

CAPE YORK
WEEDS AND
FERAL ANIMALS
PROGRAM

Weeds & Ferals News

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N E W S L E T T E R

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Further Funding for increased weed and feral animal management

The group is moving ahead in leaps and bounds for 2008, control programs are well underway targeting roadside weeds throughout the cape. The group has received several new contracts to enable the continuation of the vital work that we are involved in; further funding has come through the Natural Heritage Trust totalling to \$561,440.00 boosting the group's ability to undertake additional control work within the regions that require the most attention. The group has taken on a new contract targeting Lantana within the NPA region this will involve the control and surveying of the region and has been funded by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries through the Defeating the Weed Menace Program for a total of \$63,000.00. Funding has now been received from the Blue Print for the Bush funding program to complete two surveys within Cape York targeting rubber vine and pond apple. The funding totals to \$243,000.00 and the project will run for three years involving the surveying of both weeds using an R44 helicopter, for rubber vine the focus will be around the containment line targeting the Edward and Holroyd River Catchments in the west and the Annie River Catchment to the east. This survey will give the group the ability to target any strategic infestations of rubber vine. Once the initial survey has been completed some on ground control will be undertaken on these infestations and if possible further survey work will be undertaken to the south of the containment line to assess these infestations. The second survey targeting pond apple will cover the entire east coast of the cape from Wujal Wujal to the tip covering approximately 900 kilometres of coast line. This survey will give the group a better understanding of the size and location of these pond apple infestations allowing the group to target the infestations that are strategic to the overall management of this weed. The group will also be continuing to undertake the control of pond apple and hymenachne within the Cook Shire and assist the Cape York Peninsula community with all its pest management needs. For any further information about pest management within Cape York contact the CYWAFAP office on Ph 07 40695020, email CYWAFAP@bigpond.com or visit www.cyppests.com

Lantana Containment Zones on The Cape

Cape York land managers may have the opportunity to apply for financial assistance for the removal of Lantana camara, a Weed of National Significance (WoNS), as the Lantana Containment Zone Project gains momentum.

A northern lantana containment line has been established just south of Princess Charlotte Bay, running along the Jennie River, and the Lantana

WoNS group are calling for information on any lantana infestations north of this line.

National Lantana Coordinator Kym Johnson said that although lantana is traditionally seen as an important weed in coastal areas south of Cooktown, infestations are beginning to creep north and according to climatic modeling, the top end is susceptible to infestation. cont. Pg 3



Trevor Owens, former Weeds Officer with the Cook Shire Council records lantana infestations at Narau Beach on the east coast of the NPA.

The staff at CYWAFAP have enjoyed another busy dry season coordinating and undertaking a range of feral animal control programs throughout Cape York Peninsula. These programs have produced some excellent results for landholders and the environment with the impacts of feral animals being reduced in some cases by more than 90%. The following is a brief description of some of the projects undertaken by staff during the 2007 dry season.

Cape York Marine Turtle Conservation Program This program was a continuation of the 2006 Marine Turtle Program with the inclusion of the Pormpuraaw DoGIT for the first time. The total area covered during the program was 8000 sq km with approximately 3500 feral pigs removed from the control area in 7 days. The benefits of the program are already being shown with predation rates on turtle nests from feral pigs now being as little as 10% in some areas. Considering that feral pig predation on turtle nests two years ago was upwards of 90% this is a great result. The total number of feral pigs removed from the west coast of the Cape in two years has exceeded 14000. CYWAFAP staff will undertake follow-up control during June to ensure that feral pig numbers remain at the lowest possible numbers during the forthcoming turtle nesting season.



Central Cape York Feral Animal Control CYWAFAP staff in conjunction with central Cape York Peninsula landholders recently undertook a major feral animal control program targeting feral pigs. While the program was successful for landholders who participated it was disappointing to see that one major adjoining stakeholder refused to take part in the program. CYWAFAP figures show that 43 percent of animals removed during the control program were within 5 km of this stakeholder's boundary.

CYWAFAP is working closely with this stakeholder to ensure future participation in control programs. To be successful with pest management programs on a regional basis requires the cooperation of all stakeholders otherwise reinvasion from pest animals into previously clean country undermines the effectiveness of the program.

1080 Baiting Program Thanks to all landholders that participated in the annual 1080 baiting program that was carried out in November. Coordinated baiting is the key to a successful reduction in stock losses and damage caused by dingo/feral dog attacks. Manufactured baits proved to be very popular with stocks running out before all landholders could access them. To avoid the disappointment of missing out landholders are encouraged to order their requirements for the forthcoming year as soon as possible.

Future Projects The CYWAFAP feral animals program for 2008 is already shaping up as another busy year for staff. Below are some of the programs that staff will be undertaking.

- Annual Cape York Peninsula aerial survey
- Working with the Wild River Rangers Program in Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama
- Follow up control work for the Marine Turtle Conservation Program
- Assisting Lockhart River Council with implementing their Pest Management Plan

Jamie Molyneaux
Senior Pest Management Officer

Sicklepods—Have you seen this plant

There are three known weedy species of Sicklepod, these include: **Sicklepod/arsenic weed** (*Senna obtusifolia*), **foetid senna** (*Senna tora*) and **hairy senna** (*Senna hirsuta*). All three species are Declared Class 2 weeds. Sicklepod and sennas are thought to be native to America.



Sicklepod leaf sample

Foetid senna possibly originated from a Sicklepod-like ancestor in the Asia-Pacific region. However they are weedy in many tropical countries throughout the world.

Description:

Sicklepod and foetid senna are closely related annual weeds. Sicklepod is a vigorously growing, very competitive woody shrub. It is normally an annual shrub, growing 1.5 to 2.5m tall and approximately 1m wide.

