

Pest Troubles



Thomas Wieringa
Narrabri Public School



Enviro Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

In 2014, the “Farming Families” Enviro-Stories program provided local kids with the opportunity to write and illustrate stories about farming, farming communities and sustainable farming practices. This program was sponsored by the Cotton Research & Development Corporation, North West and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.

Cotton Research & Development Corporation

Cotton Research & Development Corporation (CRDC) is a partnership between the Australian Government and the Australian cotton industry. CRDC invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and extension projects that seek to enhance the environmental, social and economic values associated with cotton production systems for the benefit of cotton industry participants, regional communities and the Australian people.

www.crdc.com.au

Local Land Services

Local Land Services delivers customer-focussed services to farmers, landholders and the community across rural and regional NSW. Local Land Services bring together agricultural production advice, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single organisation. This program has been supported by both the North West Local Land Services and the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au

Pest Troubles

Author: Thomas Wieringa

Teacher: Claire Allen

School: Narrabri Public School

The “Farming Families” Enviro-Stories program has been proudly supported by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, North West Local Land Services and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services. This program was held in support of the United Nations 2014 International Year of Family Farming.



The “Farming Families” collection consists of the following books:

- A Farming Family
- Rearing Polly
- Eddie the Echidna
- Mystery in the Chicken Yard
- Mya and Jack’s Experience of Cotton
- Pest Troubles
- Farmer Matt Saves the Day
- A Sustainable Farm
- Going to the Cattle Yards

ISBN: 978-0-9941931-6-2

The Enviro-Stories Education Program is a PeeKdesigns initiative.

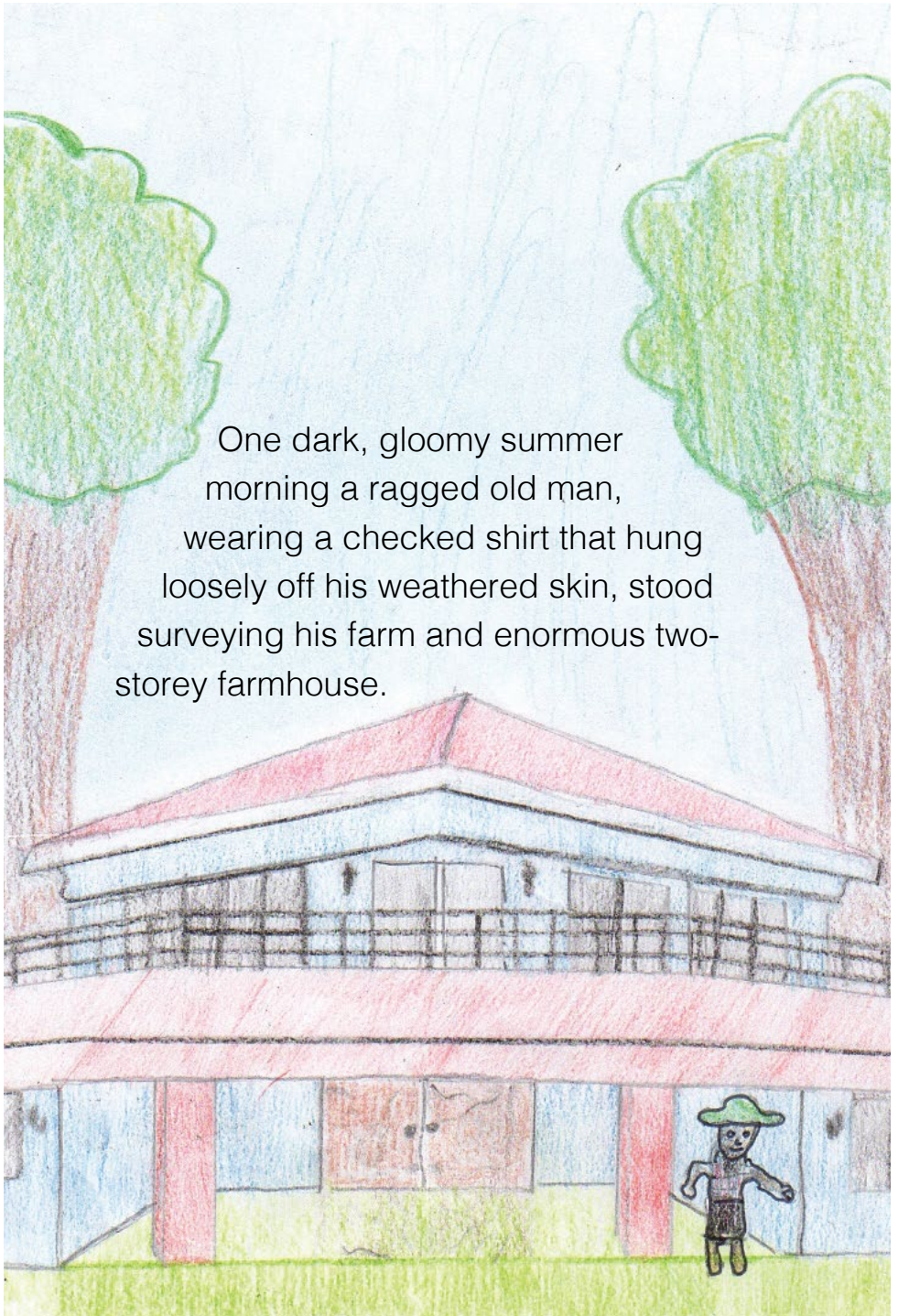
Graphic design by PeeKdesigns, www.peekdesigns.com.au

