

THE WEED SOCIETY / OF NEW SOUTH WALES

c/o Department of Agriculture, Box 36, G.P.O., Sydney

No. 67/2 MAY, 1967

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The next General Meeting of the Society will be held in the Conference Room, Department of Agriculture, Farrer Place, Sydney, at 7.15 p.m. on

WEDNESDAY, 17TH MAY, 1967.

The meeting will be preceded by a Buffet Tea in the Department's Cafeteria, commencing at 6 p.m.

ADDRESS: "Problems in the Control of Blackberries in Victoria"

SPEAKER: Mr. W.T. Parsons, Senior Research Officer, Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board, Melbourne.

Mr. Parsons, who is President of the Weed Society of Victoria, is one of Australia's leading weed scientists. An intensive programme of blackberry control in Victoria has encountered problems of blackberries resistant to 2,4,5-D. As Mr. Parsons has been involved in the research and field work with this problem, his talk will be of particular interest to this State.

This meeting has been arranged to coincide with the meeting of the Australian Weeds Committee set up by the Australian Agricultural Council. Most members are expected to attend our meeting.

Please note that visitors are welcome.

CATERING: We have to advise the caterers of the numbers attending the Buffet Tea on Monday morning 15th May. The cost of the tea, including refreshments will be \$1.50.

Please contact the President (K.R. Green) or the Treasurer (A.D. Mears) at the Department of Agriculture - 'Phone 20 536, Extension 338, or G.P.O. Box 36, Sydney - by 10 a.m. Monday 15th May, for Buffet Tea bookings.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Society is in its second year and can now claim to be well established. Our thanks go to our retiring President, Nelson Johnson, for his efforts in carrying us over the first year.

We still have our problems which we hope to steadily overcome. An earlier Newsletter and more members are priority projects. Every member can help in recruiting new members.

Following the discussions at the Annual General Meeting, an active Conference Sub-Committee has been appointed. It expects to be able to announce firm plans for a one-day conference in November.

The Programme sub-committee plans a meeting on Turf Weeds and is currently considering the remainder of the year's activities.

I look forward to seeing you regularly through the year.

KELVIN GREEN

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 1967

<u>PRESIDENT:</u>	K. R. Green
<u>IMMEDIATE</u>	
<u>PAST PRESIDENT:</u>	A. N. Johnson
<u>VICE PRESIDENT:</u>	K.A. Watson
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	P. Gregory
<u>TREASURER:</u>	A.D. Mears
<u>MEMBERS:</u>	J.T. Snelson P.F. Rylands
<u>CO-OPTED MEMBERS:</u>	B. G. Long P.W. Weiss

WHAT THE TREASURER SAYS

A number of members have not yet paid their 1967 subscriptions (\$4.00 ordinary members, \$10.00 corporate body members).

Prompt attention to outstanding dues is requested for efficient management of the Society.

WEED PROBLEMS OF THE SNOWY - MONARO REGION CONFERENCE-TOUR

Forty-seven delegates attended the two day conference and tour at Cooma on 7th and 8th April.

After the Mayor of Cooma, Ald. A.H. Johnson, had accorded the delegates a civic welcome, the Commissioner of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority, Sir William Hudson, opened the conference. Sir William said that the utilization of the Snowy Mountain's resources and the advances in agriculture which modern weed control has permitted, both contributed to the nation's development. It was therefore very appropriate that the Weed Society should select Cooma as the first country town in which to hold a conference.

Mr. R.W. Shelley, Regional Supervisor, Department of Agriculture, Goulburn, outlined the land use and weed problems of the region. Because 78 per cent of the land is rugged, steep or hilly and the rainfall in most of the agricultural areas is low, wool production is the dominant form of agricultural production. Of the 2,600,000 acres of rural holdings, only 344,000 acres have been improved by sowing grasses, clovers or lucerne. Dry autumns common to the area make pasture establishment difficult and give weeds a competitive advantage. Management after establishment should care for the crop so that thistles, barley grass or poa tussock do not over-run the pasture.

Dr. J.A. Carnahan, Senior Lecturer in Botany, Australian National University, discussed weeds of low fertility situations. On the Monaro, serrated tussock is the most serious weed. Because the tussock seedling needs light it can only establish on bare ground. Even native pastures which have always been lightly grazed remain free of serrated tussock, but most have been grazed out to a low, open turf which is ideal for tussock colonisation. Control depends on developing a dense, permanent pasture cover. This is difficult on non-arable land where tussock is already established.

