Weedy Sporobolus grasses – Best Management Practices

The 5 Weedy Sporobolus grass species are:

• Giant rats tail grasses – *Sporobolus pyramidalis* & *Sporobolus natalensis*

• Giant Parramatta grass – *Sporobolus fertilis*

• Dwarf Parramatta grass – *Sporobolus africanus*

• American rats tail grass – *Sporobolus Jacquemontii*
Best Management Practices

Very low populations of GRT eg up to 100 plants/paddock
Grub out the stools, bag them up, tie the bags, remove from the paddock and destroy the intact bag.

Low to Medium populations of GRT eg up to 2000 plants/ha
An ‘effective spot-spray threshold’ is about 1000 to 2000 plants/hectare eg 1 to 2 plants/10 square metres (ie the size of a small bedroom).

Spot-spray with flupropanate eg Taskforce®, at 2 mls/L of water
Dense populations of GRT eg more than 2000 plants/ha

On arable land – cultivate and crop for several years & spot-spray the headlands with Taskforce®

On marginal arable land – fodder crop for a couple of seasons using reduced tillage techniques to minimise soil erosion; spot-spray the headlands

On non arable land - boomspray with Taskforce® @ 2L/ha

On steep or broken land – precision aerial application of flupropanate granules @ 7.5 to 15 kg/ha

20 years of integrated catchment management
Spot-spray techniques

• Spot-spraying with Taskforce® - glyphosate herbicide should only be added as a chemical marker to the spray mix at very low application rates eg 1 ml/L (half the rate of Taskforce®)
• Taskforce® is best used alone in the spray mix
• ‘Tramlining’ methods are significantly more effective than spot-spraying ‘higgledy piggledy’ at random
• ‘Tramlining’ does not require the addition of a marker, either a chemical or a colour dye marker
• Avoid spot-spraying with flupropanate during the summer wet season

Withholding periods for grazing and slaughter

• The herbicide flupropanate eg Taskforce® is a highly soluble root uptake chemical
• The grazing withholding period for spot-spraying is at least 14 days
• The grazing withholding period for broadacre spraying eg boomspray, or aerial applied granules, is at least 4 months
• The slaughter withholding period for cattle grazing in a flupropanate treated paddock is at least 14 days (to allow time for the animal to urinate any chemical residues)
Preventing the spread of GRT seed

- Quarantine cattle for a **minimum** of 5 days when moving them from infested to clean paddocks or to another property (up to 30,000 seeds in the dung on day 1)
- A designated ‘quarantine’ paddock would be especially reserved for grazing by contaminated cattle moving from infested to clean paddocks
- A stockproof fence plus a 10 m wide clean buffer strip (& kept clean) has been shown to hold 99% of GRT seed spread
- Clean down machinery and vehicles to remove seed before moving to clean paddocks or clean properties

Dry Season Spraying

- Spray flupropanate herbicide in the lower rainfall winter/spring months eg May to November, to reduce the risk of heavier falls of rain washing the herbicide away from the root-zone
Pasture Recovery Techniques

- Consider pasture improving heavily infested paddocks in the year prior to boom-spraying with flupropanate to increase pasture competition,
- or alternatively oversow the treated paddock in the summer post-treatment while the GRT stools are slowly dying.
- Pastures dominated by stoloniferous grasses i.e. with runners, will compete more strongly with GRT infestations than clump forming grasses e.g. setaria
- Bisset bluegrass, Katambora Rhodes and Wynn cassia are recommended pasture species for oversowing
- Note that flupropanate has a plant-back delay period for sown grass seedlings