Printed by Greenridge Press, www.greenridgepress.com.au

Copyright © 2014 Cotton Research & Development Corporation, www.crdc.com.au

Citation: Wieringa, T. 2014. *Pest Troubles*. Cotton Research & Development Corporation, NSW.

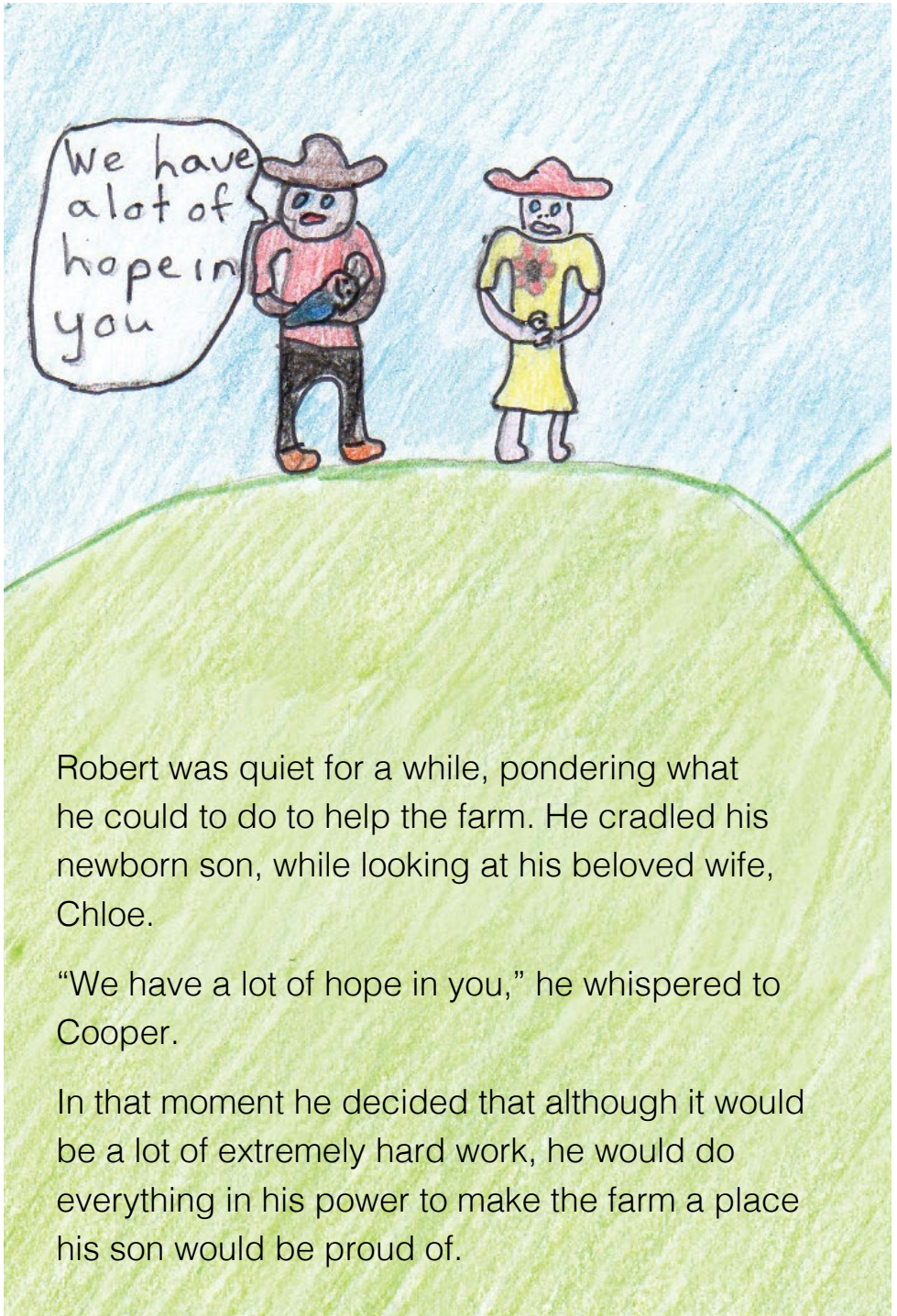
One dark, gloomy summer morning a ragged old man, wearing a checked shirt that hung loosely off his weathered skin, stood surveying his farm and enormous two-storey farmhouse.



