VSTWP Official Media Release:

TUSSOCK TRAVELLING IN FODDER ACROSS THE STATE

March 2017

The Victorian Serrated Tussock Working Party (VSTWP) would like to advise landowners to ensure fodder and hay purchased this summer and autumn is free of noxious weeds and in particular, serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*). The previous year has seen perfect conditions for this weed of national significance to seed prolifically, resulting in many paddocks being infested prior to bailing for fodder.

Whilst it can be difficult to inspect all fodder purchased for noxious weeds, VSTWP Executive Officer Martin Deering suggests that “landowners should attempt to purchase stockfeed from reputable outlets that can verify the absence of declared noxious weeds and from areas outside of the serrated tussock core infestations around the fringes of northern and western Melbourne”.

“Landowners are often unaware of the grassy weed in their paddocks, especially during a good spring like the one we just had, and may bale paddock unaware of the viable seeds in the fodder” noted Mr Deering.

In some parts of Victoria, large collections of serrated tussock seed heads are common sight during the warmer parts of the year. The serrated tussock plant produces seed heads that break off at the base and are well adapted to spreading by wind. With each plant having the potential to produce over 100,000 seeds, large infestations can easily produce masses of seed heads. These increase the seed bank, can germinate new infestations, and can become a fire risk. While wind spread seeds are often contained to within half a kilometre of the plant they came from, wind can sometimes carry the seeds up to 20 km away.

The VSTWP recommends that landowners have a designated feed-out area on their property, which allows the landowner to monitor this area regularly for the germination of noxious weeds and serrated tussock. Once identified plants can be treated as soon as possible, preventing further spread. Other precautions to help prevent serrated tussock spread can include vehicle and machinery hygiene, removing serrated tussock from around watercourses and avoiding the movement of soil off an infected property.

Long standing member and current chairperson of the VSTWP, John Burgess, stated that the VSTWP “advocates that best practice management is to control and treat mature serrated tussock plants prior to flowering and seeding each season with a registered herbicide, manual removal or cultivation”. “The VSTWP has a range of information readily available on how to best identify serrated tussock, including online videos. The website is full of useful information including landowner case studies, the ‘The Tussock Times’ newsletter and the latest research into treatment options” said Mr Burgess.

For further information, please visit [www.serratedtussock.com](http://www.serratedtussock.com), or contact the VSTWP on info@serratedtussock.com.
Serrated tussock seeds are small and numerous, and can travel across the State via fodder and stock-feed.

The VSTWP assist landowners identify and manage the noxious weed serrated tussock.