St. John's wort is at present only a potential threat. It also tends to become established in unimproved pastures that have been opened up by excessive grazing or burning. Stock can help to control this weed and they can safely graze where there is plenty of other feed to dilute the wort. Strongly growing pastures provide the best control and they may be supplemented by biological control with gall midges and chrysomelid beetles.

Sweet briar is regarded as the characteristic weed of the region. Whether it is a really serious weed is questionable. It sometimes forms thickets, but these tend to be in gullies or very rough ground, and more usually the individual plants are widely spaced. There is probably no serious displacement of pasture by briar nor production loss by harm to animals.

The more serious weeds of higher rainfall areas in the region are bracken fern and blackberries.

Dr. P.W. Michael, Division of Plant Industry, C.S.I.R.O., discussed weeds of high fertility situations. A local newspaper article of 1870 showed that there was already concern about the "rapid increase" of thistles. Three species are particularly important. Black thistle (Cirsium vulgare) occurs mainly on artificially improved areas, whilst cotton or wooly thistle (Onopordum acanthum) is found in more fertile situations and variegated thistle (Silybum marianum) is usually in the most fertile areas.

Long term control depends on establishment and management of a competitive lucerne and phalaris pasture. Research at Canberra has shown that the two species control thistles better than either one alone. Herbicides can be useful as an aid to pasture establishment, provided they can be used early without loss of selectivity.

Barley grass and brome grass are also problems in lucerne establishment.

Mr. L. McInnes, Supervisor, Parks and Gardens, S.M.H.E.A., discussed woody weeds, particularly in relation to the State Park. Some species of tea-tree (Leptospermum) and native daphne (Pimelea) need to be controlled.

Mr. G. Newby, Pastoral Advisor, Snowy Mountains Shire Council, highlighted the differences being found in the Monaro environment when results from other areas were applied. This was particularly so in serrated tussock control where central tablelands results achieved in a 30in. rainfall zone required some adaption before their application in the drier southern region. Trial areas which had been sprayed a year ago were examined the next day. Tussock control was readily achieved, but pasture establishment had been variable.

Mr. A.D. Mears, Assistant to Special Agronomist (Weeds), Department of Agriculture, showed that there are three main weeds within the Kosciusko State Park itself. These are aquatic weeds which are causing trouble in high speed turbines, St. John's wort which has infested over 6,000 acres in the Lob's Hole area at altitudes between 2,000 and 4,300 ft, and blackberries found over a total area of 25 to 30,000 acres at lower altitudes.

Mr. R. Leech, Senior Ranger, discussed the problem of whether there really are weeds in the park or whether the flora and fauna should remain in its naturally undisturbed state. A similar decision must be made about destruction of rabbits and dingoes within the park.

WEED COSTS IN TOBACCO - \$12,000,000 IN AUSTRALIA?

Typical of the information the project sub-committee, (Mr. A.D. Mears, convenor) would like to receive about any situation where weeds cause losses to primary or secondary industry, is the estimated saving of \$500,000 by use of herbicides in tobacco production.

Mr. A.D. Doyle, Tobacco Research Agronomist of the Department of Agriculture at Ashford has found that tobacco yield and leaf quality are affected by weeds as shown by these figures:

	<u>Yield, lbs/ac</u>	<u>Price per lb.</u>	<u>Gross Return/Acre</u>
Unweeded	800	\$0.92	\$736
Weeded	1200	\$1.02	\$1224

In New South Wales tobacco is grown on 1630 acres in the Inverell, Ashford and Bonshaw area. Mechanical and hand weeding costs \$33 per acre but recently herbicides have been used at \$12 per acre. There is a saving of \$36,000 in this state by using herbicides and if similar results are applicable to Queensland's 13,232 acres and Victoria's 9,725 acres, a total saving of \$500,000 can be calculated. If increases in yield and quality will increase gross returns by the same extent as these figures suggest, there is a \$12,000,000 loss to the industry annually.

MORE NEWS

As a means of keeping up to date with new herbicides, the Newsletter would like to publish details of new herbicides or major new uses for older ones as they become registered in N.S.W. A note of 100 words is envisaged for any product. Corporate body members please note.

If you have a new appointment or wish to publicise your F.R.S. we would like to report that as well. This can help the Newsletter live up to its title.

Weed Society of N.S.W.
C/- Department of Agriculture, Sydney.
Newsletter No. 67/2, MAY, 1967.

