

NATURAL PASTURES IN QUEENSLAND: THE RESOURCES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

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Although the origin of this book was a native pasture workshop, held by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in Gympie in 1984, it is far from a mere collection of papers given at a workshop. In fact, it is a well-structured, well-edited, comprehensive review of the available literature (up to 1986) on the native pastures of Queensland and their management. The objective was to provide a useful base reference for students, researchers, extension officers, and others concerned with the maintenance and management of Queensland's native pastures. The editors have certainly achieved that objective and have produced a reference work which will be invaluable to those working with native pastures in Queensland and other parts of Australia it will be also be useful worldwide.

Twenty-eight authors, all from the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, were involved in producing the 12 chapters and three appendices of the book. Several introductory chapters cover the importance and economic value of native pastures to Queensland, the Queensland environment, the native pasture communities, and the effects of plant morphology and physiology on native pastures. These are followed by the three longest chapters dealing with managing native pastures, plant ecological relations in open forests, woodlands, and shrublands, and managing tree and shrub populations. Then follow chapters on the role of fire, nutritive value, augmenting native pastures with sown species, landscape degradation, and integrating feed resources.

The 40 pages of references include nearly 550 entries, all but about 100 of which were written later than 1970. This illustrates that most of the considerable body of

information reviewed has been accumulated in the last 20 years. If a similar review had been attempted in 1970, the limited information available could only have resulted in unjustified generalizations. The situation is much healthier now and the reviewers have been able to draw together sometimes seemingly confusing results and apparent contradictions and explain them in terms of the wide variety of climate, soils, and plants involved, thus getting closer to being able to prescribe management for specific situations. The fact that the authors were all active in the field - they were involved in nearly 100 of the references reviewed - undoubtedly helped in this respect.

The book is tightly written and well edited with few, if any, superfluous words. In reading it from cover to cover I found that this made it somewhat heavy going but it is a good feature of such a reference work with which the users will want to quickly find information on specific topics. The fairly good index will also assist in this respect.

The authors, editors, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries are to be congratulated for producing such a comprehensive review. It will be invaluable to all professionals working in the field for many years to come.

The book is available from the Information Centre, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, G.P.O. Box 46, Brisbane 4001 for \$20.00 plus \$5.00 postage.

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