Robert observed the dry, dusty paddocks overgrown with weeds. He also noticed that the massive balcony was hanging off the edge of the house's roof in a peculiar fashion. He sighed, "We cannot get past another year like this."

His family had run the farm for six generations, but now it looked horrible.





Robert was quiet for a while, pondering what he could do to help the farm. He cradled his newborn son, while looking at his beloved wife, Chloe.

“We have a lot of hope in you,” he whispered to Cooper.

In that moment he decided that although it would be a lot of extremely hard work, he would do everything in his power to make the farm a place his son would be proud of.



12 years of extremely hard work later...

There Cooper stood with his blue heelers, Spud and Rocket looking over the farm with a practiced eye. He was twelve years old and was scanning the fields closely like his father Robert had taught him.



Cooper was an only child and was always trying to find ways to help his mother and father out on the farm.

The farm looked quite spectacular, but hidden amongst the beauty they were still having problems with their crops.



Coopers daily routine was to walk through the paddocks to look for problems on the farm. He noticed that the plants and crops looked unhealthy. They were having trouble with pollination and there were vicious pests that were slowly destroying the crops.

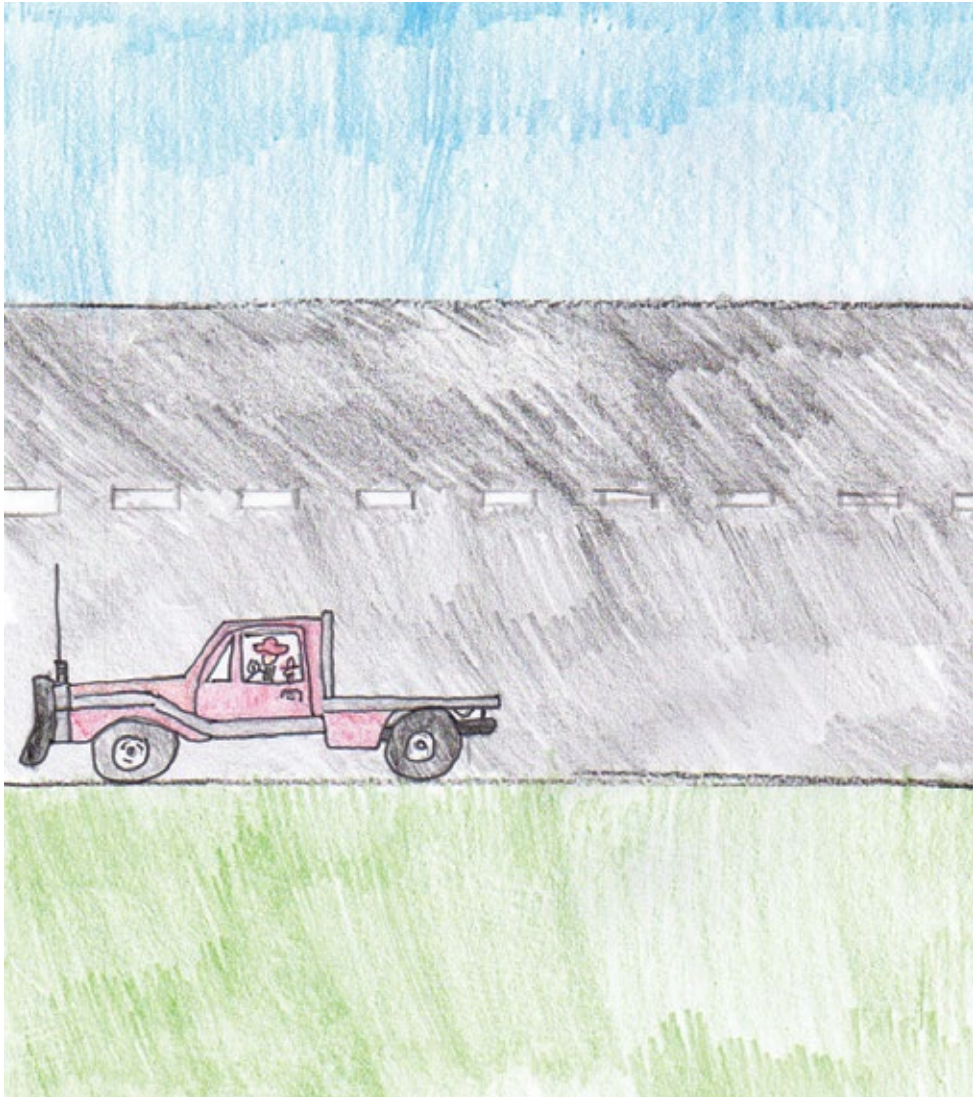
He was very confused and decided to report it to his dad.

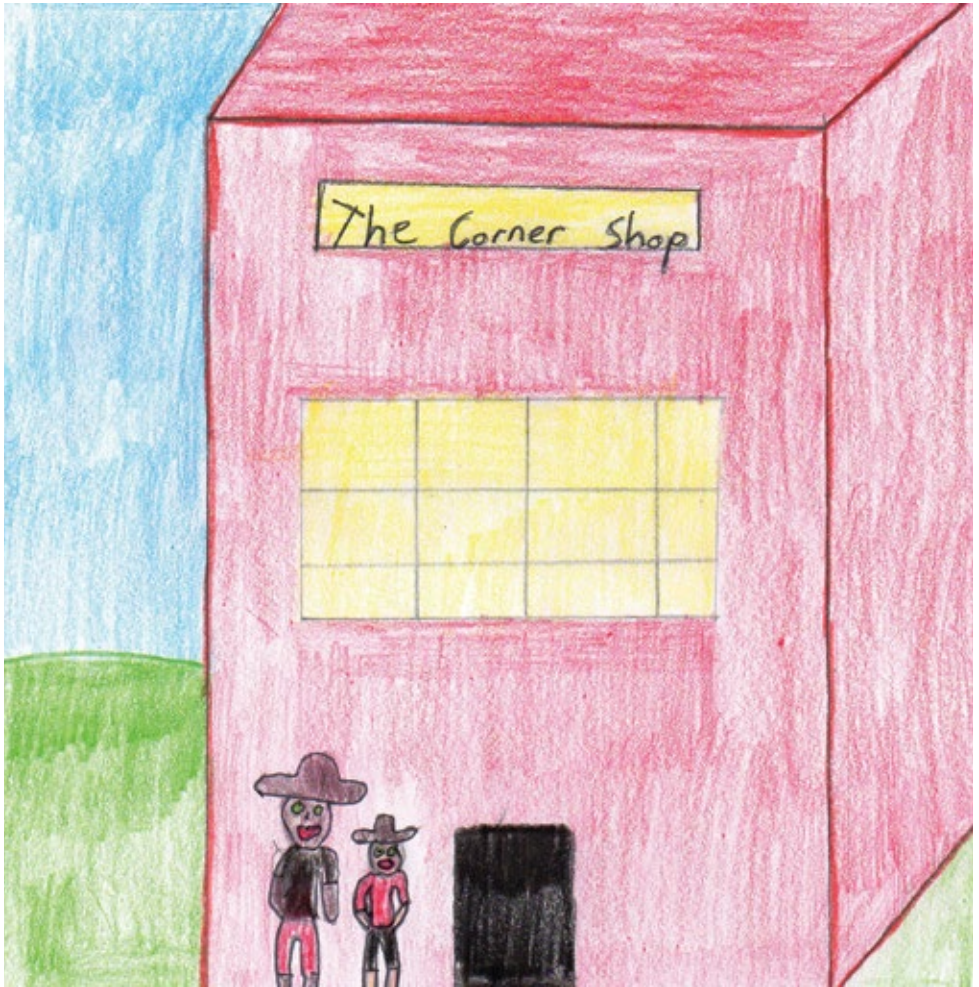
When he told his dad about this, he was just as puzzled. Robert walked outside to see for himself. He said to Cooper, "We will see what happens over the next few days."



