



Strategic Control of Serrated Tussock

NSW and the ACT are one step closer to more effective coordination and strategic management of serrated tussock.

The Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and ACT, in partnership with Mid-Western Regional Council, have been successful in securing funding under the Noxious Weeds Grants to employ a project officer to lead a coordinated effort against this highly invasive weed.

The project is the first stage in a 5 year plan to coordinate better district and regional programs so that control efforts increase in their effectiveness and there is a decrease in the impact of serrated tussock.

Clare Hamilton has been appointed to the position of Project Coordinator and is based in Rylstone on the NSW Central Tablelands.

Clare explained that her role is to quantify the current impact of serrated tussock and some of the

successful management options being implemented. She hopes to work with a range of organizations including Regional Weeds Advisory Committees, Local and State Government, catchment management authorities and landcare to prepare and implement integrated natural resource plans that focus on serrated tussock reduction.

Raising awareness of serrated tussock, its identification and potential to cause significant economic and environmental problems, will be a key component of the project.

Clare pointed out that her role is not that of district weeds officers whose role it is to deal with serrated tussock issues at the farm level. However, she hopes to be able to help coordinate regional control programs with agronomists, weeds officers and land managers who between them hold a wealth of information and experience.

Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and ACT

The Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and ACT (the Working Party) formed in May 2006 in an effort to instigate a more cooperative and consistent control effort against serrated tussock across NSW and the ACT.

Motivated by the effective government-funded control program that has been operating in Victoria since 1995, the Working Party are striving to raise the profile of this noxious weed and implement a coordinated control effort.

The Working Party consists of ten landholders from across NSW and the ACT and is supported by key government agencies.

In 2009 the Working Party, in partnership with Mid-

Western Regional Council, were successful in applying for funding under the NSW Noxious Weeds Grant program.

This funding represents the first stage in a planned 5 year program to implement effective serrated tussock management.

More information:

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“The most expensive form of control is no control”

Management of serrated tussock requires a well thought out plan that takes into account your particular geographic area, climate and individual circumstances.

All control activities need to be ongoing if re-infestation is to be avoided and it is essential that you don't over commit yourself by trying to do more than budgets or other limitations allow.

When developing your plan, do not treat serrated tussock in isolation, remember your property is a whole system and consider the impacts that different control techniques will have on the weed, the desirable vegetation and the production system.

As with all activities it is important to plan ahead. Now is the perfect time to develop your weed

control plans and there are some great resources available to help.

Visit www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/serratedtussock/

- Download a copy of the *Serrated Tussock Control Plan*. This template will help you develop an integrated serrated tussock control plan for your property
- Find more detailed information in the *National Best Practice Manual for Serrated Tussock*. The manual is available free of charge by phoning 1800 028 374
- Contact your district agronomist or weed officer.

Your responsibility in the battle against serrated tussock

Serrated tussock is considered one of the worst perennial weeds in Australia. In many parts of NSW and the ACT it has been declared noxious under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*.

Despite this many land managers are unaware of the significance of the weed, its impact on both the environment and our production systems, or know how to identify and control it.

As a Class 3 or 4 weed the following actions are required by land managers:

Class 3: The weed must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed.

Class 4: The growth and spread of the plant must be controlled according to the measures specified in a management plan published by the local council.

It is important to understand your responsibility and to have a planned control program if you have serrated tussock on your property.

If you would like to know the status of the weed in your area or need help understanding your responsibilities please contact your local council.

Did you know:

- Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) was selected as a Weed of National Significance due to its invasiveness, potential for spread and social, economic and environmental impacts. (Thorp & Lynch 2000)
- Pastures that carry 7–15 dse per hectare can be reduced to a carrying capacity of only 0.5 dse per hectare if heavily infested with serrated tussock. (Campbell & Vere 1995)
- Serrated tussock currently covers more than 2 million hectares of land in south-east Australia and has the potential to spread even further.

If you have any information about upcoming events concerning serrated tussock and would like them included in the September edition of Tussock Talk, please contact Clare Hamilton on **0428 791 359** or email clare.hamilton@midwestern.nsw.gov.au

Winter Control Guide

Winter is upon us and there are some critical activities for this time of year to help in the battle against serrated tussock! During the winter months the mature tussock plants will be showing signs of bleaching due to frost. They will have a distinctive golden yellow colour. Germination of seeds will continue (having started in the autumn) where conditions are favourable.

