

## **Experimental Archaeology**

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Past archaeological surveys conducted on land in Australia that had been used for broadacre cultivation, posed a number of questions for archaeologists who were trying to interpret the stone artefact scatters recorded in those surveys. In an attempt to obtain data on artefact displacement, an experiment was set up using agricultural broadacre implements and modern stone artefacts made from raw materials that had been used by Aboriginal knappers in the past. In this case the archaeologist was also a very experienced farmer and operated the farm machinery, thus there was complete control of the whole experiment by the archaeologist. This seems to be the only recorded instant that the archaeologist was also the farmer in this type of experiment.

The research was targeted towards the following questions :

1. What distances can stone artefacts placed on the surface, be displaced in three seasons of normal cultivation practices?
2. What are the percentages of stone artefacts that appear on the surface after each cultivation episode?
3. (a) How many stone artefacts can be recovered by excavation after three seasons of cultivation and (b) what damage can be seen on the recovered artifacts?
4. Has the size of the stone artefact an influence on the distance displaced from its original position?
5. What is the spread (linear and non-linear wise) of stone artefact positions after three seasons of cultivations?

The data obtained from this research should be considered by all archaeologists working in the field of large scale cultivation paddocks and fields.