The days wore on and the condition of the crops wasn't getting any better. In fact, they were getting worse!

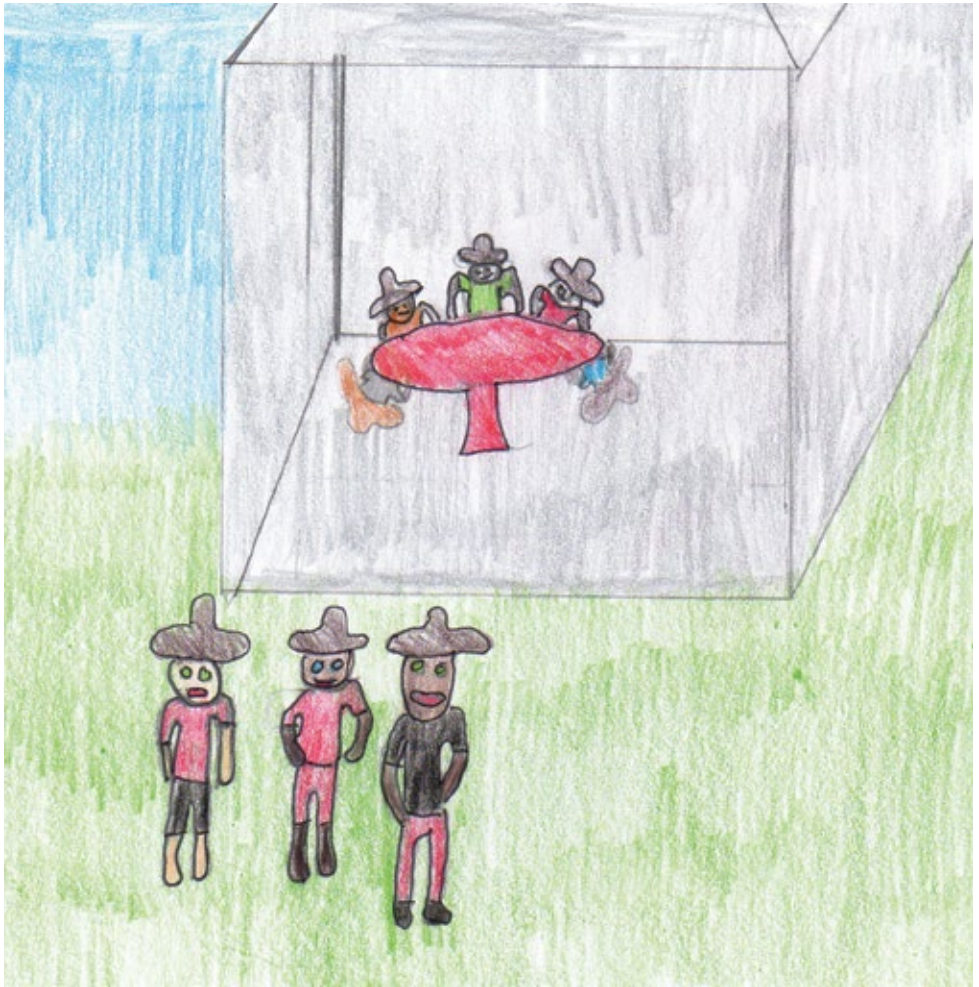
Robert and Cooper decided to go into town, eager to learn why their crops were unhealthy.





