands **Crown Reserve Trust Corporate Manager's Award**.
- The Prime Super **Community of the Year Award Population Over 15,000 Award**
- The Prime Super **Community of the Year Award Population Under 15,000 Award**
- The Fantastic Future **Youth Leadership Award **NEW****
- The Fantastic Future **Indigenous Achievement Award **NEW****
- The Peabody **Environment and Landcare Award**
- The Essential Energy **Regional Service Award**
- The University of Newcastle **Business Achievement Award **NEW****
- The Specialty Press **Events & Tourism Award**

Nominating an individual or organisation in this years **The Peabody Environment and Landcare Award** could put them in the running to win \$5,000. PRIME7 and the Commonwealth Bank are giving away TV advertising and a share in \$40,000 spread across ten Awards.

It's **FREE** to nominate and **EASY!** Visit www.awardsaustralia.com before nominations close! **2nd August 2013.**



Whiteman Creek River Reach Year 3

Waiting for the proverbial “mud to dry” has been the essence of the Whiteman Creek River Reach Project in 2013, with not one but three floods wreaking havoc and delaying work. But what’s new, every year this project gains funding... it floods!

Although starting late on projects has its downsides, streamlined management and having good contractors can ensure work is completed within deadlines. Albeit, this year was no different to last, with a three month timeline

to work with and 21 properties to complete we have achieved our goal.

As bush regenerators from EnviTE can vouch, achieving 14ha of intensive primary and secondary weed control work targeting the tenacious vine weed cat’s claw creeper, has been no simple task.

With moderate, heavy and sometimes severe infestations to control, chainsaws, loppers, tomahawks and spray units have all been put into action to control this invasive vine weed, which is one of the greatest threats to biodiversity along Whiteman Creek.

Clarence Landcare Project Officer Susan Moore said “Landholders in the project have been fortunate to be able to target cat’s claw creeper for control work now, because if it was left any longer it would become an economic and physical impossibility.”

The project funded by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority has provided Clarence Landcare Inc., with the opportunity to engage community capacity from the upper areas of the Whiteman Creek downstream to the Clarence River to tackle what is a large environmental and community concern.

By Sue Moore



Photo : Evan & Shelley Kirke from Whiteman Creek who have only just joined the Whiteman Creek Project are all hands on with controlling cat’s claw creeper on their property. Even their children Levi & Reuben got involved in the on ground work

Seed Collection & Plant Propagation Workshop

On the 8th May, local and regional Biodiversity Fund Projects combined to deliver The Native Seed Collection & Propagation Workshop at the Grafton Agricultural and Research Station. The workshop attracted participants with an interest in learning about how to observe & collect native seeds or propagate native plants.

Workshop activities included

- ◆ Recognising different plants, seed types and their dispersal mechanisms.
- ◆ Seed collection ethics
- ◆ Collection & storage methods
- ◆ Basic seed germination and plant propagation techniques



Participants took part in practical demonstrations & received resources including; Florabank Guidelines for Seed Collection & Storage, Clarence Coast, River & Floodplain Revegetation Guides & the Coastal Propagation & Revegetation Manual.

For information about this project or when the next training day will be held please contact: Julie Mousley or Susan Moore on 0266435009 or go to our website.

Both projects are supported by the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund and Clean Energy Futures Program:

Clarence Landcare's Biodiversity Resource Support Project and EnviTE's Coastal Corridor Enhancement through Restoration, Propagation & Revegetation Project.



What's happening with Landcare?

Under the new State Government model of combining the Department of Primary Industry, the LHPA and Catchment Management Authorities, Landcare funding is likely to be reduced.

SEL's (Socio-Ecological Landscapes) will be part of a new model for funding Landcare in the region. Our SEL consists of Bellingen Landcare, Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare, and Clarence Landcare.

All we know for certain at this stage is that we have a 2 month extension on the 2012/13 Community Support Project contract at the current rate. We are currently in negotiation with the NRCMA for the remainder of the year's funding. There is nothing definite at this stage of what the funding will be or how it will be made available—it does however seem quite certain there will be a reduction from the previous years funds.

Landcare will survive in one form or another, but just how will be dependent upon how Landcare rises to meet the challenges. On an optimistic note, it could be a catalyst for some exciting change.



Dynamic Speaker at North Coast Regional Landcare Forum

Guest at the North Coast Regional Landcare Awards forum (Angourie, March 2013) was U.S. Agriculturist Jerry Brunetti. A vibrant and energetic speaker, Jerry spoke on topics which included soil fertility, animal nutrition, and livestock health.

In 1999, twenty years after founding Agri Dynamics, Jerry Brunetti tended to his own cancer by developing a diet to treat and detoxify his immune system. He is still in remission.

During several workshops at the Forum, using terms such as "food as medicine" and "farm as pharmacy" he discussed the links between healthy soil, seriously nutritious food, and sustainable farming.

An internationally recognised speaker, for those who missed out on his presentations, it is worth jumping on to your search engine and looking up several web pages which cover his work.

By the way Jerry has suffered from Lyme Disease. This led him to research further into pain and what causes it.

Learn to Farm organically on the mid north coast Certificate in Horticulture (organic studies)

North Coast Institute of TAFE at the CHEC campus in Coffs Harbour delivers a Cert 4 in Horticulture (organic studies).

