



CASE STUDY

Tony White and Julie Symons - Miling

With 700ha of salt-affected country on his Miling property, 'Genocanna', Tony White has trialed many options to arrest the spread of salt. He has planted trees in recharge zones, planted oil mallees, installed deep and surface drains and sown perennial pastures, saltbush and summer crops such as sorghum and millet.

Tony operates 2,100 ha of predominantly York gum - loam country with some sandplain soils. Generally 1,400 ha is cropped in a cereal - pasture rotation with 700ha wheat, 300ha of oats for export hay, 300ha of barley and 100ha of lupins.

Tony runs 1,300 Merino ewes and 50 breeding cows. Wether lambs are sold as export shippers and ewes are kept for a self replacing Merino flock. After four to five years, Merino ewes are mated to a terminal sire and the cross - bred lambs are sold for export before summer as long - tailed lambs.

Tony tends to re-sow some legume pasture paddocks each year using seed he has harvested if the season is looking good or the paddock is producing poor pasture. The main pasture types sown are Casbah biserrula, medics, subclover and Cadiz serradella on sandplain country.

The autumn feed gap is filled with bluebush, saltbush and sorghum.

Tony says sorghum has been a huge success story for the farm, providing green feed outside of the growing season and a break between cereal crops, giving him the opportunity to manage herbicide resistance.



Tony showing his improved saltland to a group of farmers on a Grain and Graze bus tour

Generally an unproductive paddock is sown to sorghum each year using the air seeder which is fitted with knife points and presswheels.

If Tony decides to put a paddock into sorghum he will spray the paddock out in July or August, sow the sorghum in September, with some starter fertiliser and band 50 litres/ha of Flexi-N.

He lets it establish over the summer, grazes it hard in autumn and then in winter volunteer annual pasture provides feed.

Tony White and Julie Symons - Miling

Towards the end of winter, Tony will spray the volunteer pasture with MCPA to sweeten the pasture to encourage grazing. If there are herbicide - resistant weeds in the paddock, Tony will spray out the volunteer pasture with a knockdown herbicide. As summer approaches and the soil temperature rises, the sorghum shoots again.

There are six distinct saline areas on 'Genocanna'. Four of these have already been revegetated with oil mallees and saltbush and another has been rehabilitated as part of the Sustainable Grazing on Saline Lands (SGSL) program.

On this 60ha site, Tony has established oil mallees, saltbush and saltland pasture species.

Temperate perennial grasses – tall wheat grass and puccinellia were trialled as well as ryegrass and balansa clover.

The only plants that have established well and survived are the tall wheat grass and puccinellia.

Oil mallees have been planted around the perimeter of the affected area and bluebush, wavy leaf saltbush, quailbrush, river saltbush and Old man saltbush has been planted within the oil mallee rim, further into the salt affected area.

Tall wheat grass, puccinellia and native salt water couch are growing in the centre of the salt scald, with some areas of iceplant and barley grass and samphire on the bare scalds.

Tony has left plenty of room between the rows of oil mallee and saltbush to allow the passage of seeding and spraying gear.

In 2005, he sowed the ARGV-resistant Safeguard annual ryegrass in the alleys between the oil mallees and saltbush.



Part of 60ha of improved saltland on Genocanna

The Safeguard was sown in May at 7kg/ha with 80kg/ha of super potash using a Shearer trashworker bar with knife points and press wheels.

Encouraged by this ryegrass, Tony says the Safeguard was very competitive with barley grass and capeweed and responded well to nitrogen.

In retrospect, Tony said he would increase the sowing rates of tall wheat grass and puccinellia in the first year of site establishment.

He has reservations about planting trees as they can hinder management by limiting spraying opportunities.

“Next we will transplant saltwater couch runners on the bare scalds,” he says. “Our aim is to establish a diverse range of plants to increase the nutritional value of the area for sheep and maximise ground cover and water use.”

For further information contact:

Brianna Peake

Liebe Group

Phone: (08) 9664 2030

Email: liebe.brianna@bigpond.com