

24 November 2008

OLD FURROWING SITES KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESS

Landholders in the Western Catchment with old contour furrows on their land or who have been involved in furrowing or tyne pitting are asked to contact the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA).

The Western CMA is conducting research into the effectiveness of tyne pitting and contour furrowing, a popular land rehabilitation technique used in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the Cobar and Broken Hill areas.

Furrow patterns are designed to trap runoff so erosion is controlled and desirable vegetation can germinate and establish. Furrows are often long stripes following the contour, but the name also applies to other furrow patterns: spiral, straight, or swirled like a fingerprint.

People who know where old furrow patterns are located can ring Western CMA Rangeland Rehabilitation Officer, Chris Higgins at the Western CMA on freecall 1800 032101, or visit www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au and follow the links from the homepage to complete an on-line survey.

The purpose-built contour furrower once used by the Soil Conservation Service in the Broken Hill area is now gearing up for new rehabilitation work, however, Chris Higgins says he is keen to learn from the lessons of the past.

"With fuel costs so high, every operation that requires turning a key has to have the best possible chance of a good result. We need to know what worked in the past," Mr Higgins said.

"We want to know how successful furrowing was, whether treated paddocks were more productive and where it didn't work, why?"

"Our first step is to find out where furrowing has happened in the past and some basic information about those sites. Once the list of old sites has been compiled, some comparisons can be made, which will guide any future furrowing operations," Mr Higgins said.

Rangeland scientist, Dr Gresley Wakelin-King, says it can be difficult to understand factors leading to the success or failure of furrowing.

"No two sites are the same," she explains.

"Even if the furrows were made by the same equipment, sites can have different slope, soil, rainfall, or grazing history.

"Furrowing might have been done in a good year or in drought. That's why we need to know about as many sites as possible," Dr Gresley Wakelin-King said.



MEDIA RELEASE



Western CMA representatives will be available to speak to people interested in the project at Glenhope Station Field Day near Cobar on November 27 and the Barrier Area Rangecare Group Annual General Meeting on November 29.

ENDS – For further information, please contact:

Maree Barnes, PR and Media Officer on (02) 6883 3058/0427 256814

Chris Higgins on 6836 1575/0418 211 016

Gresley Wakelin-King on 03 9482 4584 (available on Monday until 1pm, on Tuesday until 3pm, and all day Wednesday)

Captions:

Aerial_view: Aerial view of recently formed contour furrows

Veg_cfv2: Vegetation in an area treated with furrowing

