



*Farming
Together*



CASE STUDY

FACTSHEETS

INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING
TWELVE CASE STUDIES

1. SWEETER BANANA
CO-OPERATIVE
2. FOOD NEXT DOOR
3. HARCOURT ORGANIC
FARMING CO-OP
4. BULLA BURRA FARMS
5. CLARENCE VALLEY
FOOD INC.
6. 2 TONNE ENTERPRISES
7. MOUNTAIN MILK
8. AG DYNAMICS
9. SOUTHERN BLUE
REGENERATIVE
10. LAND TO MARKET
11. BUNDALONG &
EASTBOURN
12. MOFFAT FALLS

Name of business / organisation	Leader / Champion	Concept / s	Additional Resources
Pillar: Innovation & Diversification			
1. Sweeter Banana Co-operative	Doriana Mangili	Marketing the point of difference Vertical integration Value adding Succession through leasing	http://www.sweeterbanana.com/ https://www.facebook.com/SweeterBananaCarnarvon/
2. Food Next Door	Deb Bogenhuber	Utilising unused land through co-operative ventures Migrant farmer support networks Community food box supply	www.foodnextdoor.org.au https://outoftheboxsunraysia.com.au/ https://www.facebook.com/foodnextdoorcoop/
3. Harcourt Organic Farming Co-operative	Katie & Hugh Finlay	Succession through leasing Marketing co-operative	https://hofcoop.com.au/ https://www.facebook.com/HarcourtOrganicFarmingCoop/
4. Bulla Burra Farms	John Gladigou & Robin Schaefer	Neighbour collaborative business Company structure between neighbouring farms Creating multiple income streams Succession planning Retaining the heritage of the family farm	https://www.facebook.com/BullaBurra/
5. Clarence Valley Food Inc.	Debrah Novak	Building capacity and economies of scale through local large-scale community resource (e.g., hospitals, correctional centres)	https://clarencevalleyfood.com/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/543678682643855/

Name of business / organisation	Leader / Champion	Concept / s	Additional Resources
Pillar: Intensification			
6. 2 Tonne Enterprises	Robbie Commens	Diversification with macadamia on low level flood plains	https://www.2te.com.au/ https://www.facebook.com/2-Tonne-Enterprises-106186537894128/
7. Mountain Milk	Stuart Crosthwaite	Collectively generating great value and securing a stronger future for farmers with a co-op	https://www.mountainmilkcoop.com.au/ https://www.facebook.com/Mountain-Milk-Co-Operative-2001545013438538/
8. Ag Dynamics	Stuart Pettigrew	Utilising unused land through improved resource efficiency	http://www.agdynamics.com.au/
Pillar: Regenerative & Sustainable Agriculture			
9. Southern Blue Regenerative	Glen Chapman	Regenerative agriculture on-farm education	https://www.southernblue.com.au/
10. Land to Market	Tony Hill	Farmer led co-operative for ecological outcome verification and niche marketing	https://landtomarket.com.au/
11. Bundalong & Eastbourne	Mick Green & Rachel Ward	Neighbouring “Own, Lease, Manage” arrangements	https://www.facebook.com/GreenFarmRuralContracting/
12. Moffat Falls	Lorraine Gordon	Carbon farming co-operative – creating additional income streams from regenerative agricultural practice	https://moffatfalls.com.au/

Champion: Doriana Mangili
Age of co-op: 18 years
Industry: Bananas
Location: Carnarvon, WA
Region: Coastal town, 900 kilometres North of Perth: where desert meets ocean. A unique environment for growing the sweetest and tastiest bananas in Australia.

SUCCESS STORY:

THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

- Five years ago, the region was hit by a cyclone and every single crop was destroyed. It took 18 months to return. Without the co-operative it could have been the end of the industry.
- A vertically integrated Co-operative that represents 18 growers and 60% of banana production in the region.
- Manages between \$8 - \$10 million of turnover each year.
- Moved from selling 100% of products on the market floor for unknown price and market, to today, where 90% of their bananas are sold to direct markets and packed to order.

Doriana Mangili,
 Business Manager, Sweeter Banana



**SWEETER
 BANANA
 CO-OP**



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- The industry had contracted to a point that it had halved in numbers.
- The contraction was the result of competition: larger tropical QLD banana was preferred over the smaller and less perfect Carnarvon banana.
- Growers were getting less return than their outlay costs.
- The industry was about to collapse, and growers knew a change was needed.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- To form a co-operative to promote their banana's point of difference.
- A marketing association was established in 1993 to create the brand.
- The co-operative was formed from the original marketing group in 2002 when the central packing shed was founded.



HOT TIPS!

- Build trust and strong relationships in the group.
- Your group decides: don't let outsiders get in the way of your vision!



SWEETER BANANA CO-OP

THE BARRIERS

- Developing trust: ensure you have a similar vision, understanding and clear, effective communication. Are you in it for the same reasons? Are you wanting to achieve the same results?
- Capital investment: putting money into something 'unknown'.
- External influences: people have a vested interest in growers being divided.

