



Farming for Sustainable Soils

COMMUNITIES PROTECTING THE SOIL

Group Name

Lockington Group

Group Area

The area encompasses part of the Rochester Irrigation District which has experienced changes in social and land use over the past two decades. The lower reaches of the Campaspe catchment form the main part of the group area taking in an approximate 10km radius of Lockington, extending south toward Hunter and north west to Patho Plains. The Campaspe River flows to the east of the group area.

About the Group

The drought and other factors resulted in a considerable proportion of irrigation water leaving the region, leading to less irrigated pastures for dairying and other enterprises.

Following more than ten years of drought in the area dryland farms to the south, west and north of Lockington have now experienced two years of higher than average rainfall. Particularly damaging high summer rainfall led to extended periods of flooding in the Campaspe and Loddon plains between September 2010 and March 2011.

Land use

The main dryland land use is mixed farming comprising predominantly cereal cropping, and grazing sheep for wool production and prime lambs, with some beef cattle. The predominant land use in irrigated areas is dairying, lucerne for grazing and hay production and some cropping for grain.

Reductions in irrigation water allocations in the Goulburn system has meant large areas of land are dewatered and perennial based irrigated pastures have largely disappeared. Dramatically reduced winter/spring rainfall meant successive failed or poor seasons in the dryland areas and a high risk of wind erosion and soil damage over this extended 13 year period. The seasons have, however, changed over the past two years with above average rainfall occurring across the group area with above average rainfall occurring over the 2010-11 summer period.

2012 Activities

- Conduct baseline soil condition monitoring
- Renovating or ameliorating formerly irrigated and compacted soils
- Understand soils better and identify problem areas
- Visit other soil groups to increase knowledge and skills in sustainable soil management
- Increase skills in sustainable farming practices through training and education
- Alternative weed control methods (steam and WeedSeeker)