

## Book review

### Fire in the Management of Northern Australian Pastoral Lands

Edited by TONY C. GRICE and SONJA M. SLATTER; proceedings of a workshop held in Townsville, April 31–May 2, 1996. Published by Tropical Grassland Society of Australia Inc., Occasional Publication No. 8.

This publication is a “must-have” for anyone interested in the use of fire as a pasture management tool. The objectives of the workshop which gave rise to the book, were to:

- examine the ecology of fire in various pastoral regions of northern Australia;
- identify the current uses for fire in these regions;
- identify constraints to the use of fire;
- examine the potential for further development of fire as a pasture management tool;
- develop preliminary management guidelines for its use;
- identify the need for research on fire-related issues, and indicate priority areas; and
- identify the need for further action.

Forty-six invited pastoralists, scientists and extensionists presented papers and took part in workshop sessions, and it is these papers and outcomes which form the book. Most of the participants work with pastures across northern Australia, with a contrast/comparison given by Winston Throllope on the ecology of fire in southern Africa.

The result is an easily read volume, with sections pertinent to the different pasture communities on current best practice, constraints and

experiences with fire in the northern grazing lands. The big picture is painted by the scientists' contribution, with insets prepared by the participating graziers. This enhances its value for land managers, since the experiences related are first-hand and are specific to areas and communities. These experiences relate to the detail of how, when, when not, where, and where not to burn. When read in conjunction with the scientists' papers, a “completeness” of the picture seldom seen in one book is available to the reader.

The book is attractively presented, with an eye-catching, glossy cover. The text is liberally illustrated, perusal made easier by the two-column format of the text layout. The different sections are well-titled, and the adequate index aids quick reference. The names, addresses and phone numbers of contributors are listed, and although this list will obviously date, it gives the reader a starting point, if further discussion or clarification is required.

For extension officers and graziers, the book is an easily accessible source of information about the use of fire in managing northern grazing lands and I recommend its inclusion in their libraries, both for interest and as a valuable resource.

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