THE ENABLERS

- Foster greater resilience through 'strength in numbers'.
- Enable each person to focus on their strengths and therefore enact authentic collaboration and growth. Farmers can focus on growing and others can work other parts of the supply chain.
- Having clear, concise visions and goals that all co-op members are involved in creating to ensure everyone is in it for the same reasons.
- Keep developing relationships: the stronger the relationship, the less opportunity for external influences to get in the way.
- Think creatively for ways to value-add. How can you turn a waste product into an opportunity?

Future looking...

1. **Talk to others in the region and or in your industry.** What are the barriers to success? How could a collaborative model improve your return and resilience?
2. **Look for opportunities to value-add.** What could you do to enhance and build the financial opportunities for your business or collaboration?
3. **Work together.** Once established, how can you continue to deepen and strengthen your relationships and your group?



VALUE-ADDING: banana smoothies bags, lunchbox bananas, banana bread

Champion: Deborah Bogenhuber
Age of coop: 3 years
Industry: mixed; fruit & vegetables
Location: Mildura, VIC
Region: warm climate, good soils, ag dominated economy, largest city in northwest Victoria.

FOOD NEXT DOOR CO-OP



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- Lack of available local produce for the community.
- Local food security issues as the community heavily relied on food being brought into the region.
- Recognised the need for growing the capacity of the community to have a strong local food market.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Created weekly local produce scheme "Out of the Box" to supply 100% local produce to households in Sunraysia
- Developed an approach to relieve the suffering and distress of newly arrived migrants and refugee groups, particularly those without access to land and living in rural and regional areas, by supporting these groups to re-engage in farming and grow food, including their traditional foods.
- Around 25% of land in the irrigation district of Sunraysia (Mildura) was no longer utilised for growing food as there was no one who wanted to farm it themselves.
- Connected landless refugee farmers to unused farming land.
- Developed options for small scale farming using regenerative practices.
- Created a multi-stakeholder co-operative model from an incorporated association to connect people in the community with more local food.

Deborah Bogenhuber

Executive Officer, Food Next Door Co-op



THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

- 61 co-op memberships including 110 total individual members.
- 90 households subscribe to Out of the Box.
- 7 acres of previously unused land being accessed and farmed.
- 37 farmers involved including 30 Burundian and Congolese farmers.
- 30% of income from Out of the Box is generated from food box sales. Grants cover the remaining operating costs. They are aiming to increase their income by expanding their enterprises, however, the group will continue to apply to external source funding for their charitable work.

HOT TIPS!

- Start where you are at.
- Bring everyone along the journey with you.
- Do the work!



FOOD NEXT DOOR CO-OP

THE BARRIERS

- Initially trying to engage too many people and had high expectations on ourselves.
- Working with different personalities and people.
- Locating financial support to continue and expand existing operations and projects.
- Developing a business model that effectively and correctly positioned all our stakeholders.

THE ENABLERS

- Focus on working one-on-one with people and developing the capacity of your core people rather than focusing on looking for more members.
- Keep people connected through tools like texts and WhatsApp which are more personal than emails and e-newsletters. Consistent and meaningful communication and listening to people e.g. by using social media to convey response to surveys.
- Prioritise building and maintaining strong relationships.
- Collaboratively reflect on your practices and processes.
- Develop a shared values statement and culture to underpin your co-op e.g. being kind, a culture of caring.
- Focus on the goodness of people. Identify poor behaviour and address the issue there.

Future looking...

1. **Talk to other multi-stakeholder co-operatives:** learn first hand from others.
2. **Look inside** for knowledge and skills within your co-op while looking outside for support and to see the forest from the trees.
3. **Stay informed and educated** on your industry, your business model and the agriculture sector more broadly to be open to new opportunities and to support others in their learning.



THE CO-OP STRUCTURE

Champions: Katie & Hugh Finlay

Age of coop: 3 years

Industry: orchardists

Location: Harcourt, VIC

Region: warm climate, good soils, agriculture dominated economy, a small Central Highlands town - the 'apple centre' of Victoria.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Lease the land to young and or landless farmers.
- Develop a number of opportunities to transition out of direct, on-land farming.
- Create a multi-enterprise model as a co-op to facilitate the opportunity.
- Develop a model to turn original nursery into a commercial business through a partnership.
- Mentoring of experienced with less experienced farmers.
- Online teaching business for organic fruit growing.

Katie & Hugh Finlay

Co-founders, Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op



HARCOURT ORGANIC FARMING CO-OP



CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- Wanted to stay living on the farm with a succession plan of how to 'gracefully exit' when they could no longer physically work on the farm.
- It was important that the land stay productive and increase in productivity. They utilised 12 acres for 5 000 fruit trees but there was a lot of potential for the remaining acreage.

SUCCESS STORY:

THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

- Five different enterprises are utilising the farm and are co-op members.
- Purposefully only just profitable to remain solvent.
- Income from three member types:
 - basic fee for all members,
 - trading fee for trading members,
 - a levy on enterprise income for trading members.
- Other co-op income includes farm-tours with opportunities for other diversification and value-adding options.
- Each enterprise pays a lease payment to the landowners, plus their water and power usage.
- Collective expenses include book-keeping, organic certification and levy, organisation memberships, etc.

HOT TIPS!

From the start, ensure the group has:

- shared values, goals and vision,
- the right business model, and
- an agreed upon decision-making process e.g. Holistic Management



HARCOURT ORGANIC FARMING CO-OP



THE BARRIERS

- Working with different personalities and people.
- The decision-making process.
- Being challenged in unexpected and different ways.
- Having fixed ideas about what should happen.
- Thinking differently and challenging others to see your ideas.