AND, there are some places left for next semester's intake in July.

Over the last 15 years the course has taught small farmers, people working in the industry, back yard gardeners aiming for self-sufficiency and sea changers who are trying to optimise the potential of their new property.

Sally Ayre-Smith is a recent city-dweller turned farmer, and is a complete convert to the notion of training and the benefits it can bring:

"We have just harvested our third commercial organic garlic crop – we anticipate it will weigh in around 3.5 tons. We are now one of the bigger fully certified organic garlic farms on the mid north coast of NSW. Five years ago we moved here from the city never having farmed before. After one year we started the organic conversion. None of this would have happened without the opportunity to attend the Organic Farming course at TAFE in Coffs Harbour. Ian Hazell ran this course and inspired and encouraged us all to understand the fundamentals of organic farming and then put them into practice. We have achieved this using all the skills that I acquired on this course – I can't recommend it more highly to anyone wanting to start a new life in organic farming".

The course is one day a week on a Wednesday with topics ranging from soil health, organic soil improvement, organic pest, disease and weed control, farm planning, pastures and animal health together with practical skills gained in the field. Course Fees apply and for more information email Ian.Hazell@det.nsw.edu.au or call CHEC campus on 66593000.

Livestock Performance Matched to Pasture Budgets

Lewis Kahn and Judy Earl

Livestock performance depends on monitoring pastures. But how do you use the information to make a difference? The information can be used to decide the number of stock to run over winter or how many trade cattle might be purchased. There are two key times in the year to conduct a pasture (feed) budget from which you make decisions about how many stock to run on your farm. These are autumn and spring, which represent the start of the low growth period and the start of the high growth period. Here is an example of a pasture budget over the low growth period.

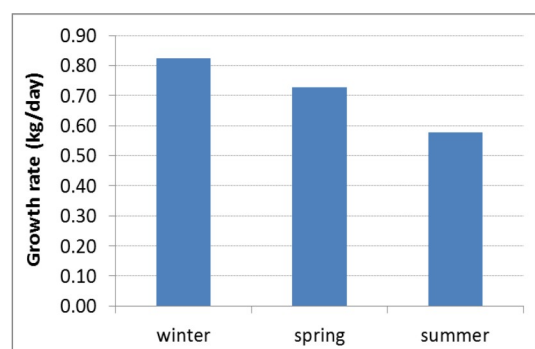
Meg estimated that the amount of feed on her farm on 1st April was on average 3,000 kg dry matter/ha. She did this by measuring pasture height at 12 cm and multiplying this by pasture density of 250 kg/cm ($12 \times 250 = 3,000$ kg/ha). More information on this in the AIMS pasture checklist at www.aimsag.com.au/software.html

She nominated that by the end of the period on 1st October there would be 1,500 kg/ha on average left in the paddocks, because this pasture residual is key to good healthy spring pasture growth.

This means Meg had 1,500 kg/ha feed that could be used by livestock over the 180 day period from April to October. This equals about 8 kg/ha each day and addition of daily pasture growth, estimated from experience at 1 kg/ha over this period, increased this to 9 kg/ha per day available for livestock.

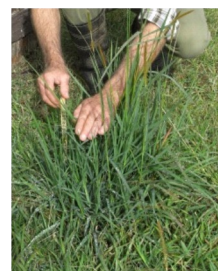
On 210 ha, Meg carried 150 cows, calving in August and using the DSE tables in the AIMS pasture checklist she calculated these would eat 8 kg/ha of pasture each day. This left 1 kg/ha for purchases or as a buffer. Meg decided to use the small amount of left-over pasture and calculated from DSE tables that she could buy 30 small trade steers.

Not only did the pasture budget make Meg feel more comfortable over winter knowing she had enough feed but it also meant she could purchase the small mob of trade steers over winter at a good price. Having the steers on hand to benefit from early spring growth helps to make sure they reach target sale weights (see graph). Pasture quality is highest during spring and it's important that growing animals get access to this feed if they are to achieve good growth rates.



Growth rate over spring, summer and early autumn of steers run in the same mob that were either bought during winter, spring or summer. Steers bought near the end of winter grew over 200 g/day faster than steers bought in early summer.

Why not look around your farm to estimate how much feed you have and use a feed budget to start a grazing plan for winter and then over the high growth period.





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Clarence
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IMPORTANT Message from Committee and Staff !!

Due to possible government funding cuts to the Community Support Program from Aug. 31 2013 it is very likely that this hardcopy newsletter will NOT be able to be printed in the current volume that is has been- over 350 distributed. We should be able to continue a smaller print run to those people that we know value our newsletter as an important conduit of community information—**If you want to continue to receive a HARD COPY you MUST ring, email or phone us to ensure your name & address remains on the list.** At this stage we envisage we will be able to continue to produce and distribute the digital version so if we don't have your current email address please advise us. **We will now accept expressions of interest for advertising in the newsletter. Thankyou to all of you who give positive feedback- I will print some of them in the next edition.** Thankyou- Deb.

This newsletter is produced by Clarence Landcare Inc. as part of our Community Support Program which is funded by the Caring for our Country and the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority