

THE LEUCAENA NETWORK

"Promotes the responsible establishment and management of combined leucaena grass pastures."

Code of Practice for Managing the Weed Potential of Grazed Leucaena Pastures

Preamble

Leucaena (*Leucaena leucocephala* subspecies *glabrata*), when planted with improved grass species provides a sustainable grazing system in northern Australia. Leucaena has been grown commercially in Queensland since the late 1970s. The Queensland Government recognises that leucaena is a valuable forage when managed properly, but it constitutes a threat to the natural environment if not contained in those areas in which it has been planted, or controlled in those areas that it has invaded.

A Code of Practice for growing Leucaena was first adopted in 2000; this update aims to reinforce its adoption.

Weed Potential

The most significant weed trait of leucaena is its potential to form dense thickets in ungrazed areas over time. Any ripe seed that escapes flower-eating caterpillars and bruchid beetles can stay viable in the soil for several years.

The current major weed impact comes from ungrazed 'common' leucaena (*L. leucocephala* subspecies *leucocephala*). This has been naturalised in coastal and urban areas of Northern Australia for more than 100 years - long before the release of commercial cultivars for grazing. However, it must be noted that commercial cultivars of subspecies *glabrata* have similar weed potential. When planted as ungrazed ornamentals in urban areas, plants can contribute to the weed threat. Commercial leucaena pastures **must not be allowed** to contribute to the weed problem.

It is recommended that Leucaena be grown to The Leucaena Network Code of Practice.

Purpose of a Code of Practice

The Code of Practice (CODE) targets those features of leucaena that pre-dispose it to weediness and advocates management to limit their impact. It aims to promote the responsible, sustainable and productive development of combined leucaena / grass pastures. It is essential that the CODE be adopted by all landowners who have leucaena planted on their properties.

The planting of leucaena for any purpose other than as highly managed and well contained forage is **not** supported by industry bodies and Government agencies, and should be discouraged. This **CODE** is supported by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

Aims of the Code of Practice

- Avoid planting leucaena near potential weed risk zones
- Minimise seed set in grazed stands
- Diminish the risk of live seed dispersal
- Control escaped plants from grazed stands

Principles of the Code of Practice

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.

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/seed. If leucaena becomes a restricted or regulated plant under a Wild Rivers declaration, growers must comply with the relevant Wild Rivers Code*
- *Keep leucaena at least 20 m 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 minimise seed set*
- *Establish and manage vigorous grass in the inter-rows to:*
 - *provide competition to minimise establishment of volunteer leucaena seedlings*
 - *minimize the risk of seed being transported during heavy rain*
 - *productively utilize fixed nitrogen the system produces*
 - *maintain ground cover and prevent soil erosion*
- *Maintain the practice of:*
 - (a) *regularly monitoring creeks and major watercourses to detect any escaped leucaena seedlings and plants*
 - (b) *Controlling all plants detected adjacent to property boundaries*
 - *on creek banks and other adjoining areas where cattle do not normally have access*
 - *on public roadsides (after first obtaining a permit from Main Roads 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.*

CODE updated June 9, 2010

Join The Leucaena Network

to find out more about the establishment and management of leucaena pastures

Contact: Kevin Graham, Executive Officer

Mobile 0418 411 351 or leucaenanetwork@bigpond.com



This Code of Practice is endorsed by AgForce and its development was financially supported by MLA