THE CO-OP ENTERPRISES

- Tellurian Fruit Gardens
- Gung Hoe Growers
- Sellar Farmhouse Dairy
- Carr's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery
- Grow Great Fruit

THE ENABLERS

- Worked with experts to explore a lot of different collaborative models to decide which was most suited to their needs.
- The established team formed part of the planning process to work through any potential or perceived issues and ensure everyone was on the same page.
- All members of the co-op (those working on the property) have a positive and co-operative relationship; they all get along.
- A well-considered selection process. Members are carefully selected to ensure they fit in well with the vision and ethos of the HOFC community, "it's critical to the success of the co-op that the people who are in here share values and share common ideas about what's acceptable and what's not" (Hugh Finlay, 2020).
- A strong consultation and negotiation process to form a solid contractual agreement.
- A culture of clear communication and consistent checking-in with everyone's feelings.

Future looking...

1. **Prioritise relationships and authentic working together.** "We didn't say right we're starting a co-op and this is what we're going to do, we said we want to work together, how are we going to do that" (Hugh Finlay, 2020).
2. **Be thorough.** Keep watertight legal agreements - not just handshake agreements.
3. **Let go of expectations and be open to exploring new ways of doing things.** It is not an easy road, but extremely rewarding and worth the effort.

Champions: John Gladigau and Robin Schaefer

Collaborating since: 2009

Industry: Cropping

Location: Northern Murray Mallee: Loxton & Alawoona, South Australia

Size: 10,000 hectares, with 4900ha owned, 5100ha leased and share-farmed

Average annual rainfall: 275 millimetres, 175mm growing season

Soil types: sand over sandy loam, clay loam

Soil pH: 7

SUCCESS STORY: THE BENEFITS

- A solid return on investment e.g., in average yield seasons, the collaborative business has returned an extra \$100K in gross margin gains.
- New economies of scale, particularly with improved machine efficiency. Access to most efficient and up-to-date machinery to improve farming practices.
- Improved farm management decisions based on a corporate structure that is designed for transparency and accountability.
- Flexibility in their farm operations and personal lives - they receive a commercial wage and four weeks annual leave - promoting work/life balance and family time.



**BULLA
BURRA
FARMS**



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- Increased cost of production.
- From his traditional 2000ha ordinary farm, John started questioning the possibilities for the future: how to create efficiencies and economies of scale.
- John considered collaboration as a way to ignite the future of sharing
- Through a Nuffield scholarship, John investigated collaborative business structures across the globe.
- Being close friends, John, Robin and their wives, decided to join farms.



THE OPPORTUNITY

- To form a company structure: an operations company that leases the land owned by the two families, (and land owned by others) and purchases/owns its equipment.
- To develop a more profitable and sustainable cropping operation that preserves the integrity and heritage of two distinct family farms.

HOT TIPS!

- **Start from the ground up:** what do you want to achieve?
- **Crunch the numbers first:** what do you need to make a profitable business?



BULLA BURRA FARMS



Family farming collaboration in action: **Bulla Burra Farms**

THE BARRIERS

- Lack of knowledge and understanding about different business structures and opportunities for collaboration.
- Not having effective financial records to assist with future planning and predicting.
- Ineffective communication and interested members having different priorities.
- Thinking you have to be involved in all facets of business operation.

THE ENABLERS

- Focus on the principles of collaboration, not just on the business model by being professional, transparent and accountable. The model can then be adapted to suit the needs of each group.
- Start with a blank sheet of paper and ask your collaborators: what is the ideal farm? What does it look like?
- Create a culture where all employees are equally respected based on the quality of work they do, not what they do. At Bulla Burra, all employees are encouraged to consider that they "are all owners". Employees who are proud of their work and feel appreciated, will go above and beyond.
- Enable each person to focus on their strengths and therefore enact authentic collaboration and growth. Farmers can focus on growing and others can work other parts of the supply chain.

"Running your own farm you have to be a jack of all trades and a master of none, whereas concentrating on areas where you have the most skill and passion helps push our farm productivity and profitability forward."

Robin Schaefer

Future looking...

1. **Find collaborators:** Talk to others in the region and or in your industry to locate those who share a similar vision and value with the goal to develop a collaborative business structure together?
2. **Explore the possibilities:** get informed and get creative. What could the future of your business look like?
3. **Know your strength:** Be confident in your passion and area/s of strength. Focus on bringing this expertise to the arrangement to improve efficiency.

Champion: Debrah Novak
Age of incorporated association: 3 years
Industry: representing mixed industries
Location: Clarence Valley NSW
Region: agricultural-fed economy, also includes tourism for the combination of coastal and country towns.

HOT TIPS!

- **Be consistent:** for your stall-holders and patrons. This builds capacity, trust and wellbeing.
- **Set clear expectations,** and communicate these effectively. This includes "no gossiping!"

Debrah Novak

Chairperson, Clarence Valley Food Inc.



CLARENCE VALLEY FOOD INC.



CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- Debrah saw there was a need to connect the community with the amazing diversity of food produced in the Clarence region.
- When the Yamba farmers market came up for tender, Debrah saw the potential: no one was willing to apply for the tender, there were few stalls and there were many non-compliant practices.
- Debrah was approached to take over the Grafton Farmers Market. Again, Debrah saw the potential in shifting sites and the time to suit the community.
- The Clarence Valley Correctional Centre had no local procurement policy for using local produce.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Establishment of Clarence Valley Food Inc as the representative voice of primary producers in the region.
- Developed a Farmers Market Policy for the Clarence Valley Council.
- Established a farmers market delivery service (as a response to the Covid-19 situation).
- Documented a set of 'market rules' to ensure consistency, clear communication and understanding for stall holders and shoppers. Follows NSW guidelines. Gives confidence to the consumer.
- Utilised a strong business model to grow the markets into a popular and thriving enterprise.
- Lobbied for government support to get a 30% local procurement policy secured for the Clarence Valley Correctional Centre.



CLARENCE VALLEY FOOD INC.



CLARENCE VALLEY AREA

SUCCESS STORY: THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

Yamba Market:

- Growth from 15 to 44 stalls in 2-years since takeover.
- Increase in patronage from approximately 200 to 250 people.
- Generates 4 - 5 million dollars annually into the local economy.

Grafton Market:

- Morning market transformed from 7 stalls with 200 patrons to 25 stalls and 1500 patrons in just 2-weeks after takeover.

Local Procurement Policy:

- 30% local procurement policy for the Clarence Valley Correctional Centre secured providing local growers certainty in supply arrangements.



THE BARRIERS

- Negotiating with all parties to ensure everyone's needs are met.
- Ensuring that everyone follows the rules and policies.

THE ENABLERS

- Identifying grant funding opportunities that support the organisations supporting local growers e.g. finding funding for a cold storage facility for the Clarence Valley Correctional Centre to keep the local produce.
- Digital technology provides a means to connect with people and keep track of your produce. It can save time and develop the potential of your farm.
- Support, educate and up-skill stallholders e.g. developing their own branding and displaying at the markets.
- Ensure actions are based on evidence e.g. keep records of weekly numbers etc.

Future looking...

1. **Set up some rules, a framework and a policy** at a local government level to support and protect the wishes of those in the sector. This further ensures clear communication and that everyone knows the expectations.
2. **Keep connected with your community.** Ensure they know they are being heard and supported. Utilise digital technology to connect: keep updated, stay informed and track your produce and other data.
3. **Embrace Change:** Adapt, adopt and be fearless in what you want to do!

Champion: Robbie Commens
Industry: Macadamia orchard project management
Location: Northern NSW
Region: This business operates in the floodplain regions.

2-TONNE ENTERPRISES

2te

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

1. **Capital value growth:** currently macadamia orchards are worth up to 3 to 4 times the value of the broad-acre cropping industry.
2. **The most productive orchards in Australia have been on the floodplains in NSW.** This has increased investor confidence especially over the last 10 out of 12 years.
3. **Significant returns.** Not just capital based but also the annual production. Market shifts have seen an increase in the demand for nuts, with highlighted health benefits.

SUCCESS STORY: THE NUMBERS...

Macadamias take four years to produce a crop and pay back their input after a decade. This is calculated at today's prices where the net annual return can be \$200,000 for 20ha at 1t/ha.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Increase productivity through intensive macadamia cropping.
- Diversify by adding a macadamia orchard to your existing farm



Robbie Commens

Managing Director, 2 Tonne Enterprises



HOT TIP!

"Growers with 50 or 100ha could diversify a modest area into macadamias, and retain the majority of their farm with their current broad acre crops. Reducing their orchard development costs, maintaining cash flow, improving their capital value and providing risk management for their family property into the future".

Robbie Commens, 2TE, in The Land

2te **2-TONNE ENTERPRISES**



THE BARRIER/S

- **Capital** will vary enterprise to enterprise. The method to break through the capital barrier will also vary enterprise to enterprise.
- **Knowledge** is a barrier that can be solved through collaborative farming; by working with like minded growers and talking directly with experts in their fields. Knowledge is needed on both the financial and the agronomic aspects of the new cropping enterprise.
- **Confidence.** Increased knowledge will increase confidence: the confidence to act, or confidence not to act.

Macadamia orchards provide opportunities for intensification and diversification

THE ENABLERS

- Invest in building great relationships; they give the best returns.
- Relationships can assist in building value with:
 - machinery,
 - innovation,
 - ideas,
 - regulations,
- Actively seek out like-minded producers through creating authentic opportunities to connect and collaborate.
- Relationships with strong foundations create strong communities and lifelong friends!

Future looking...

1. **The number one source of information for growers,** is other growers. Expand your knowledge and understanding of your industry through collaboration.
2. **Create opportunities to collaborate.** For example, why not invite an expert to come and speak and host a lunch with your community?
3. **Do your homework.** Decide if converting your whole crop is the best option or if you could diversity by converting some of your land.

Champion: Stuart Crosthwaite

Age of coop: 3 years

Industry: Dairy

Location: Ovens & Kiewa Valley, North-East Victoria

Region: Dairy is the main industry in the region followed by beef, lamb, wool, cropping and horticulture. Collectively, along with forest products, tourism, value-added processing industries and manufacturing, they contribute an estimated \$3.24 billion every year to the State's economic wealth.



