Managing common rush without chemicals

– field lab feedback

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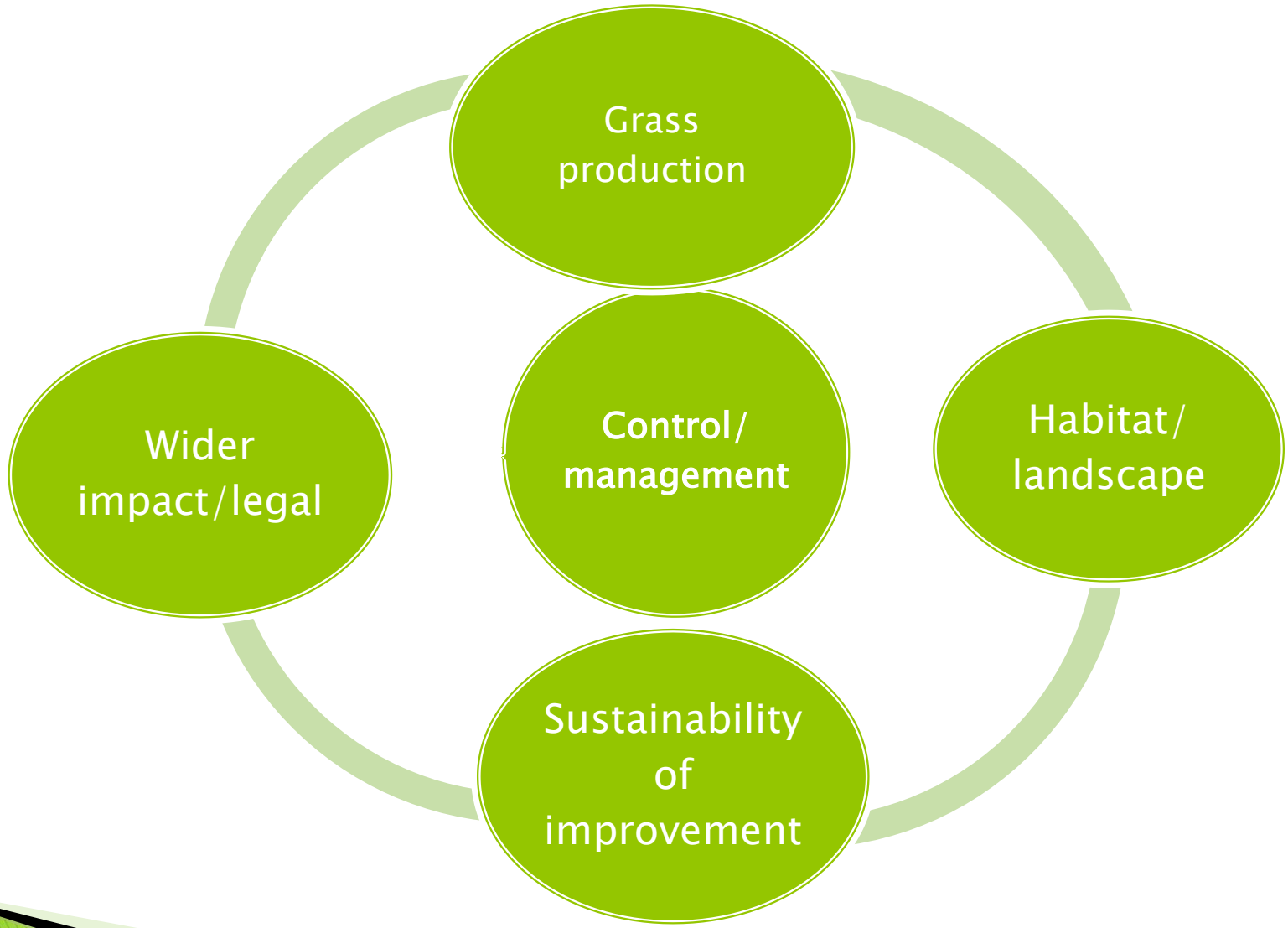
Field lab overview and key messages

Different levels of infestation

When is intervention required?

Considerations



When a good plan »

… turns bad

Field lab overview and key messages

1. Each land manager driven by their own objectives
2. Can classify into three broad levels of rush infestation; light, moderate and severe
3. Site specific action plan required

Field lab overview and key messages

1. Short term control
   - Topping
   - Cutting & removing
   - Other; burning/chemicals etc.
2. Longer term control
   - Soil management
   - Competition from the sward
   - Grazing and long term management

What doesn't work and why?

Focus on direct control of common rush plants without considering growing environment

Short term control without further action

Topping

Even topping 3 times in a single season has limited success

One-off treatment without further action »

Weedwiping with glyphosate can be dramatic, but common rush will return

Don’t ignore the growing environment

Identify soil problems and sort them

Don’t aim to eradicate 100% of rush cover

‘easy wins’ first

What next? – keeping on top of things

1. Manage the seedbank
2. Keep the grass sward competitive

Good and bad reseeding

Mainly due to soil conditions

Poaching damage

New plants given opportunity to germinate

Responsive sward

Encourage grass and clover to fill in open space

Maintain soil pH and nutrient status »

Maintain the sward

What next? – keeping on top of things

1. Manage the seedbank
   - Avoid disturbance – poaching/cultivation
   - Control new rush growth
   - Good grazing management

2. Keep the grass sward competitive
   - Maintain pH at optimum for grassland
   - Maintain soil nutrient levels
   - Consider reseeding (& method)
   - Grazing vs. hay/silage
   - Good grazing management

Management of common rush without chemicals

The end

…. Or the beginning?