



sustainable
grazing
on saline lands

productive and sustainable
ways to use saltland

LandWater & Wool

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Australian Government
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another australian wool innovation
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THE SUSTAINABLE GRAZING ON SALINE LANDS (SGSL) Producer Network in WA

For livestock producers in WA, dryland salinity has been a major environmental and farm management issue for a number of years.

A recent survey* found that salinity directly affects up to 78 per cent of WA woolgrowers, compared to 41 per cent of woolgrowers nationally, so it's no coincidence that the greatest interest and participation by livestock producers in the *Land, Water & Wool Sustainable Grazing on Saline Lands (SGSL)* sub-program can be found in WA.

Grazing is one of the few activities that can make productive and profitable use of saline land, while also reducing the negative impacts on the environment, and on property owners and managers.

SGSL is helping livestock producers better understand and manage their saline land through a range of activities.

There are now 61 groups comprising 70 sites participating in the WA SGSL Producer Network from Geraldton in the north to Esperance in the south, with numerous on-farm research sites located throughout the northern, central and eastern wheatbelt and Great Southern regions.

WA is also host to key SGSL National Research Sites which are investigating profitable and sustainable grazing on saline land as well as optimising the saltland pasture system for practical and profitable use. These sites will ensure strong scientific evidence about the relationships between saline land, pasture productivity, animal performance, system economics and environmental impacts.

SGSL is an initiative of Australian Wool Innovation Limited and Land & Water Australia. It includes financial support from Meat & Livestock Australia, as well as CSIRO and the Department of Agriculture of WA and key agencies in the States.

**Land, Water & Wool
Best Practice Survey, 2003*

Case Study:

Research to fill the summer feed gap – and kick goals for the environment

Maximising liveweight gain and wool production of Merino wethers while alleviating the threat of salinity is the focus of an SGSL Producer Network project hosted by central wheatbelt producer Deane Aynsley (pictured).

“We wanted an option to keep this land within our animal production system whilst preventing it from becoming more saline,” he said. “This project gives us that opportunity.”

The Aynsleys farm 8000 hectares in the Beverley shire. “We are a typical wheatbelt mixed enterprise property,” Deane said. “We are mainly dedicated to sheep (prime lambs and wool) however due to the drought our numbers are down and it has been difficult to build them up again. That is one of the reasons I am keen to see perennial pastures introduced as they will give us some feed during the summer.”

SGSL research team member John-Paul Collins said local growers report salt appears to come to the surface particularly after wet summers and this is why growing sub-tropical perennials could be very helpful. “Many of the farmers in this area noticed that the saline land rapidly expanded on their farms after the January 2000 floods. These summer flood events contributed large amounts of water to the groundwater when there were no plants actively growing in the paddocks to use it and therefore prevent a further rise in the water table,” John-Paul said.

Deane agrees with this theory. “We noticed that major salinity onset occurred after the wet years of 1998-2000, indicating that salts stored in the water table had been brought closer to the surface as a result of the higher rainfall,” he said.

“It is all about halting the spread of salinity whilst maintaining the health and production of the areas. We need to explore the options in dealing with land that has this degree of salinity other than taking it out of production and into trees,” he said.



Photo courtesy: Land, Water & Wool

WA Producer Network – growers getting involved

The SGSL Producer Network projects in WA aim to turn saline land into a profitable asset using the practical ideas and know-how of producers, combined with the technical knowledge and experience of many of Australia's leading salinity research experts.

The research funded through the SGSL Producer Network is relevant to groups' particular needs as well as being appropriate to their local conditions, knowledge and experience. Wherever possible, SGSL is working directly with existing land management, production and other groups to initiate the research, with a local support person (Landcare facilitator, project officer, etc) to assist them with project development, monitoring and extension.