CATALYST FOR CHANGE

In 2017, after the failure of Murray-Goulburn, dairy farmers in the Victoria's North East were left with no option but to sell their milk to a large multinational company and be price takers. They knew there had to be another way.



THE OPPORTUNITY

- Five farming families started Mountain Milk Co-operative, a farmer-owned dairy co-operative.
- The co-op's purpose is to create value for its members and empower them to take greater control of their future.
- Create a path that the next generation will be proud to follow, ensuring a sustainable future for the farms and the region.

Stuart Crosthwaite

Chairperson, Food Next Door Co-op



SUCCESS STORY:

THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

Today Mountain Milk Co-operative:

- Has grown from 5 to 8 member farms,
- Has an \$11.2 million annual turnover,
- Produces 23 million litres of milk per year,
- Has forward supply arrangements with Freedom Foods, Gundowring Fine Foods and Lactalis, and
- Is looking to develop their own branding and sell bottled milk to their community.

"Initially our number one goal was to make our farming businesses more profitable. A big processor will basically provide you a milk price and leave you to generate your own profit. But in a co-operative like ours you can help each other to achieve more profitability."

Stuart Crosthwaite



Stuart Crosthwaite and his herd



MOUNTAIN MILK CO-OPERATIVE

THE BARRIERS

- Developing a common business and strategic plan that everyone agrees with can be a challenge.
- The fear of breaking the corporate ties, and uncertainty if this will have consequences.
- Building a solid governance framework and culture within the co-op. It is a start up business and takes time.

THE ENABLERS

- Committing to a good amount of planning and governance – business and strategic.
- Establishing a business model that will work for the community well into the future.
- Asking for help, advice and support. Mountain Milk Co-op employed a CEO to do the work and provide guidance.
- Surrounding yourself with good people. Mountain Milk Co-op appreciate and feel blessed with an amazing array of professional people with skills that help our decision making. You will have a homogenous board and group of farmers and sometimes your decision making will be limited due to lack of skills. Ask for help, surround yourselves with key skill sets because how you make decisions is critical.

Future looking...

1. **Don't be scared.** There's plenty of help in the co-op sector. Co-op Federation have been fantastic, not to mention other co-ops. You feel like you are part of a huge family where there's an amazing amount of support and assistance available. Everyone is co-operative and collaborative!
2. **You need a good business plan.** Spend the time up front and invest in a good plan and foundation. It's no different to a corporate structure - without a plan and good governance you won't succeed! You need to understand where your ambitions lie and having plans to support that is really important. You will encounter uncertainty, risk and be challenged with decision making – but a good set of plans helps guide you.
3. **There are opportunities out there.** The uncertainty might feel too big, but what have you got to lose? Back yourself as there is an amazing array of opportunity and prosperity for you. The co-operative structure will become your competitive advantage!

Champion: Stuart Pettigrew

Industry: Orchardist

Location: Murray-Darling Riverland, South Australia

Region: The region covers approximately 53,780 square kilometres and much of the land in the region is used for primary production, including pastoral lands, dryland cropping, grazing, horticulture, irrigation and dairy farming.

SUCCESS STORY:

THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

Stuart averages 45 to 50 tonne of fruit per hectare, where the benchmark in areas like this used to be 20 to 25 tonnes per hectare of marketable fruit.

Stuart's project saved 12 megalitres of water. This saving is part of the ongoing work to help restore the Murray Darling river system.

Stuart Pettigrew,
Principal, Ag Dynamics



AG DYNAMICS



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- With an existing 4 hectares and about 10 acres of new orchard, Stuart had two options for irrigation to install rather than the old overhead system. He chose mini sprinklers, that give reasonably large coverage across the whole orchard floor.
- He sourced, applied and received funding for soil development to implement a higher-intensity orchard system including closer planting and a modern sprinkler system.
- Part of that was to install a fertiliser and filtration system. Stuart runs that from a solar panel. It is about as automated as you can get for a property of this size.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Increased yield.
- Transferable opportunities for water use in other industries.
- Address water infrastructure and security issues.
- Turning unproductive land into productive land.

HOT TIPS!

- **Recognise that it is a system you are investing into, not a solution.** Solving one problem only leads you to the next limitation of your property, and you need to work your way through that one.
- **Don't lose sight of the target you set yourself.** It is easy to only see costs, but if you understand what you are trying to achieve, then that helps through the tough (or boring) parts of managing change.



AG DYNAMICS



Stuart Pettigrew

THE BARRIERS

- Up front capital required and long lead times to payback typical of tree crops.
- Needing a crystal ball to understand future trends in crops that can take 7 years to reach maturity.
- The need to not only invest in one element of the farming system, but all parts to ensure success.

THE ENABLERS

- Having a plan for where I wanted the investment to take me.
- Only taking on what I could manage.
- Having good support people around me.



Super High Density Almonds in Spain

Future looking...

1. **Fully understand the crop you are working in.** If you are new to the crop, don't rush into changes but take your time to get to know the system.
2. **Have a clear target in mind.** Be willing to change, but understand where your finishing point is when you start.
3. **Budget conservatively.** Doing part of the system half-heartedly is a waste of all your investment.

