

Making a Difference

LLCI005-007

Farmer Wellbeing and Regenerative Farming

Mid Lachlan Landcare



‘Farmers must prioritise, avoiding putting themselves under intense pressure in long dry times as it can impact their wellbeing,’ said Dubbo Agricultural Consultant, Mark Gardner who recently spoke to a group of farmers at a Canowindra woolshed meeting organized by Mid Lachlan Landcare.

The issue

Recent storm activity has sent many drought-stricken farmers’ precious topsoil into dams, creeks and river systems or blown out to sea. In most cases this can be prevented says Mark Gardner, who has recently completed a report in collaboration with the Australian Government’s National Environmental Science Program, The Australian National University, the University of Canberra and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The report states ‘ *there is significant potential to simultaneously increase environmental health and biodiversity in grassy box woodlands and improve financial and wellbeing for graziers.*’

The solution

It is possible to have good regenerative land management and be profitable and have healthy happy farmers,’ Gardner summarized. ‘Maintaining ground cover, with green leaves, allows a faster response when it does rain and results in more feed and less weeds.’

Using this advice, a regenerative farmer with MLL, Matt Pearce, applied the strategies of early destocking, conservative dry pasture assessment and creating a temporary feedlot to protect his soil and maintain a feeling of mental well-being during 2018’s extended dry period.

The impact

Measured findings in the report, reveal regenerative farmers had higher levels of physical health, wellbeing and happiness when compared to similar farms in the report’s Rural Wellbeing Survey.

Regenerative farmer, Matt Pearce says he has avoided ‘feeling under pressure by getting stock numbers right so pastures got the right rest.’

The study revealed unfavorable seasons in the study area in NSW were much more common than favorable, in 11 out of every 14 years, for the farmers in the study.

The study also found Regenerative farmers maintain profitability in below average years because of their low-cost structures, low risk management decisions and low levels of applied inputs. This means in 11 out of every 14 years, regenerative style agriculture comes out on top.



Key facts

- Avoid running landscapes to bare soil
- Maintain ground cover, with green leaves
- Consider Early destocking
- Apply conservative dry pasture assessment
- Consider creating temporary feedlots
- Make sure decisions are not made under pressure
- Have a feed budget and a grazing plan involving planned recovery for every paddock.

Project Partners



The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Program that enables the promotion of these case studies on the Gateway, is funded by the NSW Government and is supported through the partnership of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW



29 Jan, 2019