

CURRENT RESEARCH ON LOTUS TENUIS IN BALCARCE (ARGENTINA)

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- Leopoldo Montes -

Narrowleaf bird's-foot trefoil (Lotus tenuis Waldst.) is naturalized on heavy clay flooded soils of Buenos Aires province, Argentina, and is often continuous over large areas on low land fields and roadsides. It is a temperate legume with a high potential to cover extensive areas of the so called 'Pampa Deprimida' which has an extension of more than 6 millions ha.

Because of its productivity and nutritional value this species is being increasingly employed as a forage in beef and dairy cattle production systems.

In spite of farmer's interest in 'lotus', information about biological, ecological and technological limitations to improve crop technology of 'lotus' is at present very scarce.

Despite the many studies that have been made principally on taxonomy and genetics in other countries, we are still lacking enough knowledges to understand the functioning and persistence of natural and cultivated pastures with 'lotus'.

Within that context, we began to work in a project which includes studies on plant demography (recruitment of seedlings and reproduction, in order to know the role of both population density and gap importance in colonization, mortality and population stability in sown pastures). Also our program (1986-1991) includes studies on seed bank dynamics, growth analysis, primary production and management of lotus - tall fescue pastures.

The group are composed by Osvaldo N. Fernández, Daniel Miñón, Gabriel Sevilla, Marta Colabelli, Silvana Langero, Néstor Maceira and Leopoldo Montes.

Other research programs been complementary carried on are: nitrogen fixation, Rhizobium strains and morphological and agronomical characterization of Lotus introductions.

Most of these works are just starting so no enough information is still available to communicate to Lotus Newsletters' readers. Naturally, we are very pleased receiving any information about 'lotus' from other groups and contacting them through this publication.