Champion: Glen Chapman

Age of business: 3 years

Industry: Regenerative Agriculture

Location: Armidale/Guyra region in the New England, NSW

Region: The bioregion lies mainly in the temperate to cool temperate climate zone of NSW, which is characterised by warm summers, with uniform rainfall generally occurring in summer.

SUCCESS STORY:

THE NUMBERS SO FAR...

- For a small property we have to focus on both the costs we put in and the turnover we generate. Because of our size this turnover is not in numbers but by selling directly to retail and wholesale customers. This takes our average Gross Margin from \$50-70/DSE to \$160/DSE.
- Our biggest cost currently is our finance of the land. I would not advise people get started our way especially if you are trying to make the farm your sole income source. There are many ways to access land that can be budgeted into the production costs.

Glen Chapman,

Owner/Director,
Southern Blue Regenerative



SOUTHERN
BLUE
REGENERATIVE



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- I observed alternative production methods to what I saw being taught at uni through my parent's involvement in studying Grazing for Profit.
- Inspired by what I saw, I began researching alternative practices such as Keyline Farming and the work of the Rodale Institute.
- I work to inspire and educate others through workshops, field days and providing fresh produce to the community.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Move into more sustainable, regenerative ways of farming as demonstrated in the cattle and sheep industry.
- Join with other regenerative farmers to create education hubs around sustainable and regenerative practices.
- Sell produce directly to the community.
- Value-adding.

HOT TIPS!

- **Clearly define your vision** and why you are doing what you are doing. This goes for all the parts of your life not just your farm business.
- **Create a clear plan including all the finances**, plan out at least 5 years ahead. Create scenarios and build in buffers and or exit strategies.
- **Test and Monitor all your changes** to ensure they work for you in your situation.
- Plan --> Implement --> Monitor --> Control --> Replan



SOUTHERN
BLUE
REGENERATIVE

THE BARRIERS

- **Being afraid or unable to take any perceived risk.** Even if the risk is very low, there is a fear of failure rather than embracing the failures (and make them small ones) and learn from them to move forward.
- **Changing your thinking from maximising production to create the required profit.** Change the question from – “how much profit do I want?” to “how much profit do I NEED?” Many farming operations are about more output or more profit well above what is needed to satisfy the people – changing this thinking is a big challenge.
- **Trying to do too much too soon,** make single changes at a time. I see many people start out trying all different enterprises and making lots of changes all at once. Their focus is split and they struggle to do any one part well.



VALUE-ADDING: Selling farm produce direct to consumers

THE ENABLERS

- **Define your clear vision of your future** – personally and for your business – you need to define your why to help guide how and what you do each day.
- **Get a handle on your financial position** – build your financial literacy. I see so many people make changes to their production without knowing how they are currently financially positioned. Or knowing what is and isn't working. You need to have a good handle on the profitability of your business so you know how much you can invest to make changes.
- **Focus on making small changes and monitor the results of every decision.** DON'T make a change unless you know how to monitor the results to determine if you are off track or it has gone wrong. Start monitoring at the earliest possible point to minimise the risk and impact on your production.

Future looking...

1. **Regenerative principles focus** on a balance of improving your land and environment, creating a sustainable profit AND looking after the people and your community.
2. **Invest in changes in your operation** that give you a 100% return on investment in 1 year – maybe 2 - when you start. Yes, it is possible and it will fundamentally change the economic situation of your business when you do.

Champion: Tony Hill
Age of co-op: 2 years
Industry: Regenerative agriculture
Location: NSW Southern Tablelands
Region: Characterised by scenic rural landscapes and coastal scenery, the region is supported by strong tourism and agriculture industries.



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

With the increasing pressures and implications of climate change on local and global communities, this group looked to develop an innovative way forward for land, soil and food production.

SUCCESS STORY:

As a farmer owned and run co-operative (Australian Holistic Management Cooperative), Land to Market offers farmers:

- services for the ecological monitoring and regeneration of agricultural land, and
- an outcomes-based verification that can be used as a brand in the marketplace that gives consumers and businesses the opportunity to make their spending decisions in a way that recognises farmers' efforts to care for their land.

Land to Market has 35 members and was recently awarded the Grand Champion Australian Government Innovation in Agriculture Award by NSW Landcare.

Tony Hill,
 Executive Chair,
 Australian Holistic
 Management Cooperative Ltd

THE OPPORTUNITY

- Encourage sustainable and regenerative practices in the region.
- Build a brand for the region founded under sustainable regenerative practices.
- Be part of a co-operative business where each member has equal share in the business.
- Utilise a credible and transparent sourcing verification program based on actual ecological outcomes.
- Provide an opportunity for restaurants, food producers, etc to convey a valuable story of hope, optimism and proven regeneration to their own patrons.
- Create a supportive network for farmers practicing regenerative agriculture.



"For the first time, there is an opportunity to reward farmers for their provision of ecosystem services, in addition to the produce that they sell."

Tony Hill



LAND TO MARKET



THE OPPORTUNITY

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The 4 Steps to Ecological Outcome Verification™ ('EOV'): for the Land to Market program.

