DEVELOPING FORAGE RESOURCES FOR SALINE DISCHARGE AREAS.

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An important objective of Subprogram 5 of the Cooperative Research Centre for Plant-Based Management of Dryland Salinity is to identify and develop new and better varieties of forage species for saline and/or waterlogged discharge areas. The subprogram involves scientists in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Proposed components of this subprogram include:

(1) a thorough background scoping study to catalogue discharge environments across Australia and to identify potentially valuable germplasm including grasses, legumes, herbs and shrubs
(2) a workshop to establish standard salt and waterlogging tolerance screening techniques
(3) a greenhouse screening program to evaluate the salt and waterlogging tolerances of a large range of germplasm
(4) a field evaluation program conducted at approximately 15 saline discharge field sites across Australia and using material identified from the greenhouse studies.

It is anticipated that the greenhouse studies will commence in 2002/2003 once the scoping study and the workshop have provided useful background information. Field evaluations will also commence in 2002/2003 and will expand as potential suitable plant species are identified from the greenhouse program.

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