When they reached town they pulled up at the corner shop and got out of the old rusty Ute.

They went into the shop to find Robert's old mate Brock. Robert explained the situation to Brock with Cooper adding on additional information occasionally.



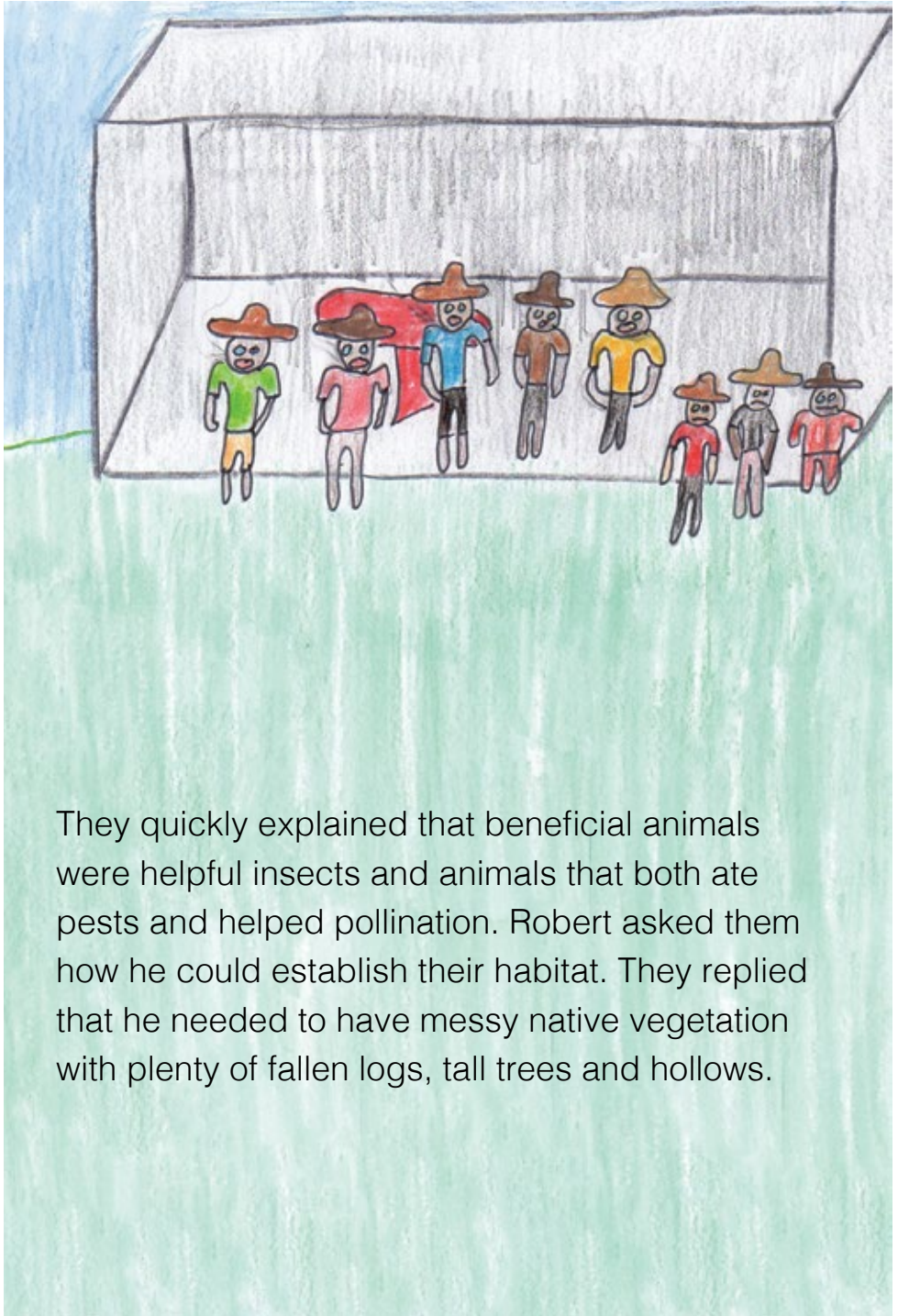
Brock directed them to a small shack where they met up with lots of other farmers that were all crowded around a table discussing serious matters.