- 1: **Farmer joins – training is offered.** Farmers join the program! While training is not compulsory, farmers are encouraged to train in ecological monitoring process that underpins EOV.
- 2: **Monitoring site established and baseline assessment conducted.** The long-term monitoring site is set up and a baseline assessment is conducted there. The next assessment at this particular site will be conducted by an accredited verifier in year 5.
- 3: **Annual monitoring.** To satisfy the requirement for annual ecological monitoring, short term monitoring by trained and accredited EOV monitors is conducted at least once per year.
- 4: **5-yearly monitoring.** In addition to the short term annual monitoring, every 5 years the farm undergoes a detailed evaluation process of ecological functions at the long-term monitoring site.

Champions: Rachel Ward & Mick Green

Length of arrangement: 2 years

Industry: Regenerative Agriculture

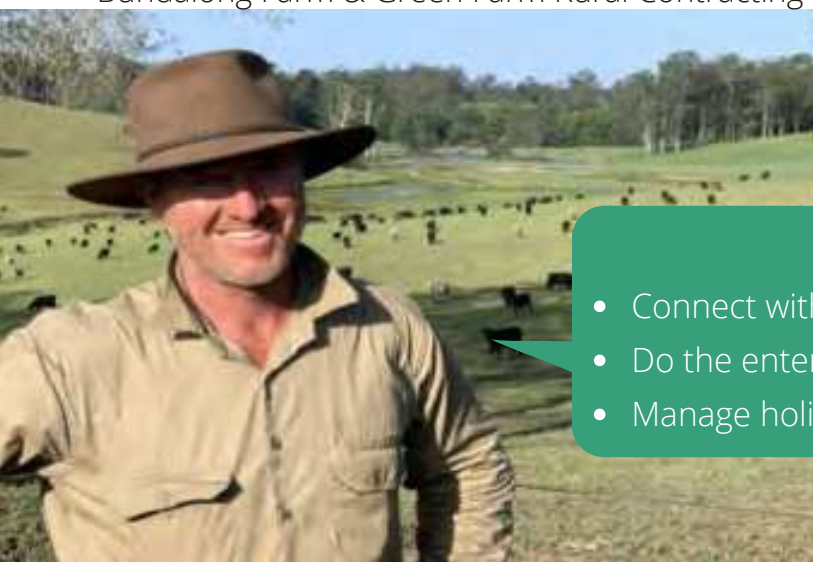
Location: Nambucca Valley, NSW

Region: The region's leading sources of business income are Construction and Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, and together accounted for 45 per cent of business income.

SUCCESS STORY:

- The transformation to regenerative agriculture is in infancy however the success lies in the process and the partnership.
- Mick Green looks after 324 hectares in a combination of ownership, lease and management. Mick adopts a couple of key strategies to ensure his farm is regenerative – 'cell grazing' and untouched borders (e.g. dam, fence and steep slopes) [1].
- The partnership between the two neighbours continues to thrive and grow after navigating the tricky waters of the start-up of a business arrangement together.
- Profitability through sharing equipment.
- Transitioned 350ha to regenerative agriculture.

Mick Green,
Farmer/Owner,
Bundalong Farm & Green Farm Rural Contracting



EASTBOURNE & BUNDALONG

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

- Gradually recognising that the way they were farming was unsustainable, both economically and ecologically, Rachel began talking about the possibility of farming a different way.
- After fires and drought Rachel destocked all but a herd of breeders.
- Ultimately, the bushfires were a catalyst for change and since then she has jumped boots and all onto the regenerative agricultural trail.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- They joined their herds together and stopped drenching, applying any chemical fertilisers or biocides and began cell grazing their herds. They have added water tanks and more troughs and are now in the process of further dividing pastures and erecting permanent electric fencing.
- Providing consumers with best practice, high welfare, chemical free beef while optimising the health of our soils is their ultimate goal.

HOT TIPS!

- Connect with others in your area.
- Do the enterprises that suits you and your land.
- Manage holistically, communicate and monitor!

EASTBOURNE & BUNDALONG

HOT TIPS!

- Do a holistic management course.
- Check out Graeme Sait's bio-products.
- Read case studies on Soils for Life website.

Rachel Ward,
Farmer/Actress/Director,
Eastbourne Farm & Newtown Films

THE BARRIERS

- It doesn't cost a cent to change a paradigm however matching personal and business values with landscape needs can be challenging.
- The risk of jumping into a new frontier of farming with not a huge number of long term practitioners for mentorship.
- Climate and conditions: they began when all boundary fences were burnt in fire and just emerged from very dry year.
- Fed stock and then sold more than usual so bouncing back and restocking in high market was added pressure.
- Fear, procrastination, intergenerational norms and expectations and negative people.



THE ENABLERS

- Joining forces: the two neighbouring farmers working together by joining their herds had greater impact on cell grazing management.
- Background knowledge: Mick and Daren Newbury (who we employed) had both done some regenerative agriculture courses and had read extensively on subject for many years. They knew the concepts well.
- Combining strengths: Mick is the farmer and has the knowledge. Rachel had resources from off-farm income sources to support the venture during the transition.

Future looking...

1. **Start!** And don't be concerned about the mistakes - that is part of the learning process.
2. **Transition at a pace you can afford.** Holistic financial management planning has really helped to get control of finances.
3. **Patience.** It takes 3 - 5 years for the soil to wake up and transition from years of soil ignorance. Biodiversity improves with time. So know it will come. It is a life time change. It doesn't have to happen all at once.
4. **Find a local mentor,** or join with someone who is passionate about the same goals and where the sum of your parts is greater than the individual. Engage with passionate and positive people who won't waste your time.

