

# Genie provides online salinity solutions



ABOVE: The Saltland Genie website provides farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to turn their salt-affected land into profit.

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Kondinin Group

**F**inding the right solutions for tackling your salinity problem can now be found on one easy-to-use website – the *Saltland Genie*.

The website is the result of almost seven years of research into sustainable farming on salt-affected land and has been brought to life by the FFI CRC.

The new *Saltland Genie* website, [www.saltlandgenie.org.au](http://www.saltlandgenie.org.au) is the one-stop shop for farmers, agronomists and others tackling salinity.

## key points

- The new *Saltland Genie* website will provide farmers, agronomists and other land managers with the information they need to manage salinity
- By answering a few simple questions farmers and extension officers can determine the best management strategy for their salt-affected paddocks
- The website includes research papers, case studies, videos and farmer stories as well as an interactive forum.

The interactive, easy-to-navigate, site provides customised, on-farm recommendations on how to make more money from salt-affected land.

FFI CRC researcher Dr Nick Edwards, South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) says *Saltland Genie* is the first of a new generation of land management websites that allows users to quickly bypass irrelevant information and get the answers and information they want.

"The site has a fresh and modern design, but more importantly it is well laid-out with farmers able to quickly find the information they are looking for," Dr Edwards said.

"Visitors to the website can go straight to the 'Your Saltland: Genie's Advice' section and by answering four simple questions about their property can find out which of a possible 11 solutions is suited to their situation."

The questions relate to region, rainfall, the severity of the salinity and waterlogging, and the motivation for seeking a remedy – productivity and/or profit. The proposed solutions are diverse ranging from excluding grazing through to establishing saltbush, salt-tolerant grasses and legumes.

As well as providing advice on the most suitable pasture options and how to best manage salt-affected land, *Saltland Genie* contains one of the largest information collections about Australian dryland salinity, in the website's 'Genie's Library' section.

## Collaboration proves fruitful

*Saltland Genie*, and the 11 saltland solutions are the result of a huge body of research and development carried out by the successful national *Sustainable Grazing on Saline Lands* (SGSL) initiative between 2001-07.

Dr Edwards currently leads FFI CRC's *Saltland Knowledge Exchange* project and was previously the national coordinator of the SGSL research sites.

"A lot of really useful and practical information on managing saltland came out of the SGSL initiative and we want to make sure people who need this information can get hold of it easily and use it by having a single, credible source of information," Dr Edwards said.

## Information at your fingertips

*Saltland Genie* users can view research papers, case studies, videos and stories from farmers that provide scientific and personal insights into how salinity can be managed to boost productivity and improve the environment.

"The website is even able to provide farmers with knowledge of what work is being done on salinity in their area by accessing the 'What's Happening Where' section," Dr Edwards said.

"You click onto whichever State you are in and a map will come up outlining all the research, farmer trials and case studies



The 'Advice' section guides farmers as to which, out of 11 possible solutions, is the best way to tackle salinity on their property.

relevant to your district – and this will be added to as work continues.”

The resources section of the website includes other information applicable to the whole of Australia along with other material such as an electronic version of the *SALTdeck* plant species identification cards produced by SGSL. The 50 individual cards cover common grasses, legumes, herbs, shrubs, rushes and trees associated with saltland or used in saltland rehabilitation.

Each card has pictures of the plant to help identification, along with a description, information on its value, growing conditions and salt tolerance.

### Interact and stay informed

The interactive features of *Saltland Genie* complement the wealth of digital



The 'Explorer' section provides farmers with a range of resources on salinity including research papers, case studies, photographs, videos and farmer stories.

information on the site. For those farmers who have a unique problem or would just rather talk directly to an expert they can. By clicking on the 'Interactive' tab and then 'Forum', farmers can post a question so that one of the *Saltland Genie* team can promptly reply.

The forum also allows farmers to interact with each other – share their stories, experiences and solutions.

### Getting back to basics

For those land managers who are new to tackling salinity, the 'Saltland Uni' section covers seven units outlining the basics of salinity, its history in Australia, its effect on livestock and the environment, the economics of rehabilitating saltland and a glossary.

### A dynamic resource

The *Saltland Genie* website is regularly updated with the latest results from the ongoing saltland research and development by the FFI CRC and its partners.

*Saltland Genie* is an initiative of the Land, Water and Wool program and the FFI CRC, both of which receive funding from Australian Wool Innovation (AWI).

For more information visit: [www.saltlandgenie.org.au](http://www.saltlandgenie.org.au)

### More information

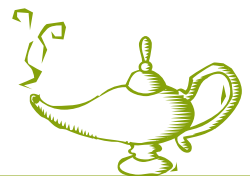
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For those new to salinity problems the 'Saltland Uni' provides a masterclass in the basics of salinity including its history in Australia and the current status of the problem.



## Saltland Genie: out of the bottle

User-friendly, thorough and very impressive' were the words Dan Ferguson of the Avon Catchment Council (ACC) used to describe the *Saltland Genie* website.

Employed as the ACC's Sustainable Agriculture Program Manager, Dan recently attended a *Saltland Genie* workshop and was suitably impressed with the innovative resource.

"I think the level of information available was excellent – there really is just about all you need to know about salinity on the site."

"I particularly like the land capabilities assessment, whereby answering a few simple questions, people can find out the best options for dealing with their salt problem.

"I foresee *Saltland Genie* as being a really useful resource for people at the coal face

of salinity – extension officers who are giving information direct to farmers," Dan said.

"Before they go out to the paddock, or after they come back, they can use the website to find the best and necessary management actions for their client."

As a part of the workshop, the group travelled to some salt-affected paddocks south of Doodlakine, to test the website's accuracy. After assessing the paddocks, Dan entered the information into the website.

"It returned the recommendations I thought it would," Dan said.

"Because the website is continually being updated it will be a great site for people like myself, to jump onto and check out the latest developments when it comes to salinity in Australia." ↴