

Craig's Dieback Journey and a Trial Overview

Craig Fowler, Alstonville, Northern Rivers, NSW

Initial signs of pasture dieback

Before the onset of dieback, Craig's pasture was mainly Broadleaf Paspalum, with some Setaria. In autumn 2019, the pasture started to turn purple and die off. "At first, we didn't know what it was... and it just kept getting worse," Craig recalled.

Local Land Services identified pasture dieback, marking the property as the southernmost affected area at that time.



Symptoms of dieback in Broadleaf Paspalum

Pasture re-establishment

With the advice of LLS agronomists, in September 2019, Craig mulched 12ha of pasture and oversowed with Signal and Setaria. Establishment was slow, but the pasture eventually thrived.

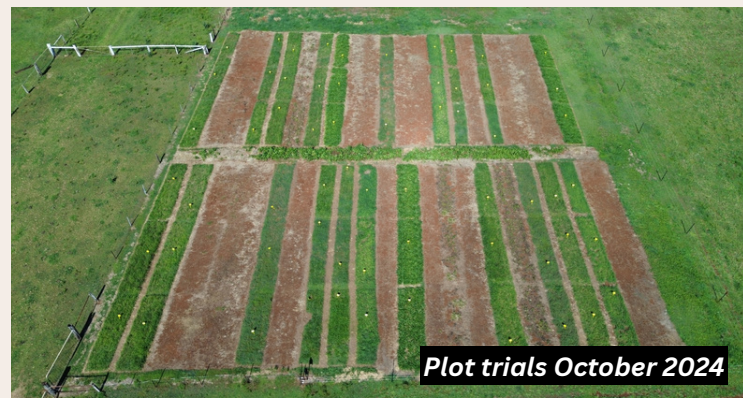
Pleased with the results, he applied the same treatment to more paddocks that winter, achieving even better outcomes. As Craig said: "It was just flying!"

Site overview

- 25ha cow and calf agistment block
- Red Ferrosol soil
- Median rainfall: 1650 mm/year

Six years later

The Setaria and Signal grass pasture base has proven a good option on this landscape and soil type. In Craig's experience the recent wet years have challenged pasture resilience against dieback, with a very wet 2024 and the region reaching its annual average rainfall by July 2025. Nonetheless, Craig remains satisfied with the revitalised pasture's productivity.



Plot trials October 2024

Trial details

In response to ongoing challenges with dieback, a plot trial is exploring which tropical and temperate grass species perform best under local conditions.

The trial also includes a focus on increasing legume and forb diversity, with clovers and chicory oversown in a paddock-scale demonstration established in late winter 2025.

Pasture dieback resources

- Identification guide
- Case studies
- Videos



www.bit.ly/pasture-dieback