

The Leucaena Network



Promoting the responsible development of leucaena in sustainable and productive grazing and agroforestry systems to build stronger rural communities.

Introduction

The Leucaena Network was formed in July 2000 by a group of producers and industry representatives who wished to progress the beef industry with the adoption of a perennial legume and address environmental concerns associated with leucaena at the time.

The organisation's aim is to "promote the responsible development of leucaena in productive and sustainable ecosystems to build stronger rural communities".

In 2000, the Network developed The Leucaena Code of Practice to promote responsible management of the legume in response to the environmental concerns.

Today, The Leucaena Network is a leading producer group in the grass-fed beef industry across northern Australia. Members include livestock producers, leucaena and pasture seed growers, industry representatives, researchers and extension personnel. The Network remains true to its message, continuing to focus on the responsible management of the legume while working to promote the industry and provide current and relevant information and research to its members.

The release of the psyllid-tolerant leucaena variety Redlands has presented producers across Northern Australia with the opportunity to benefit from the increased productivity provided by leucaena.

To this end, the Network is working closely with government, industry representatives, Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and producers to ensure the Leucaena Code of Practice addresses the current needs of the grazing industry.

A specific Northern Territory Leucaena Code of Practice has been developed, in conjunction with the Northern Territory Government, the Pastoral Lands Board, industry representative bodies and producers.

The current Code of Practice for your State or Territory may be accessed from leucaena.net or from the Network's Executive Officer at admin@leucaena.net.

The Network encourages membership to foster ongoing activities and research to assist the industry to prosper.

The Network continues to address the ongoing high demand for the provision of quality information and strategies for successful leucaena establishment for new producers and strives to provide established producers with research and extension information.

The Leucaena Network's information provision is its website, www.leucaena.net. Current information on Network activities and member information may also be accessed through the Network's Facebook site.

Research projects

The Leucaena Network has partnered with MLA to undertake several research and adoption projects. These include the MLA Donor Company (MDC) and MLA Producer Innovation Fast Track (PIFT) 'Redlands for Regions' establishment trials of the new psyllid-tolerant leucaena variety in north Queensland; and a Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) trial in the Wandoan, Central Queensland district to assess the impact of fertiliser on established leucaena and grass pastures. The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) provided the extension for these activities.

The Network facilitates an MLA funded PDS project in collaboration with the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industries and Resources (DPIR), to determine the most suitable leucaena variety and row spacing for the Douglas Daly region in the Northern Territory.

The Network continues to seek and assess improved strategies for the establishment, maintenance and management of leucaena as well as investigating potential value-adding activities for leucaena producers.

The Leucaena Code of Practice

Purpose of the Code

The Code aims to promote the responsible, sustainable and productive development of leucaena-grass pastures. The Code should be adopted by all producers and natural resource management agencies.

The Standard Leucaena Code of Practice

The key message of The Leucaena Code of Practice for producers is to plant leucaena ONLY if you intend to manage it and are prepared to accept responsibility to control leucaena that establishes outside the planted area on your property, including watercourses. Producers are advised that this can be achieved by adopting the following practices:

- Do not plant leucaena in areas where rivers, creeks and flood channels can disperse seed pods or seed. If leucaena becomes a restricted or regulated plant under future government legislation, growers must comply with the relevant requirements.
- Keep leucaena at least 20m away from external fence lines.
- Maintain a buffer strip of strong grass pasture between leucaena plantings and creeks or boundary fences.
- Fully fence leucaena paddocks to avoid the unlikely risk of stock spreading ripe seed.
- Graze or cut leucaena to keep it within the reach of animals and to minimise seed set.
- Chemically manage leucaena escapees with Access® (currently the only registered herbicide for controlling unwanted leucaena).
- Establish and manage vigorous grass in the inter-rows to:
 - provide competition to minimise establishment of volunteer leucaena seedlings
 - minimise the risk of seed being transported during heavy rain
 - productively utilise the fixed nitrogen that the system produces
 - maintain ground cover and prevent soil erosion.

- Maintain the practice of:
 - regularly monitoring creeks and major watercourses to detect any escaped leucaena seedlings and plants
 - controlling all plants detected adjacent to property boundaries on creek banks and other adjoining areas where cattle do not normally have access, and on public roadsides (after first obtaining a permit from Main Roads Department or Shire Council).
- Comply with local laws (weed declarations, etc.) and assist Local Government agencies to identify any escaped leucaena so that action can be taken to control it.
- Promote the responsible management of leucaena in accordance with this Code.
- Keep abreast of best-practice developments in the management of leucaena.

For further information regarding the Leucaena Code of Practice, please contact:

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The Leucaena Network**

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