

Agency Report  
DPIRD  
Rob Summers

### **uPtake update**

The uPtake project is working with a range of stakeholders to review the soil testing guideline information and improve understanding, credibility and collaboration of the basic information that is required to make a fertiliser recommendation from a soil test.

The uPtake project was developed as a part of the Regional Estuaries Initiative (REI) that identified a barrier to uptake of fertiliser testing was the understanding and credibility of the information that was used. Farmers and fertiliser companies were considered the main targets for collaboration and communication.

There are field sites across the REI coastal catchments that monitor the plant growth of pasture in response to the phosphorus in the soil and compare that with phosphorus applied. We are also comparing this with other nutrients which may also be limiting because we are aware that there are many paddocks which have more than enough phosphorus and are missing other nutrients such as potassium which could improve the soil health and increase production and potentially improving water quality.

To monitor the trial in Nambelup with only one staff member in the region, Rob Summers has managed to secure another staff member from South Perth and has had approval to carry out field work. A number of procedures have been needed to be put in place for biosecurity risks but these are now relatively commonplace. Equipment and consumables are being couriered from suppliers and other staff to carry this out.

The monitoring will be DPIRD's contribution to assessing the plant response on a very sandy site and will add more data to a massive, Australia-wide database. DWER are also monitoring the water quality that is leaching through the plots on the site using pan lysimeters.

### **REI workshops**

The DPIRD contribution to the REI is nearing finalisation with presentation of a series of 6 workshops in the fourth and final year. Each year the workshops present to the participating land managers their mapping reports showing the results of the soil testing and the nutrient status of their paddocks.

This year included the employment of a communications expert to assist in reducing the complexity of the presentations and aid in the inclusion of the participants to learn more by being involved. Another departure from previous years was to include a webinar to help in the reinforcement of the workshop by priming those who attended with some pre-learning about the workshop itself.

Funds have been identified to include another round of soil testing in the 20/21 season, but this time to use it as an opportunity to test soil sampling by the landholders themselves. The

necessary contracts are being varied and equipment for landholders to use is being accumulated and modified for their use.