Here are some general control activities worth considering at this time of year.

- ✓ Continue to use flupropanate as a stand alone herbicide until mid to late August.
- ✓ In late August consider adding glyphosate to your spray mix to be sure of stopping seed set.
- ✓ Survey your property and manually chip or spot spray isolated plants which should be easy to find before the spring flush.
- ✓ Spot spray low density infestations.
- ✓ Broad acre spray high density infestations.
- ✓ Avoid overgrazing to maximise growth of desirable species.
- ✓ In cultivation paddocks consider preparing for a spring sown forage Brassica or for millet or sorghum in November/December.
- ✓ If establishing new pasture, consider spraying out paddocks as an alternative to cultivation for direct drill operations.

This information is intended as a guide only. Any works that are carried out should be researched for your area and individual circumstances. For further advice please contact your district agronomist or weed officer.

**Report suspected weed
resistance to your local weeds
officer or agronomist.**



Typical serrated tussock plant at this time of year.

Flupropanate resistance in serrated tussock

Serrated tussock resistant to flupropanate was first identified on a Victorian property in 2002 and has since been confirmed in several locations in New South Wales, from Armidale to Goulburn.

Herbicide resistance is the ability of a plant to survive and reproduce following exposure to a dose of herbicide that would normally be lethal.

The only registered herbicides for control of serrated tussock in pastures are flupropanate, glyphosate and 2,2-DPA. Flupropanate is widely regarded as the most selective and effective herbicide for serrated tussock control, however repeated use of the herbicide can lead to an increase in the likelihood of resistance developing.

Herbicide resistance to flupropanate has many management implications including:

- Increased dominance of serrated tussock and reduced grazing opportunities
- Increased costs to land managers - in herbicide use, time and lost production
- Higher environmental pollution and damage to the environment

To avoid herbicide resistance - most importantly **do not rely solely on the use of chemicals for control**. Integrate herbicide use with other control strategies including chipping, cultivation, mulching, cropping, pasture rehabilitation, grazing management, strategic fencing and regular rotation of herbicide types.

This information is taken from "How to recognise, manage and prevent serrated tussock herbicide resistance" published by the Department of Primary Industries, Victoria.

Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and ACT

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Many valuable resources have been developed to assist weed control authorities and land managers in the government, corporate and private sector. A great place to start is by visiting www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/serratedtussock where a comprehensive list of resources is available.

Hard copy versions of the *Serrated Tussock National Best Practice Management Manual* are available, free of charge, from the Industry & Investment NSW Bookshop

phone: 1800 028 374 or email: bookshop@industry.nsw.gov.au

Points of contact that may have local information, possible assistance programs or funding include: Landcare, local government weeds officers, catchment management authorities, noxious weeds authorities, agronomists, and State government weeds officers.

Tussock Talk is an initiative of the Serrated Tussock Working Party for NSW and ACT. The aim of the publication is to share information and provide support to land manager to continue the battle against serrated tussock in NSW and the ACT. Tussock Talk will be produced quarterly and we welcome your feedback which can be sent to Clare Hamilton, the NSW/ACT Serrated Tussock Coordinator. Please feel free to share this publication by distributing it widely.



Seeds are a distinctive purple colour.



Young serrated tussock plants are bright green



Frost will bleach the leaves of serrated tussock plants

Key identifying features of serrated tussock

Identification of grasses can be difficult, especially when the seed head is not present. Serrated tussock can be confused with a number of native tussock grasses as well as other introduced *Nassella* species. Serrated tussock leaves roll smoothly like a needle when rolled between the index finger and thumb. Native grasses will feel like they have flat edges.

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*):

- Tussocky grass to 60 cm tall
- Thin, tightly rolled, hairless leaves with very fine serrations
- White hairless ligule
- White swollen leaf bases
- Purple tinge to flower heads, later turning golden as the seeds ripen
- Weeping flower heads that break off at maturity
- Difficult to pull from the ground, even when small.

Extract from: *Serrated Tussock National Best Practice Management Manual*

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