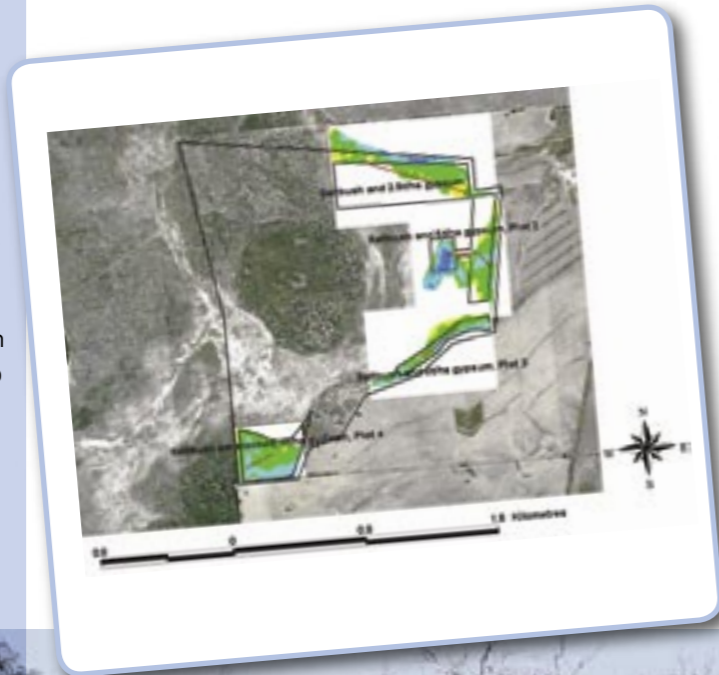
Collectively, the 70 WA project sites are contributing not only to improving local knowledge and interest, but are part of a national network of more than 120 group-based projects, all aiming to improve skills in saltland management and improving the value of saltland grazing to the whole farm business.

Understanding what is happening

A partnership between producers and researchers is developed and maintained through the process of forming initial ideas, collecting data, interpreting data and sharing the outcomes with other people and organisations with an interest in sustainable grazing on saline lands.

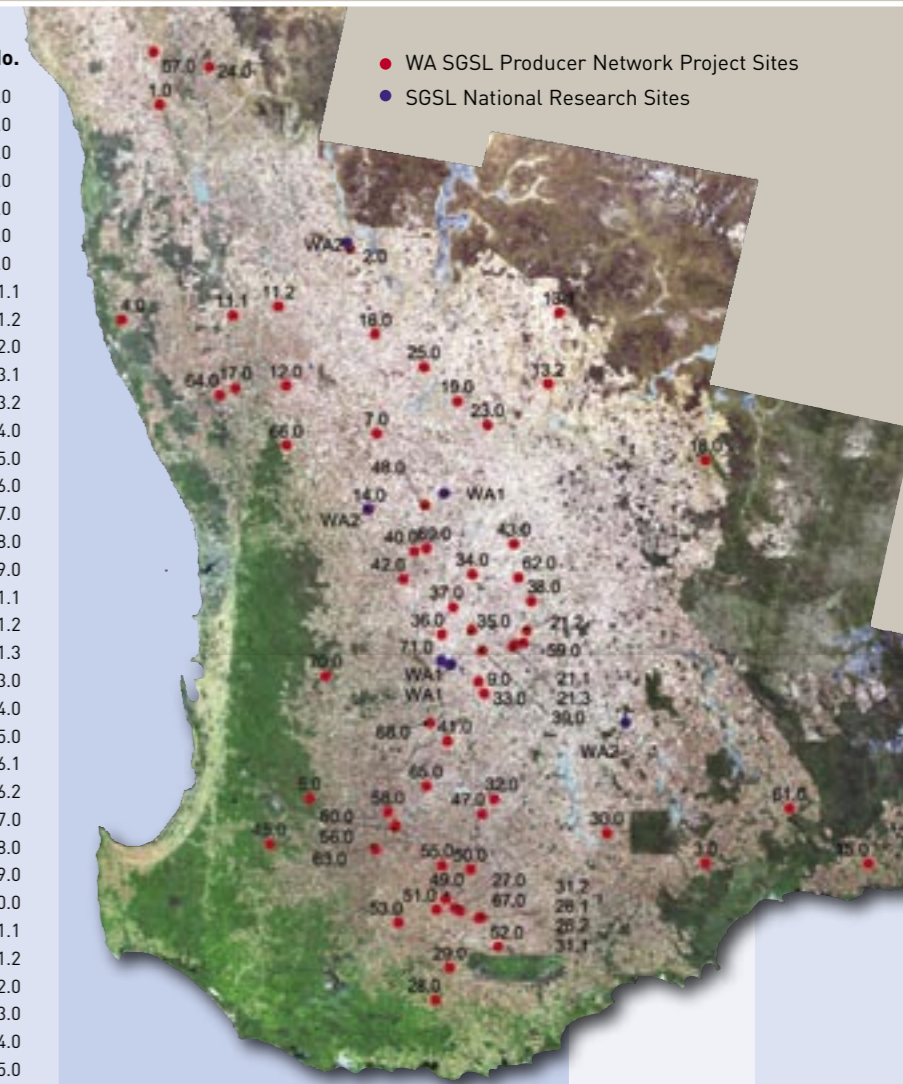
Data from SGSL Producer Network sites is collected using rapid, consistent and straightforward methods. Enough data is collected at each site to provide meaningful and quantitative information to verify, as well as validating anecdotal observations made on each of the trial sites.

