

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Inc. is an independent community-based group providing leadership for NRM across the Avon River Basin. We support landholders to look after their properties with initiatives that are beneficial to the environment and help to ensure the future profitability of the farming land of the region. If you would like to find out more about our organisation please visit our website above.

We have secured funding through the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund for projects to address the degradation and risks to biodiversity assets within the East and South Mortlock River catchments.

HEALTHY BUSHLAND PROVIDES A NUMBER OF BENEFITS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY INCLUDING:

EROSION CONTROL

Both erosion and salinity are significant issues for farmland across the Wheatbelt and are associated with the loss of deep-rooted plants that stabilise the soil and lower the water table. A 2006 study of soil erosion across Australia by the University of Newcastle found that the Western Australian Wheatbelt is losing an average of 6.6 tonnes of soil per hectare each year. This significantly lowers the potential productivity of farmland.

SALINITY CONTROL

The salt store under the soils of the Wheatbelt is one of the largest in Australia. With fewer deep-rooted plants in the landscape, the water table rises and brings with it the salts that are normally lower in the soil profile. Estimates suggest that \$130 million is lost in agricultural production across Australia each year, due to rising salinity.

INCREASED DIVERSITY OF POLLINATORS

Pollinators are vital for many crops and pollinator numbers are in decline across the world. By increasing the diversity of pollinators in a system this acts as a level of collective insurance in case the primary pollinators are lost from the Wheatbelt.

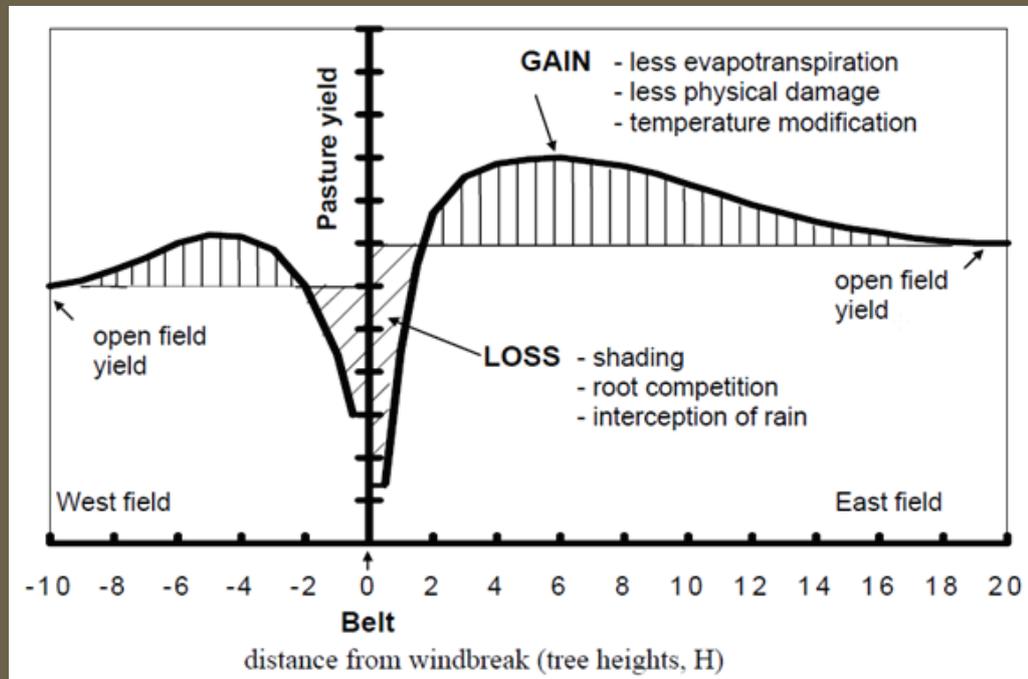
SOIL MICROORGANISMS

Healthy natural bushland contains beneficial mycorrhizal fungi that colonise the roots of many plants. This colonisation allows the plants to access nutrients in the soil that are otherwise unavailable and increase the moisture retention of the soils. These relationships are also important for conventional crop species, improving the health and nutrition of the crop and reducing the necessity for high fertiliser inputs. Having healthy native bushland on your property increases the presence of mycorrhizal fungi.

SHELTER FOR CROPS

Crops growing directly alongside remnant vegetation will suffer from shading, root competition and reduced moisture, resulting in smaller plants. Studies through Australia and the world, however, have shown that as you go further in to the paddock crop growth increases well above rates found in a completely open field due to decreased evapotranspiration, less physical damage and modification of the localised temperature. Revegetating corridors between remnant patches can not only benefit native species, but also benefit the productivity of your paddock.

The image below, taken from the West Victorian dairy industry development body (WestVic Dairy)



SHELTER FOR STOCK

Effective shelter can reduce losses of shorn sheep and lambs by 50%, while increasing wool production by 31% and live-weight by up to 21%.

Another benefit is that some studies have shown off-shear wethers can require only 1/3 of the supplementary feed when compared with unsheltered stock.

Working with your neighbours will greatly increase your chances of success for feral control, weed control and effectively connecting remnant vegetation.

This project is also designed to assist landholders to control feral animals on their properties, which will help to protect stock and crops from the impact of rabbits and foxes.

We receive funding through the Australian Government under the expectation that all of our project activities involve partnerships with landholders. All activities must have a 50/50 split of input between Wheatbelt NRM funding and landholders' in-kind contribution. The landholders' in kind contribution is generally in the form of conducting the management activities.

We have a number of short films of some of the projects that we have done in the past on our website:

<http://www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au/videos>

Some useful information on the economic benefits of native vegetation can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/1SZLq6a>

Supported by:



If you are interested in receiving assistance from us to protect the bush on or near your property please contact:

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