

Tackling serrated tussock successfully at “Arunda”

Written by Fiona Leech District Agronomist, Department of Primary Industries Yass

Don Thomas and Sue Mackenzie's property *Arunda* is an immediate neighbour of *Yellangalo*. When they arrived in 2003 they knew there was a problem although perhaps not the extent of it.

Don says there were a number of elements to their serrated tussock control plan. Firstly, they wanted to minimise the number of plants getting to the flowering stage so they sprayed and chipped before seed set as much as possible. Secondly, they worked on their worst areas first. Thirdly, they recognised they must remain vigilant and continue their mopping up work.

Don and Sue have boom and spot sprayed with glyphosate and flupropanate depending on the season and extent of the infestation. They have also done a lot of chipping. But that is just part of the recipe for successful weed control – you also need to prevent its return. Don and Sue have undertaken a number of farm and pasture management courses and put the lessons they learned to good use. Once the weed severity had decreased they did pasture renovation work to increase ground cover and help prevent its return.

Their efforts have been rewarded by some impressive improvements. That said, there is always more to do. Don says “While it is very rewarding to have the initial severe outbreaks under control there seem to be more 'person hours' maintaining the necessary vigilance. Boom spraying a big area and then watching it die is quick work but to stay on top we need to take every opportunity throughout the year chipping any plant we see while doing other work or just out enjoying the land. Sue likes her garden fork while I prefer my mini-mattock. In late summer & late winter we do a few weeks of strategic 'seek and destroy' spot spraying methodically covering the whole property.”



Sue Mackenzie riding in the first Serrated Tussock area tackled on Arunda. Six months before this the paddock had been boom sprayed with Glyphosate and when browned off it was grazed by goats. Shortly after the photo a brassica crop was sown, followed later by triticale. When the seasonal outlook was promising and tussock emergence low improved pastures were sown. It now needs only chipping and spot spraying.



No room for Serrated Tussock in this very well covered paddock. Don Thomas and Sue Mackenzie with the Lachlan CMA's Christian Wythes and Genevieve Reardon