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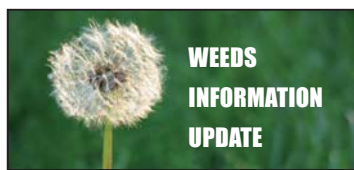
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Potential bio-control agent for Giant Parramatta Grass

Giant Parramatta Grass (GPG), or Sporobolus fertilis, is an aggressive perennial tussocky grass that is a declared noxious weed. It is known to invade native pastures and reduce animal production. Its potential distribution is estimated at 23.7 million hectares in Australia

The naturally occurring fungus, *Nigrospora oryzae*, causes a crown rot in the GPG which has now been shown to reduce tussock size dramatically in the field.

According to Industry & Investment NSW scientists based at Grafton, laboratory trials of a new fungus-based herbicide to control Giant Parramatta Grass are showing great promise.

"The herbicide is being developed based on spores of a naturally occurring fungus isolated from Giant Parramatta Grass growing in the Clarence Valley of Northern NSW," said David Officer, I&I NSW Research Agronomist.

"Laboratory tests have shown a 70 per cent reduction in healthy GPG leaves seven months after plants were inoculated with a solution of fungal spores.

"Once we have checked that the fungus-based herbicide doesn't affect other important plant species, we will trial it in the field – hopefully this Spring.

Industry & Investment NSW scientists at Grafton along with collaborators at RMIT in Melbourne are currently working on the development of the mycoherbicide based on spores of *N oryzae*.

"Ongoing work to ensure that the use of a *Noryzae* mycoherbicide will not affect any desirable species of grass or other plant species will build on field observations," Mr Officer said.

"This is encouraging because it suggests the disease is quite host-specific.

"Once we are sure it is safe to do so the next step in the research will be to inoculate GPG plants in the field and monitor the disease progress.

CEO moves on

Early next month, Shaughn Morgan will step down as Chief Executive Officer, after more than four years at the helm of the NSW Farmers' Association.

At the time his resignation was announced, the President of the Association, Charles Armstrong thanked Shaughn for his dedication and management of the Association; he added Shaughn has been a great asset to the Association through his commitment and dedication during tough times faced by Members and the Association over the past few years.

"There is no doubt Shaughn's work and commitment has ensured the Association has continued to be a strong voice for Members," Mr Armstrong said.

A publican's son from Watsons Creek, North of Tamworth, Shaughn Morgan joined the Association as General Manager Policy and Government Relations in mid-2006 after a career at the Bar Association, Clayton UTZ, The Law Society and advisor to the late Jeff Shaw who was then the Attorney General and Deputy Government Leader.

In 2006 Shaughn became Chief Executive and since then has worked tirelessly to improve the Association.

One of Shaughn's major achievements as Chief Executive has been converting the Constitution to plain English, meaning the foundations of the Association were easily



understandable for grass roots Members.

He also worked hard to find operational savings whilst not impacting on the level of the Association's service. For example, he was able to save the Association thousands of dollars by moving the Head Office to Goulburn Street.

In recent times, Shaughn Morgan was a key driver in the amendments to the Land Access Bill and is continuing to work tirelessly on the 'Families Needing Farmers' campaign being run by the Association.

Shaughn Morgan will finish with the Association soon after Annual Conference.

Mackellar Media Awards

With over 100 of the best writers and reporters entering the Mackellar Media Awards this year, the judges have a mighty task ahead of them next week when they meet to judge the best.

The Mackellar Media Awards are an initiative of the NSW Farmers' Association recognising excellence in television, newspaper, radio and photographic reporting of rural issues.

Some big names enter the awards each year, but that doesn't guarantee a winning entry according to judging panelist and NSW Farmers' Association President Charles Armstrong.

This year's judging panel includes the Association's President Charles Armstrong, Chief Executive Shaughn Morgan and three respected media professionals including university lecturer and author Harry Dillon, former NSW Press Gallery

President Simon Benson (judging the print categories) and renowned television reporter George Wood (judging the broadcast categories).

The judges will meet at the NSW Farmers' Association head office on Wednesday to pick the winners of the six categories. Each winner will receive \$2000.



Our turn to tweet

Once upon a time if you had a political comment to make, you would have stood upon a soap box and said your piece. Today lobbyists, politicians and social commentators hop on a virtual soapbox: a website called Twitter.

The social networking and micro-blogging site, where people 'tweet' their pithy comments about any topic at all, is a veritable hive of influencers who use the site multiple times a day.

The clincher being that your comment can be no longer than 140 characters.

The value of the site for an advocacy group, like the NSW Farmers' Association, is as an immediate and far-reaching mouthpiece to editors, politicians and other representative bodies.

Some of Australia's most influential newspaper editors and columnists are on

Twitter including the likes for former Daily Telegraph editor David Penberthy, The Age political editor Michelle Grattan, and Channel Nine political editor Laurie Oakes.

So too the entire population of Australia's parliamentary halls, or so it seems.

And the Association isn't the first lobby group to use the cyber-sphere as an advocacy tool: the Victorian Farmers Federation, NSW Minerals Council and Australian Workers Union, are all having their say on the site that more than 100 million users access worldwide.

The Association will launch its Twitter site in coming weeks with a focus on achieving outcomes in the arena of property rights in the lead up to the 2010 Federal Election.

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PROPERTY RIGHTS
 RECOGNISING THE RIGHTS OF RURAL LANDOWNERS

Association thanks Chief Executive for outstanding service

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NSW Farmers' Association Members can contact the Editor to have their edition posted.

Growing the Business of Farming **NSW Farmers Association**

NSW Farmers' Association
 NSW Farmers' NDRF
 NSW Farmers' Industrial Association

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