



From the Editor



Hi All, and welcome to the Autumn 2019 issue of the Marlborough Nassella Report, to wrap up the nassella tussock control season for 2018. Hopefully you've all managed to find some shade!

In 2018 Council issued 354 Pest Control Programmes to land occupiers on properties with significant nassella tussock infestations. 253 of these properties were inspected by biosecurity staff. 23 of these properties showed signs of non-compliance, and Council issued 6 Notices of Direction where it was deemed necessary to do so.

34 properties with low-density infestations were visited during the nassella tussock flowering period, from October to December 2018, to determine and then map the extent of nassella tussock on those properties.

Searching for and destroying nassella tussock during the flowering period should be an important part of any nassella tussock control programme, especially on properties with low-density or scattered infestations. This approach helps to locate those isolated infestations that would otherwise not be seen earlier in the year. Subsequently, once these infestations are found they need to be controlled annually before the 31 October, before the seed begins to set.

Follow-up control work is always recommended during the nassella flowering period (when the plants are most conspicuous) to help locate missed plants. However, grubbing or spraying plants at that time of the year cannot be relied

upon as the only time that tussock control is undertaken on a property. Not only is viable seed already present on the plant at that time, the occupier of that property will also be in breach of Council's Regional Pest Management Plan. Late season tussock control on properties with dense infestations may yield little benefit in combatting the spread of nassella tussock in the long term.

Unfortunately Council has received a number of anecdotal reports of occupiers not having done their nassella tussock control last season. While Council may not have the resources to annually inspect all properties in the region, all land occupiers still have a standing obligation to control their nassella tussock each year. Failure to do so will result in seed spread, potentially burdening neighbouring properties.

This year's Pest Control Programmes will be sent out to you in April and property inspections will commence in May 2019.

Now is a good time to book your contractor for the year ahead, do not leave it too late.

On a final note, 2018 has been a good year for nassella tussock growth (from a plant's perspective) and also a good year for lamb prices. Let's hope for more of the latter in 2019.

See you on the hill.

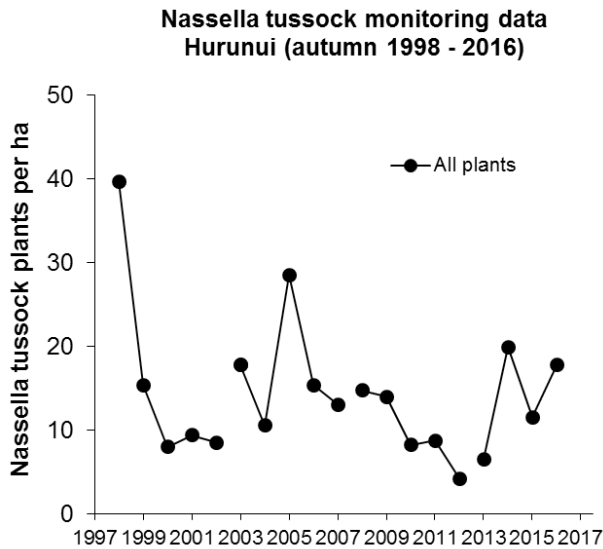
Rob Simons

Senior Biosecurity Officer



Nassella Trend Monitoring

The previous issue of the Marlborough Nassella Report mentioned the start of the first annual transect monitoring for nassella tussock to help determine the density of nassella tussock in the Marlborough Region over the long term, and whether the nassella tussock programme is keeping nassella tussock under sustained control or not. The second run of this annual transect monitoring is expected to get underway again this Autumn, where another 25 properties will be randomly selected for random transect lines. Because transect sites are selected using a random numerical system, some properties which were included in last year's survey may or may not be included in this year's count. The graph below shows a long term nassella tussock density trend for the Hurunui in North Canterbury, and gives us an idea of what sustained control could look like in Marlborough over the long term.



Control Operators

Clive Billingsley	027 610 9234
Marlborough Noxious Plant Control	
Tommy Walker	021 633 240
Kevin Conroy	03 577 8582
Ben Minehan	021 344 045
Weed Solutions Limited	
Terry Stewart	022 658 1904
Don Lafrentz	027 573 5563
Michael Williams	021 141 3886
Nigel Neal	021 156 1606
Barry Winter	027 431 6239
Weed Works	

For a more detailed list of operators, contact a Biosecurity Officer at the Council

Get Your Contractor Booked

Updates

Biological Control Agent for Nassella Tussock on the Horizon?

Good news. I am pleased to let you know that the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) application to develop and release a biological agent (fungal) for nassella tussock has been approved by the Ministry for Primary Industries, to the value of \$580,000, subject to a contract being signed with MPI. Just a reminder, if anyone finds a nassella tussock that looks like it's being attacked by a fungal disease, please refer a sample to the Council Biosecurity Section, as this information could greatly assist the project.

Alternative Herbicide Options for Nassella Tussock

During February 2018 herbicide trials were undertaken to test a new product from Arysta LifeScience (formerly Etec Crop Solutions). The new product known as X-it Grass has proved very effective against nassella tussock and kangaroo grass (spot spray only). Treated plants break down rapidly, with some plants barely visible after 12 months from the date of treatment. If you would like further information regarding this product you can contact Pete Dejong at Arista 021 790 775.



Nassella tussock 12 months after treatment with X-it Grass (untreated healthy plant on the left)



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