Case Study

Managing mimosa (*Mimosa pigra*) on Top End Floodplains

Between June 2005 and April 2008, 19 pastoral properties in the Mary, Daly, Finiss, Reynolds and Adelaide River catchments joined forces to implement a collaborative, whole-of-catchment approach towards the management of mimosa (a Weed of National Significance) in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

Mimosa poses a significant threat to the production, cultural and conservation values of wetlands and river systems in the NT, with pastoralists among the worst affected. The impenetrable and unpalatable, thorny thickets block access to stock watering points, hamper mustering and can rapidly smother the floodplain grasslands which are vitally important to the export cattle market.

The map (*inserted left*) illustrates the unprecedented level of involvement in strategic mimosa control. The properties, ranging in size from 15km$^2$ to 2098km$^2$ combined to exceed 13,000km$^2$.

The total project investment was almost $4 million including in-kind contributions, with the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program contributing $600,000 in funding. The project was developed in accordance with the national strategy for the management of mimosa. The techniques implemented were consistent with the *Mimosa pigra: National Best Practice Management Manual*.

The success of the project can be attributed to the cooperative involvement of the Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association, Aboriginal land managers, local government councils, the Northern Land Council, the Indigenous Land Corporation, the NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS), the NT Department of Resources (DOR), Kakadu National Park (DEH) and numerous pastoralists.

**Key Outcomes**

Key outcomes of the project included the development of integrated land management plans for each property incorporating seasonal work plans, the implementation of strategic
management of mimosa and clear identification of management costs and options for pastoralists.

The land management plans for each of the properties were developed with the assistance of the Weed Management Branch of NRETAS. The plans traversed over property and land tenure boundaries, just as mimosa would.

The weed was controlled high in the catchment to limit reinfestation in valuable floodplain areas, while work continued to reclaim crucial grazing areas. The result is a more cost-effective and efficient weed control program with positive outputs for biodiversity and productive capability.

**Further Successes**

This project allowed for the identification of issues associated with mimosa management and provided an opportunity to develop strategies to address these issues.

The collection of spatial data describing the location and density of mimosa along with the land condition of individual properties has allowed a greater understanding of the overall state of the Top End floodplains.

**Benefits to the Community**

The successful results of the project are shared not only by project partners but also neighbouring properties who have derived a range of benefits from the management of mimosa on pastoral land, including:

**Mary River**

Sections of conservation land on the Mary River can now be managed with reduced risk of mimosa infestation from neighbouring properties, as this land is distributed between five pastoral properties, all of which were involved in the program.

**Adelaide River**

A reduced risk of land lower in the Adelaide River catchment being infested from further upstream after mimosa was managed on a pastoral property at the top of the catchment.

**Daly River**

Aboriginal land holders have a reduced risk of their land being reinfested from neighbouring pastoral properties in the Daly River catchment along with developing better working relationships on a regional basis.

Public awareness programs and partnership development have increased awareness of the threat of mimosa and management options available for properties on Top End floodplains.

For further information contact:
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“Significant areas have been reclaimed for grazing purposes and that’s good news for the health of this vital Territory industry”

Stuart Kenny, former Executive Director Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association