

Media Release



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Farmer sees perennials as the solution to his climate change problem

NSW farmer Philip Bush has planted a mixture of perennials ready to battle serrated tussock – a weed now threatening his property's productivity.

Drier winters and out-of-season summer rainfall combined with several years of drought has seen the serrated tussock begin to thrive on Philip's 'Chatsbury' property near Goulburn.

The serrated tussock is spreading and out competing the native pastures which Philip has utilised in the steeper and rocker parts of his property.

"The native pastures have been terrific for grazing but I had no alternative to lose them, as the only way to get rid of the tussock was through spraying," Phil explained.

"However, the long-term challenge is to remove the tussock and find something more competitive to replace it under a changing climate that is becoming drier."

Philip has chosen a mix of phalaris, cockfoot, subclover and white clovers to complement the lucerne he has already planted to provide year round feed. He established the mix earlier in the year by direct drilling with a rock hopper after an initial winter spray with round up.

"Depending on rainfall, I hope to graze these newly-established pastures in spring. Last year, we didn't get rain until Christmas so the initial grazing was delayed," Philip said.

"This new mix is part of our pasture establishment program and currently we have the property at about one-third improved pastures and two thirds native pastures."

The amount of lucerne on the property has also increased to help Philip finish off his lambs.

"We tend to wean the lambs onto the grass-based pastures to let them settle and then move them onto the lucerne during November to finish. Lucerne allows us to turn off lambs quickly at about 48 kilograms lightweight," Philip explained.

"I think the challenges occur when grazing perennials species is when there is a flourish of growth – which hasn't been much of an issue these past few seasons. The way around is to put in place a grazing strategy that makes the most of the feed available.

"At this stage, I think perennials will help us beat the tussock problem. It seems to be working so far but it is still a work in progress."

A more in depth article on Philip's approach to combating serrated tussock can be found in the June edition of the Landmark sponsored *Future Farm* magazine, which showcases personal stories of farm innovation in the use of perennials.

Copies of *Future Farm* magazine can be downloaded from: www.futurefarmcrc.com.au/publications or email gmadson@futurefarmcrc.com.au for free subscription.

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