



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



MEDIA RELEASE

Experiments to give NSW insight into grassland fires

2 March 2015

Twenty NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) members will work alongside CSIRO researchers in Tamworth over the coming week to conduct experimental grassland burns to help understand the impact of grass curing on the behaviour of fire.

NSW RFS Senior Fire Behaviour Analyst Laurence McCoy said that working with the CSIRO was a valuable opportunity to gain significant insight into the spread of fire in grasslands in NSW.

“We already know that as grasslands dry out or ‘cure’ the way they interact with fire changes, but these experiments will allow us to understand what that means in NSW for Fire Danger Ratings and planning hazard reduction burns,” he said.

“CSIRO has been conducting these experiments across Australia but it is important that the outcomes can be applied to NSW grasslands, and for this to occur, experiments need to be conducted here in NSW.”

Lead researcher for CSIRO Dr Miguel Cruz said the experiments had commenced in Victoria during late 2013.

“The project results showed that our previous understanding of the effect of grass curing on fire propagation was deficient,” Dr Cruz said.

“The results from the Victorian experiments needed to be validated in distinct grasslands, namely the ones characteristic of NSW. Having the support of the NSW RFS is critical to the success of this national research project.”

The experimental burns will take place from the 4 March to the 12 March 2015 at two sites across the Tamworth area.

NSW RFS is also planning on conducting further experimental burns in other parts of NSW over the next year.

Media Contact

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For more information contact the New England Fire Control Centre on 6762 7641
For current incidents or major fire updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au