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## Project Snapshot

**Project Name:**

**Wind Erosion Control on sandy soils**

**Objective of the project:**

The aim of the project is to provide protection to a sandy site while also producing fodder for sheep for short grazing periods. A variety of shrubs will be grown in rows in between these rows there will be a planting of perennial grasses and deep rooted annual legumes.  
**Robert Grylls**

**Name**

**Farm name**

**Location**

**Catchment group**

**Rainfall**

**Farm size**

**Enterprise mix**

**Soil types**

**Newcourt Farm**

**Bencubbin**

**Lake Wallambin**

**300 mm**

**4400 ha**

**75% crop, 25% sheep**

**Heavy Clays, Wodjil sands, medium grey sands**



## Getting involved

Rob had received funding in an earlier round from Wheatbelt NRM and was keen to trial this on another part of the farm to see how it went in comparison to the earlier round site.

Rob saw the need to improve the land use on one of the paddocks on his farm, because of the wind erosion risk it had, as well as the reduction in production.

## What has happened

Rob has had the chance to plant forage shrubs and perennial grasses, "it will change the rotation and the way we use the paddock, Rob said. "I also hope that it improves the productivity". The most important change for Rob has been 'the ability to try sub-tropical perennial grasses and fodder shrubs'.

A key achievement for Rob was that he was able to revegetate an area of a paddock to reduce the impact of wind erosion. The section of the paddock was unproductive and did not grow a reasonable crop. As forage shrubs have been used, the uneconomical area of the paddock has now become valuable in providing feed for stock. It is also important that this forage is available in Autumn when other feed sources are scarce on the farm.

## In the Beginning

Rob planted a range of fodder shrubs, using the Chatfield's planter, in belts that consist of 3 rows that run in an east to west direction. The centre row is a range of Acacia species and the other 2 rows consist of a mix of weeping tagasaste, *Rhagodia preissii*, old man salt bush, river saltbush and emu bush. The alleys in between each of the fodder shrub belts were planted to a mix of sub-tropical grasses; Signal Grass (20%), Gatton Panic (60%) and Rhodes grass (20%) (Evergreen Northern Mix) at 6kg/ha. The fodder shrub seedlings were planted in July and the perennial sub-tropical grasses were sown in October after the alleys had been sprayed twice to remove winter weeds and so increase moisture retention on the site.

Right: harvesting triticale over an established perennial pasture

## What was learnt

Through being involved in this project Rob has improved his knowledge on what fodder shrubs will work well on his farm as well as how to effectively seed and manage sub-tropical perennial grasses. "I have had to make some changes to the rotation and the grazing management that I employ but that's probably about it in regards to managing the project area", said Rob.

"A rainfall event before sowing the perennial grasses (in spring) can help provide the sub-tropical perennial grasses with more suitable conditions for germination", Rob stated. "Next time I would sow it into a thicker cereal stubble as well". This would ensure that there is some anchored ground cover in the paddock to stabilise the soil until the sub-tropical perennial grasses have established.

"The success of the project has been a little unexpected", Rob stated. "The increase in summer rainfall has made the perennial grasses and fodder shrub system more successful and viable".

"Not only can sub-tropical perennial grasses produce a lot of sheep feed in the north eastern wheat belt but Wodjil soils can be productive".

## Looking forward

"I will use the paddock for autumn pasture feed for stock, when feed is scarce on other parts of the farm" said Rob. "I also plan on sowing a cereal into it next winter but I am also thinking of sowing serradella to provide nitrogen for the perennials".



Published: August 2013



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