

Indigenous Food Research Park

Native grains update - March 2021

Building native grain businesses in NW NSW

Although COVID-19 put a stop to plans for big community johnny cake days, we have had many individual meetings and collaboration yarns. Pic left is at Brewarrina, plus there has been some great stories from small Johnny cake days run locally using native flour we posted to Toomelah and Walgett.

There is a strong desire to build native grain enterprises, and common themes for the need for technical and administration assistance to make this happen. The conversations are extending beyond the University of Sydney's connections on Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Kwiambal Country in 2020 to many Aboriginal nations who are working with local collaborators and researchers, as well as plenty of interest from generous local farmers who want to share paddocks.

The vision of Black Duck Foods is to help make things like this happen across the historic grain belt of Australia. They are putting together a collaborative grant application to create support structures specific to creating successful native grain enterprises which are connected through this common theme. We are excited to be part of this application.



Johnny cakes being made at Brewarrina by the Cert III Conservation and Land Management TAFE class, Dec 2020, with native grain flour supplied by University of Sydney. Pic credit: Craig Hiscock

Release of the paddock to plate report



Our highlight from 2020 was release of “Native grains from paddock to plate: study of the economic, environmental and social sustainability of an ancient system in a modern context.”

This report describes the potential for native grains (based on Gomeroi Country) including the field work, harvesting, milling, food products, economics and social/cultural aspects.

The booklet is aimed at a general audience and we hope will assist people of all cultures know where their aspirations might fit.

Various technical publications which underpin this research will be published over the next few months. One is already finished and available on our website – economic analysis of a native grains enterprise within a working farm.

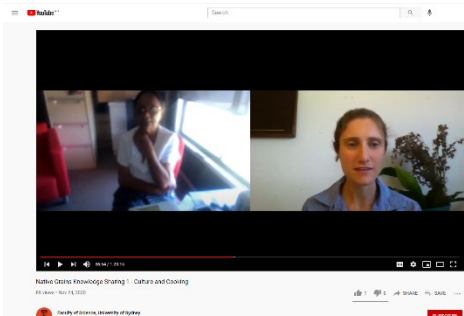
The Paddock to Plate report, and the technical reports as they become available, can be found here:

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/science/our-research/research-areas/life-and-environmental-sciences/indigenous-grasslands-grain.html> (or just google “grasslands for grain”)

Release of paddock to plate teaching videos

Along with the written report, a series of YouTube videos were created. They aim to explain the basic principles of native grain production on Gomeri Country, which is currently a productive farming region with cropping (including irrigated cropping) and cattle production.

Each video is 3 to 10 minutes long and suitable to a general audience, including classrooms. The playlist can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiNGfByLAQoEutEUk98Zbw4sBRfbkbt3c>



Native Grain Knowledge Sharing Webinars

In November 2020, a cross-discipline team presented a series of webinars on native grains. These longer videos are available at the same Youtube address above, and are also linked from our website.

They are highly recommended to provide information on the current opportunities and threats to seeing native grains in fields and diets.

A big thanks to David Carr of Stringybark Ecological, Aunty Beryl from NCIE, the Garragal Women's Language and Culture Network, Tony Meppem from NSW TAFE and Chris Andrews from Black Duck Foods for giving their time to speak at the webinars, and NSW Northwest Local Land Services for funding the event.

Whetting your appetite

Here are some pics from the last few months of native grain foods in various proportions (minimum 16%):



From left to right, top to bottom: Warrego grass scone (pic credit: Col Seis), acacia kibble, button grass and weeping grass loaves made in breadmaker, fresh weeping grass crepe (pic credit: Lisa Jackson-Pulver), quandong and weeping grass biscuits, binamayaa (old man saltbush) seed flour pizza base; binamayaa seed flour crackers with climbing saltbush greens and purslane tzatziki.

Native grains on display: the Dhuwarr Exhibition

“Dhuwarr” architectural installation was displayed at the University of Sydney main campus in October 2020. Created by the Architecture Faculty, it depicts a confluence of ancient and modern ideas in native grains on Gomerioi Country (*Dhuwarr* is Gamilaraay for grain-based foods/bread). The interactive display included video from Country, native grain flour, three species of plants and farm vehicle models as well as poster boards and information. It is now on its way to the Moree BAMM Gallery as a travelling display.

<https://www.bamm.org.au/>



Quick fire updates

- Bruce Pascoe lecture “Perennial soil” with Angela Pattison is available here <https://www.sydney.edu.au/engage/events-sponsorships/sydney-ideas/2020/bruce-pascoe-perennial-soil.html>
- A TAFE certificate is being developed to provide basic field-based training in native grain production in NW NSW, set to start in term 2, 2021. Contact Anthony.meppem2@tafensw.edu.au for information.
- Trainee Callum Craigie finished his 1-year traineeship in September 2020 and has gained full time employment in local industry. Congratulations Callum, and best of luck!
- We are privileged to have Gomerioi woman Kerrie Saunders from Yinarr-ma working part time on the project for the harvest season. She has a wealth of knowledge of foods from Gomerioi Country and we are all learning from each other while working. Welcome Kerrie!
- The results from the nutritional analysis of over 15 native grain species is almost complete. A preview is available within the Native Grains Knowledge Sharing: Culture and Cooking webinar (starts about 40 minutes in). Full results will be peer reviewed and published soon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00DGKBCjVCE&list=PLiNGfByLAQoEutEUK98Zbw4sBRfbkbT3c>
- All are invited to the summer crops field day on 30th March 2021 at I.A. Watson Grain Research Institute, which will include a short talk from Uncle Steven Booby from OEH and native grain taste testing at lunch as well as the latest in summer cropping research. Contact Annabelle at drycotresassoc@gmail.com for info
- A crowd funding page has been set up for people who would like to donate to this research project. The link can be found through our website (google “grasslands for grain”) or at give.sydney.edu.au/indigenousgrains.

Invitation to connect

With decent rain to start the season, there seems to be excellent momentum for field growth and hopefully development of seed supplies over the next few months. If you would like to connect, please don’t hesitate to contact the team. We are excited by the potential 2021 holds. *Yalu!*

The IFRP team