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STIRLING RANGE FUEL MOISTURE STUDY WP 19/73

Autumn-Winter Results

Pt.1 It does not matter how much rain fell as long as it was above two mm (2mm) the suspended fuel becomes saturated. The excess rain then runs off onto the soil.

Pt.2 Drying is very swift, drying from saturation to burning point 120% - 30% MC from one to two days.

Pt.3 Drying rate is mainly dependent on and duration of rainfall following saturation.

Pt.4 It appears to be too complex to apply a simple rainfall correction factor: this is because not being a litter layer which dries from above sequentially day by day, there is never a proportion of the fuel which is available for burning and a proportion which isn't.

In the suspended fuel it all dries at the same rate hence all is available for burning at the same time.

However, the drying rate below 30% is of great importance and it does not appear that it will be easily predicted by a rainfall correction factor based on amount of last rain and number of drying days.

The imprecision of a table of this nature added to the sensitivity of rate of spread to aerial moisture content rules it out as impractical.

The second phase of the experiment, that following moisture trends from Winter to Spring will incorporate an assessment on the use of hazard rods to indirectly predict moisture content.

A pilot study on this will be conducted in Manjimup during July.

RMJ. 1/7/74