Their flowers are small yellow, about 1cm across, and have 5 petals. Their leaves are separated into three opposite pairs, rounded at the end and wedge shaped at the base. The seed pods are long slender and shaped like a grass cutting sickle. They ripen and burst open, dispersing their flat shiny, dark brown seeds.

You may have noticed a shorter "dwarf"

form of Sicklepod in amongst the taller Sicklepod. It could be Foetid senna which flowers and seeds 3 to 4 weeks earlier than the taller Sicklepod. They are generally mixed together. Hairy senna is a soft woody shrub with hairy leaves and pods. This is what distinguishes it from Sicklepod and foetid senna. Their leaflets are pointed at the tips and a prominent conical gland is found at the base of each leafstalk.

Distribution can be from northern New South Wales, along the coastal pastures and rainforests of Queensland to the tip of Cape York Peninsula and over to the top end of the Northern Territory. Sicklepod prefers well drained, fertile soils and is well suited to cleared coastal forest country. These species can also invade and completely dominate pasture and disturbed areas like earthworks, service trenches,

fence lines, creek banks, dumps and roadsides. They can establish and become dominant in 2 to 3 growing seasons. Horses and cattle will eat the mature seed,



Sicklepod infestation in Cook Shire

but being unpalatable, will pass thru and germinate in the dung. This is the main way of spread from property to property. Human movement can also spread the seed, as it can get caught in vehicles, machinery and clothing.

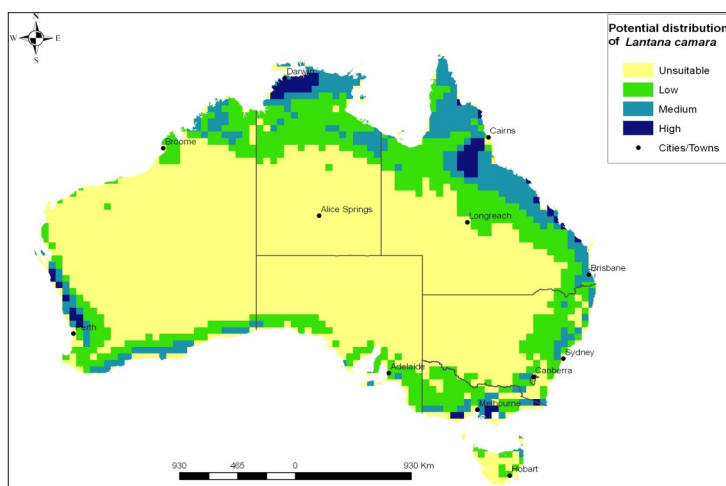
The seeding is prolific and can build up a large seed bank in the soil. Under favourable conditions the seed may germinate at any time. The seed can remain viable in the soil for more than 10 years. Sicklepod can remain a problem for many years after initial infection. We have noticed this in the Cooktown area. We have been controlling Sicklepod for 15 or so years. There has been a noticeable decline, but we still

find more outbreaks each year.

Sicklepod is a Class 2 declared plant under the Lands Protection (*Pest and Stock Route Management*) Act 2002. Declaration requires landholders to control declared pests on the land and waters under their control. CYWAFAP are currently undertaking control programs for the control of this plant throughout the entire Cook Shire. CYWAFAP officers would like to hear from anyone who thinks they may have it on their land and would like advice on how to control or manage this pest. CYWAFAP officers can be contacted on Phone 07 40695020 / 07 40695030 or Email: cywafap@bigpond.com

Incentive Scheme Update

Funding for the Landholder Incentive Scheme for approved pest control methods is now available. This funding is to provide landholders with a helping hand in pest control throughout the Cape. The scheme enables landholders to access up to \$1000 for weed control and \$500 for feral animal control (this includes non herbicide methods). To be eligible landholders you need to have a current pest management plan and a pest assessment conducted by an officer from CYWAFAP. Get in quick before this years' funding runs out. For more information or an application form contact CYWAFAP on (07) 4069 5020 or visit www.cyppests.com



Lantana Containment Zones on The Cape continued

“Early and proactive management of weeds is the most effective way to avoid costly environmental and economic damage and Cape York is in the fortunate position being able to nip lantana in the bud, before it grows out of control,” Ms Johnson said.

The Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program, with the support of the Lantana Containment Zone Project have already undertaken substantial control and survey activities in the Northern Peninsular Area and hope to control all known infestations by the end of this year. Funding from the Australian Government’s Defeating the Weed Menace Programme is currently available to support control activities in far northern Queensland, western Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Lantana, a Class 3 Declared weed in Queensland, causes serious economic and environmental impacts. Recent assessments suggest the cost to the Queensland grazing sector is in excess of \$70 M in lost production each year. Lantana infestations have also been linked to dramatic reductions in biodiversity, with more than 1300 native species recognised to be at risk.

The Lantana Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) group is

responsible for a diverse range of projects, including research into best practice control techniques, mapping, communications and biodiversity conservation. Through the Containment Zones Project, all known infestations from South Australia have been removed, and we look forward to yielding similar results in the top end.

Through the Lantana WoNS program a range of free information resources is available, including the lantana DVD: “Battling Lantana, Learning from the experiences of others”, the Lantana Control Manual, the Using Herbicides on Lantana manual, and a range of fact sheets and posters.

The Lantana Lowdown newsletter is issued to subscribers seasonally, providing guidance and control updates from industry members and fellow landholders, along with details of field days and other weed-related events that may be helpful to fight this weed.

If you would like to receive these newsletters, any of the free publications, or simply would like more information on the projects we are currently involved in, please go to <http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/lantana/>, or contact the team by calling (07) 3406 2511 or emailing LantanaWoNS@dpi.qld.gov.au.

Cape York Weeds and
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2008 Wet Season
Newsletter

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