

Pastures for production and protection
Proceedings of the Sixth Australian Tropical Pastures Conference
held at Emerald, Queensland, in April 2000

A Welcome from the President

As president of the Tropical Grassland Society, I extend a very warm welcome to participants — guests, members and visitors — to this Conference 2000 and Field Tours. I trust you have a pleasant three days, participate actively in the discussions and gain knowledge of practical benefit to your work.

The thrust of the conference presentations and field days is towards an applied or practical base appropriate for users of grazing land including farmers and graziers.

The title 'Pastures for Production and Protection' reflects a change in thinking. We can no longer look at pastures, native or sown, merely as a resource to use for increasing production levels. Long-term community needs and standards require that we have a responsibility to ensure that the land and water resource is used in a sustainable way for both our benefit and that of future generations.

This Conference looks at some of the land use issues that pasture can affect in either positive or negative ways. It looks at the soil-plant-animal complex to see what progress has been achieved in the last decade. We will see new pasture technology that utilises perennial and short-term forage legumes to improve soil fertility for crops and pasture. We will see and hear about better species selection and management practices that limit weed invasion, soil erosion and soil acidification.

The Conference also recognises the important role that pasture plants can play in stabilising and rehabilitating mined areas in central Queensland.

The Tropical Grassland Society of Australia Inc. that is facilitating this event was formed in November 1962 with the aim *to promote the science of grassland farming*. It was formed at the time of the 'Pasture Revolution' where there was a major push to supplement or replace the deficiencies of native pasture. The Society has evolved over time to a broader base to cater for the practical, grass-roots, technology development 'on the farm'.

Today, membership of the Society includes graziers and farmers, agri-business personnel, scientists, consultants, extension people, students and industry funding agencies. We produce a technical journal, *Tropical Grasslands*, as well as a newsletter, *TGS News & Views*. You will also find us on the internet. Membership details are available at the Conference. Please look us up.

I thank our sponsors for this year 2000 event. Our major sponsors are CSIRO Tropical Agriculture, Heritage Seeds, Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and the Department of Primary Industries, Queensland. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the support, over the years, of Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) which has sponsored our Annual TGS-MLA Pasture Award and encouraged the documentation of pasture experience and knowledge through our Occasional Publications.

My final thanks go to last year's President, Maurie Conway, who has worked tirelessly to organise this program, the speakers and the field tours for this Conference in Emerald.

Please enjoy the Conference.

Col Middleton
President
Tropical Grassland Society of Australia Inc.