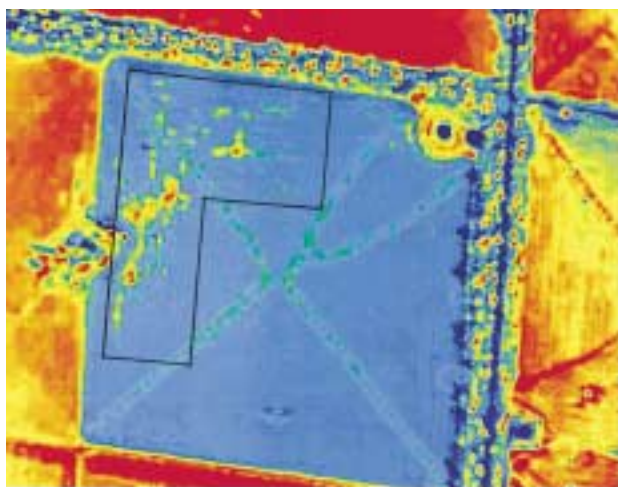


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## Preface

Australia is recognised as containing the world's largest area of sodic soils, with about 33% of the continent being affected.

The first National Conference and Workshop on sodic soils in Australia was held in Adelaide (9–13 November 1992), to bring together information and experience on sodic soils available at that time. The papers from that conference were published as a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Soil Research* (Volume 31, 1993). The 1992 conference covered a wide range of topics, including distribution, classification, mineralogy, fertility, environmental consequences, irrigation, and management of sodic soils. Importantly, it identified priority areas for research in each of these topics.

The 3-day International Sodicity Conference held at Tatura, Victoria, 28 February–1 March 2000, sought to:

- provide a forum for presenting sodicity research in agricultural industries since 1992, and
- set specific directions for future sodicity research across different agricultural industries.

The theme of this conference was **'Sodicity Issues in Agricultural Industries — Current Research and Future Directions'**. The application of sodicity theory to practical problems experienced by primary producers and other land managers was the main focus of presentations.

The conference targeted dairy, rice, cropping, cotton, sugarcane and viticulture industries and provided a top-notch forum among soil scientists, agronomists, engineers, industry representatives and some farmers. Keynote papers targeted 2 audiences: (i) main stream research soil scientists, and (ii) applied agricultural scientists involved in implementation, consultants, farmers and policy makers. The theme of the conference generated considerable interest and as a result 40 oral papers and 12 poster papers were presented. Over 140 participants from Australia and overseas attended the conference. The main emphasis of a mid-conference field tour was on irrigated pastures. The conference concluded with a facilitated workshop to capture issues that need research to further improve knowledge of sodicity in agricultural industries.

In recognition of the importance of soil sodicity research to Australia, the *Australian Journal of Soil Research* (AJSR) and *Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture* (AJEA) agreed to publish peer-reviewed papers from the conference.

Sixteen papers from the conference are published in this volume. Eight papers from the conference and 2 related papers were already published in AJSR's special issue (Volume 31, Issue 6, 2001).

A summary paper is also published in this volume. This paper covers: (i) sodicity issues generic across agricultural industries, (ii) results of interactive workshop, and (iii) knowledge gaps identified specifically for individual agricultural industries by experienced researchers.

I extend my appreciation to all Program Committee members from the different states and members of the Organising Committee from the Institute of Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture at Tatura. I especially acknowledge the help of Mr David Burrow, Ms Wendy Hopkins, Dr Ken Olsson, Ms Kirstin Coote, Ms Debbie Smith and Ms Sue Ward.

The conference was greatly facilitated by generous financial assistance, materials and staff support from:

- Murray–Darling Basin Commission
- Dairy Research and Development Corporation
- Grains Research and Development Corporation
- Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation
- Rice Cooperative Research Centre
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Processed Gypsum Products Australia Pty Ltd
- Natural Gypsum Miners Association of Victoria Inc.
- Cumco Gypsum
- Northern Gypsum
- Polisbet Natural Gypsum
- John Morato Enterprises
- Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. (Riverina and Victorian branches)
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