



Incorporating brushwood and improved pastures



Project Snapshot

Land Managers:	Ray Fulwood
Property Size:	2200 ha
Location:	Southern Brook
Annual Rainfall (mm):	390 mm
Enterprise Mix:	Crop 100%
Soil Types:	Gravelly sand

Key Messages

- **Serradellas are well suited to sandy soils and can grow good biomass even in dry years;**
- **Aim for good seed set of serradella in year one to set your paddock seed bank up for life;**
- **Learn from past experiences and try again and**
- **Brushwood can offer an alternative farm income if harvested.**

This project is supported by Wheatbelt NRM, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

Getting involved

Ray Fulwood is a member of the Southern Brook Landcare Group and was asked by the group's coordinator at the time whether he was interested in applying for funding through the Soil Conservation Incentives Program to reduce the impact of wind erosion on one of his sandy paddocks. Ray was keen and decided that he would try alleys of brushwood and some annual and perennial pastures.

The plantings

After a knockdown, Ray seeded the Ballards Serramix at 9kg/ha in May 2010. This consisted of Santorini Yellow Serradella and Margurita Pink Serradella seed with Cadiz pod (soft seeded Pink Serradella). Then in mid July the brushwood was planted between the pasture alleys in wide-spaced belts by volunteers who were on a team building exercise. In spring 2011 Ray also planted Panic grass, a sub-tropical perennial grass, at 1kg/ha down one of the alleys in between the brushwood to see how it would persist.

The trial hasn't been overly successful but Ray puts this down to the dry season in 2010 when the pastures were planted into the sandy soil. The brushwood seems to be doing okay and Ray has cropped the alleys in 2011 and 2012. However Ray stated, "The most important change was that there was a good legume stand in the drought year as the serradella managed to produce some good biomass. Unfortunately it didn't set much seed as it was a harsh finish to the year".

Lessons Learnt

Ray said, "There hasn't really been any change to the way that I manage the land, I just crop in between the brushwood alleys. It is a little more difficult to manage but it isn't too hard really".

The trial wasn't as successful as Ray had hoped with the perennials, but it hasn't deterred Ray from trialling more perennials in the future. If

Ray was to participate in the project again he would try a bit harder with the perennial grasses.

"One thing that was an improvement because of the trial, was that the paddock produced its best crop after the serradella", said Ray. The reason for this is unknown, but one possible explanation is that the serradella produced an organic source of nitrogen for the crop.

Looking forward

"As a result of being involved in the trial I'm now trying summer cropping. I am going to plant some millet, sorghum and cow peas", says Ray. As he has some leftover Panic grass seed he will also give this another go. Ray mentioned that what he tried on his place could be tried by other farmers in other areas and that results would be better with more favourable weather conditions.

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www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au

Wheatbelt NRM
75 York Road
PO Box 311
Northam WA 6401

Phone: (08) 9670 3100
Fax: (08) 9670 3140
Email: info@wheatbeltnrm.org.au