

TAGASASTE INDUSTRY SEMINAR
SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

February 26th, 1988

Held at Dept. of Conservation and
Land Management, Como, WA.

Chaired by Ken Rotman
Rural Innovation Centre

Opening Remarks

The theme of the seminar was to address the past history, current research, and the future of the crop. Several Tagasaste growers that believe that it is time to join forces for mutual benefit. The seminar is to gain a better perspective on the current Tagasaste Industry, to determine whether it would be of value to form an Association.

Laurie Snook - Margaret River

Laurie indicated that the crop had not been grown commercially in WA except in the past few years. This is despite its 30year history, as previous attempts were only on small trial plots. He believes the lack of progress was that it was tried on marginal soils, with poor fencing and no fertilisers, in small acreages. He believes our responsibilities as an industry are to prevent diseases being imported on the seed, with a unified research co-ordination, with research on how far north Tagasaste can be grown, and how the crop responds to better soil and moisture conditions.

Dr. Chris Oldham - Martindale Research

Martindale has been pursuing research on the crop for the last 5 years. During that time there has research and experimentation on tagasaste from the basis of both plant and animal production. However, although much research had been done, there were so many avenues still to be pursued and it is only now that real definitive data is starting to emerge. When asked about the future of Martindale, Chris indicated that tagasaste was only one of other crops being used, and that research was, and had to be solely commercially dictated.

John Hemsley-CSIRO

Although the original accent of CSIRO work on Tagasaste was on plant establishment and growth, current research is in the area of its effect on animal production. CSIRO has found that there has been some difficulty with grazing the crop as it stands. Its effect pelletised is still not complete, together with research on its combination in feed mixes. The work he presented showed that Tagasaste and clover achieved better wool growth than pure clover under dry conditions, but the mix was not as productive on wool growth when rains are favourable. As with Martindale, future Tagasaste programs had to be commercial decisions. The Wool Board has just increased its sponsorship of Tagasaste programs at CSIRO. In future, he can see that groups/associations will sponsor particular research in which they have an interest.

John Cook - Dandaragan

John Cook has recently been awarded \$25000 by NSCP to develop a Tagasaste Harvester. His presentation was on the need to recognise that it would be in the best interests of the industry that standard tree shapes and planting configurations should be determined to make it easier for a harvester to be developed and operated. He is seeking advice from all growers on potential harvesting methods. He also introduced the idea of double/triple "rows" per row to increase the efficiency of mechanical harvesting.

Kerry Hawley - Dept Agriculture

Kerry discussed the projects at Bowelling and Bukerup. He felt that there was still no accurate data from the projects yet, as the information had still to be correlated statistically. Early results show that bark stripping was only evident in one location. He further sees that row fencing cannot be considered by commercial growers due to the cost. His most recent research shows that sheep may get yellowed fleece, with a poorer "feel" when grazed on Tagasaste, although no accurate tests had been done and and this preliminary data was disputed by other growers.

Steve Hill - Kimberley Seeds

Has been in Tagasaste industry since 1982. Because there was minimal information at the time, he has had to learn via experience, initially in planting techniques, then fertilisers, pesticides, etc. Wishes to see growers share information and work in liason with Seedsmen. As an example, the effect of seed scarification has an impact on the germinability of seed and the time of its germination, and growers must identify their priorities to Seedsmen in this regard. Tagasaste should also be registered under the Seed Act.

An Industry Association - John Cook

John Cook believes that it is time to form an Tagasaste Association. He believes that it is important for these main reasons:

- register of services collated
- standardisation of information
- lobby for greater research
- assessment of research priorities
- operate as unified voice to the public
- sponsor research as a body
- recommend standards & guidelines to new growers
- give respect to the industry
- legislate for registration under the seed act.
- increase communication on techniques to other growers

Discussion ensued on the opportunities to be part of other existing organisations, and the name of the Association.

There was unanimous approval for establishing such a group. As such, the meeting resolved that:

A broad based Steering Committee be formed with the view of proposing a Tagasaste Association and determine the structure and draft constitution of such an Association.

The members elected as part of the Steering Committee were John Cook(Chairman), Dr. Chris Oldham, Laurie Snook, Mike Lindsay, Harry Perkins and Ken Rotman.

Meeting ended approximately 4.15pm.