



## Media release

27 April 2011

# Red grass alert

An invasive weed is causing havoc for graziers and other landholders in north Queensland following a very wet season.

High rainfall has created perfect conditions for grader grass, a tall weed that grows in thick clumps and has the potential to dominate and degrade landscapes across northern Australia.

Natural resource management group NQ Dry Tropics has been receiving calls from concerned landholders who are alarmed at how quickly it has spread.

The grass is seeding now and turning a distinctive orange-red which is why it's become noticeable by landholders.

It grows to two metres in tufts on cane-like stems.

Native to India grader grass (*Themeda quadrivalvis*) can be mistaken for kangaroo grass and mature plants are unpalatable to stock.

NQ Dry Tropics Amanda Laurie says once it takes hold, it's a difficult grass to control.

"It's a worry to see how quickly this grass has spread. Grader grass significantly changes the landscape and outcompetes native pasture and grass species. It has no value as stock feed. It also poses a high fire risk in the dry season because of its density, and quickly invades burnt and disturbed areas."

"Grader grass is one of those weeds that creep up on you and it seeds prolifically. You want to get rid of it as soon as you see it."

For isolated outbreaks landholders are advised to bag the head of seeded plants and destroy the seeds by burning in a safe area. Larger infestations will require long term strategic management and might require chemical control.

It's important to cause minimal disturbance to seeds. Whatever management is taken follow up is critical.

Amanda says, "If you're driving in an areas that has grader grass make sure you clean underneath vehicles and machinery to stop the spread of weed seeds. Avoid driving through weed patches and spreading the seeds further."

Landholders can find more information about controlling grader grass by visiting the NQ Dry Tropics' website [www.nqdrytropics.com.au/grader-grass](http://www.nqdrytropics.com.au/grader-grass).

For more information about how to control grader grass call Amanda Laurie at NQ Dry Tropics on 4722 5743.

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NQ Dry Tropics' region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays.

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