Every site has been 'characterised' to provide a detailed description of the landscape and system being examined by producers and project teams. Site characteristics include soil salinity, site location, soil characterisation and hydrological features, which are included on site maps (see example below) as an overlay of the salinity management system being trialed as part of the research.



SGSL Producer Network Group

SGSL Producer Network Group	Location	No.
Mingenew Irwin Group	Mingenew	1.0
Liebe group	Wubin	2.0
Fitzgerald Biosphere Group	Jacup	3.0
Evergreen Group	Badgingarra	4.0
West Arthur LCDC	Darkan	5.0
Tin Dog Creek Catchment Group	Dowerin	7.0
Facey Group	Wickepin	9.0
Moora-Miling Pasture Improvement Group	Moora	11.1
Moora-Miling Pasture Improvement Group	Moora	11.2
Yerecoin-Piawaning LCDC	Moora	12.0
Ningham Farm Focus Group	Mukinbudin	13.1
Ningham Farm Focus Group	Mukinbudin	13.2
WANTFA Farming Systems	Meckering	14.0
Jerdacuttup Grazing Group	Ravensthorpe	15.0
Ballidu Woolpro Group	Ballidu	16.0
West Gillingarra Koojan LCDC	Moora	17.0
Yilgarn LCDC	Southern Cross	18.0
Yeelanna Catchment Group	Trayning	19.0
Gorge Rock Salties	Corrigin	21.1
Gorge Rock Salties	Corrigin	21.2
Gorge Rock Salties	Corrigin	21.3
South Trayning Catchment Group	Trayning	23.0
Morawa Farm Improvement Group	Morawa	24.0
Koorda LCDC	Koorda	25.0
Hamilla Hill Catchment Group	Cranbrook	26.1
Hamilla Hill Catchment Group	Cranbrook	26.2
Tambellup Noongar Land Association	Tambellup	27.0
Upper Hay Sub-catchment Group	Mount Barker	28.0
Lake Matilda Sub Catchment Group	Mount Barker	29.0
Range Road Catchment Group	Pingerup	30.0
Lake Toolbrunup Catchment Group	Tambellup	31.1
Lake Toolbrunup Catchment Group	Tambellup	31.2
Nairibin Saltland Enhancement Group	Dumbleyung	32.0
Facey Group	Wickepin	33.0
South Yoting Catchment Group Inc.	Quairading	34.0
Kunjin Woolpro Group	Corrigin	35.0
Bulyee Catchment Group	Corrigin	36.0
Jubuk-Wogerlin Alliance	Corrigin	37.0
Kurrenkutten Lakers	Corrigin	38.0
Bullaring Valley Flatties	Corrigin	39.0
Conallan Creek Catchment Group	Quairading	40.0
Narrogin LCDC/Normans Lake Catchment Group	Narrogin	41.0
Morbinning Catchment Group	Morbinning	42.0
Yerapin Catchment Group	Bruce Rock	43.0
East Woop Woop	Boyp Brook	45.0
Jinkas Hill LCDC	Badgebup	47.0
Cunderdin Hill West Catchment Group	Cunderdin	48.0
Pindellup Catchment Group	Tambellup	49.0
Murdong Pools	Tambellup	50.0
Upper Hay Sub-catchment Group	Tambellup	51.0
Camel Lake Sub catchment Group	Tambellup	52.0
Kojonup LCDC - Ryans Brook Catchment	Kojonup/Cranbrook	53.0
Katanning Creek Catchment Group	Katanning	55.0



