



Project Snapshot

Land Manager Names:	Glenn & Sherree Nicholson
Location:	Moorine Rock, Shire of Yilgarn
Annual Rainfall (mm):	250-300 mm
Enterprise Mix:	Cropping and Livestock (sheep)
Soil Types/Vegetation Types:	Salmon Gums, Morrell and Mallee.

Key Messages

- **Currently salt is encroaching on once productive cropping land. The primary aim of this project was to reduce salt encroachment.**
- **Saltbush provides an additional feed source for stock and makes productive use of previously unproductive land**

The Story so far

Clearing of the original farming land began in the Yilgarn in the 1920's and continued into the 1960-70's when the higher, lighter land was cleared. As has been demonstrated in many parts of the Wheatbelt, land-clearing on a large-scale has had the effect of increasing the water table and salt issues on the valley floors.

In the 1970's, Whittington Interceptor Salt Affected Land Treatment Society Banks (W.I.S.A.L.T.S Banks) were implemented on the farm by Glenn's father. When designed correctly, the banks were shown to control water runoff and intercept shallow subsurface flows. As a result, the banks are believed to be effective in reducing waterlogging and aiding in the reclamation of marginally flat saline land. Glenn is now looking at removing some banks on the flatter country, leaving some higher banks for the occasional quick downpour.

In recent years salt encroachment combined with wind erosion, produced a need to retain precious topsoil. As a result, Glenn and Sherree saw the potential for saltbush to help alleviate the salt issue with the possibility of financial benefit from the additional stock feed being an added bonus.

Lessons learnt

We initially applied for 40,000 saltbush seedlings but received 22,500. This amount was enough for a family to plant although many farming jobs, like spraying, were put on hold whilst planting.

We should have acted 20 years ago. However, money was the main limiting factor.

We will now try cropping the area more instead of leaving it for pasture in an attempt to reduce moisture.

Keys to success

"Timing of planting will ensure a high success rate, we had a good amount of rain and went straight into planting. We had an optimal planting situation this year. When it rained we had to utilise the water, it did mean all our eggs were in the one basket, breaking the planting up would decrease this risk".

"Farmers in this area are very proactive. Our neighbours are all trying different techniques, it doesn't hurt to look over the fence to gather more ideas."

"Good seedling size is important; pot sizes could be larger for healthier plants".

Legacy of the project:

According to the Nicholson family the main focus with their farm was getting a crop off the land. Now, however, they recognise the need to be more forward-thinking and the importance of looking after the environment to get something out of it.

By receiving the funding from Wheatbelt NRM the Nicholson's were able to plant one large amount of seedlings instead of smaller plantings of 5,000 seedlings per year over a longer time frame. As Glenn says, "in theory we are four years ahead of ourselves".



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