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# Editor's Note



Welcome to this issue of Grassroots! Congress 50 is just around the corner and we are looking forward to the half centenary celebrations of the GSSA in Pietermaritzburg. You will find more information and important dates on this exciting event on the back page of this issue.

Our grassland scientists play an integral role in conserving wetlands, amongst other ecosystems. As we are always trying to keep you up-to-date with relevant news on a wide variety of grassland-relevant topics, we have included two news articles on wetland management and conservation within this issue. Furthermore, we bring you three feature articles. *Parthenium hysterophorus* is a problem plant which is invading grazing, cultivated, fallow and protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity. It has very bad health implications on both animals and people and is definitely a plant to look out for so as to prevent the spread of it into further areas. In a feature article by Lorraine Strathie, challenges with this weed are identified, and successful biocontrol management of this plant is discussed.

In the second feature article, the impact of soil moisture balance on bush encroachment is debated. This argues that soil moisture balance is the most significant edaphic feature controlling landscape change, which could have important consequences for research to control shrub invasion of grasslands. Please feel free to send us your comments to debate these aspects further.

Finally, the strategic over-sowing of temperate grasses and legumes has been found to be an economical forage-based way to improve the dry matter production, forage quality and milk production potential of kikuyu based pasture systems. Research results from Outeniqua Research Farm near George, provides the latest information on establishing grass-legume mixtures into kikuyu using various mechanical and herbicidal methods.

*Pieter Swarepoel*