SGSL Producer Network Group

SGSL Producer Network Group	Location	No.
Beaufort Flats (sodic soils)	Woodanilling	56.0
Woogoondy Farm Improvement Group	Mullewa	57.0
Beaufort Flats (perennials)	Woodanilling	58.0
Gorge Rock Salties	Corrigin	59.0
Beaufort Flats (mixed)	Woodanilling	60.0
Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network	Ravensthorpe	61.0
South Yarding Catchment Group	Bruce Rock	62.0
Kojonup LCDC - Lower 54 Creek Catchment	Kojonup	63.0
Kojan-Gillingarra LCDC	Moora	64.0
Wagin LCDC	Wagin	65.0
Solomon Yulgan Catchment Group	Bolgart	66.0
Tambellup LCDC	Tambellup	67.0
Narrogin LCDC	Narrogin	68.0
Hommajelly Creek Catchment Group	Quairading	69.0
Wandering Productivity Group	Wandering	70.0
Woodabulling Catchment Group	Yealering	71.0

It's not secret salinity business – it's the detail that matters...

An important research outcome for each SGSL Producer Network site in WA, and for the producer group and research teams involved, is the on-going collection of on-site data.

Copies of detailed soil salinity monitoring, pasture and livestock assessment data along with other observations and notes collected by the group is kept in a paddock diary, housed in a special storage box designed uniquely for the SGSL Producer Network research sites.

On-line resources

Land, Water & Wool
www.landwaterwool.gov.au
Department of Agriculture
www.agric.wa.gov.au
CRC for Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity
www.crcsalinity.com
Australia's National Dryland Salinity Program
www.ndsp.gov.au

SGSL - productive and sustainable ways to use saltland

SGSL is aiming to achieve:

- Improved production and profit from grazing saline land;
- Better environmental outcomes from saline land; and
- More pride for producers who have saline land on their properties.

SGSL is looking at management options for saline land, including new pasture mixes and grazing management strategies, to help producers make more informed decisions about their salt-affected land.

Wherever possible, SGSL is working directly with existing groups of livestock producers already participating in local initiatives, such as Woolpro, Landcare, etc. A network committee has been established in WA made up of local producers with experience in saltland agronomy and a representative from lead agencies.

For further information about the SGSL Producer Network in WA, and the wider *Land, Water & Wool* initiative, please refer to the contact section on this information sheet.

SGSL information resources:

SGSL has a number of products and guides containing further information on dryland salinity, the program and its projects which are either free or available for purchase.

These include:

- *Saltland Pastures in Australia: A Practical Guide.*
Barrett-Lennard E. (2003).
Product code: PR 030 563.
- *Productivity Solutions to Salinity Management (2003).*
Product code: PR 030 508.
- *SGSL Projects and Products (2004).*
Product code: PF 030 608.
- *SGSL Insights (case study series).*
Product Code: PK 040 658.

To order these publications, contact CanPrint on freecall (1800) 776 616 and quote the relevant product code.

A two-day *EDGEnetwork™* course *Making a Profit from Saline Land* has also been developed by SGSL and is delivered in WA by the Kondinin Group. For further information regarding the course, visit the website:

www.edgenetwork.com.au

or contact

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