[1] Reference: Scott Gooding, *The Sustainable Diet*, (UK: Hachette, 2019)

Champion: Lorraine Gordon
Age of business: 35 years
Industry: cattle grazing and carbon farming
Location: Ebor, Northern Tablelands NSW
Altitude: 1500 metres
Rainfall: up to 2000mm
Soil type: Red Basalt

OPTIONS FOR REALISING VALUE

- 1. Register the project without contracts:** through the Federal Government. Contracts to sell ACCU's can be organised later.
- 2. Register and include an ERF** contract:** to get paid at the Government price for any increases.
- 3. Include a secondary market contract (e.g. Corporate market):** to increase the value of the carbon payment.
- 4. Sell ACCU's to specific buyers:** with a full history of flora and fauna.
- 5. Sell products which are "Carbon Plus"** rather than just "Carbon Neutral": higher price again.
- 6. Having no contracts in place for now and selling on the 'spot' market when credits become available.** This is a safe option in that if you don't increase carbon for some reason you don't have to deliver!

***ACCU:** Australian Carbon Credit Units

****ERF:** Emission Reduction Fund

Lorraine Gordon

Director, Moffat Falls Pty Ltd



MOFFAT FALLS



MOFFAT FALLS

CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- Build resilience into family farming business
- Increase in risks and threats from climate change.
- Value-adding opportunity to diversify farming practices.

9-STEPS TO CARBON FARMING

- 1. Carbon ready:** conduct an initial farm assessment and appraisal.
- 2. Complete a Carbon Management Plan** to increase soil carbon.
- 3. Register the farm** as a project with the Federal Government. It is a lengthy process - so be prepared!
- 4. Consider entering the project** into competitive ERF auction process for a carbon contract to sell ACCU's to the Federal Government within 10 years.
- 5. Complete baseline documentation** to establish history of previous practice.
- 6. Baseline soil testing and audit** (government requires 3 testing regimes spaced apart in total) includes: mapping, recording, analysis and record keeping
- 7. Review Management Plan annually.**
- 8. External independent audits** undertaken with the 3 testing regimes.
- 9. Payment to farmer within 3 to 5 years** from sale of ACCU's to either Government, Corporates or both!

HOT TIPS!

- Measure your baseline.
- Register with Government but don't start trading as prices are only increasing.
- Price range: \$15 Gov., \$30 Corporate and \$45 International.
- Opportunity to Carbon Stack by including Biodiversity offsets and credits



Moffat Falls, Ebor, NSW

PRACTICES THAT DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO CARBON FARMING

- Paddocks of bare soil/lack of ground cover
- Monocrops/lack of biodiversity
- Spraying out paddocks prior to sowing new pastures or crops
- Set stocking
- Reliance on synthetic chemicals, fertilisers and pesticides
- Over tillage/disturbance of soil

CARBON FARMING PRACTICES AT MOFFAT FALLS

- Time controlled grazing and holistic management.
- Correcting mineral deficiencies based on soil testing.
- Increase stock density by either increasing numbers and moves or reducing size of paddocks.
- Adding an additional mineral not used before such as gypsum.
- Composting.
- Multi species pastures cropping for winter months.



Future looking...

1. **Research is continuing** into the types of practices and methods that build carbon.
2. **Carbon farming adopts regenerative agricultural practices.** This will increase your triple bottom line in a changing climate.
3. **Watch the market.** There are both government and corporate markets domestically and overseas. Carbon prices are increasing so keep informed!

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Judy & Charlie Hocking with Jeremy Collins: Retiring Farmers | New & Young Farmers

<https://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/5784792/cultivating-farm-opportunities-for-the-next-generation/#!>

Emma-Kate Rose: Food Connect | Community Supporting Agriculture

<https://foodconnect.com.au/>

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/978904/5345680-episode-14-food-connect-with-emma-kate-rose-and-morag-gamble>

Richard Symes: ABC Honey | Producer Co-operative

<https://www.abchoney.com.au/>

<https://youtu.be/RMGvvV2hlfA>

Sally Ruljancich: PromCoast | Paddock to Plate Collective

<https://www.promcoastfoodcollective.com.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/promcoastfoodcollective/>

Bill Hoffman: Hoffman's Beef Benchmarking | Producers Sharing Data to Enhance Profitability

<https://farmingtogether.com.au/farming-together-data-group-adds-up-for-beef-farmers/>

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/4410743/keen-weaner-producers-warned-dont-lose-focus/>

<https://www.beefcentral.com/production/revolutionary-change-through-mentoring-for-young-victorian-producers/>

Brian Wehlberg: Inside Outside Management (Regenerative Farming) | Holistic Decision making

<https://www.insideoutsidemgt.com.au/>

<https://www.theland.com.au/story/6415973/energy-in-regenerated-landscape/>

Bart Buston: Fair Fish South Australia | Community Supported Fishery

<https://fairfishsa.com.au/>

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/messenger/west-beaches/new-fair-fish-app-and-website-will-allow-people-to-buy-seafood-online-thanks-to-federal-grant-through-wildcatch-fisheries/news-story/c41065707848add9a38a0ad68d6777f3>