When Robert told the group about his problem, their faces grew grave.

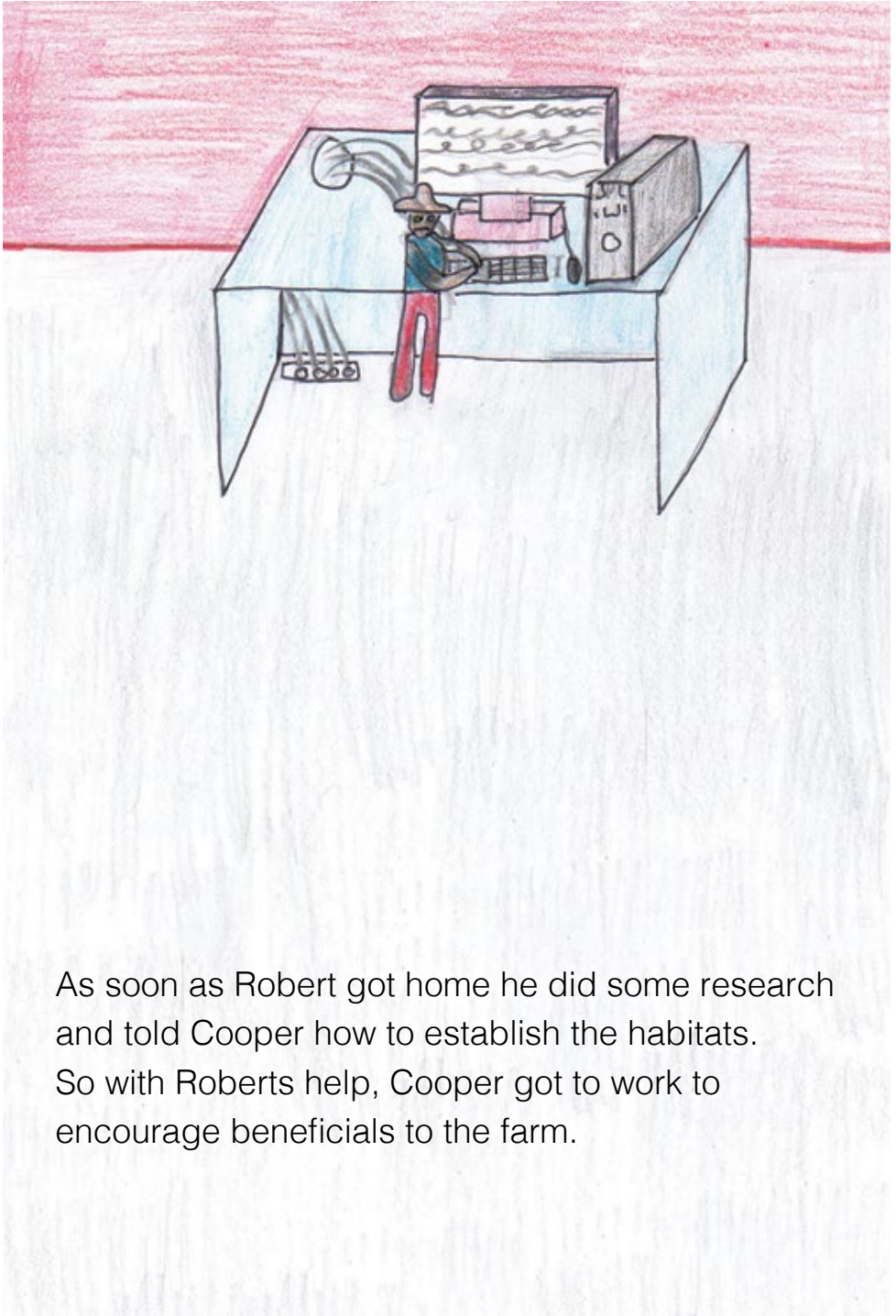


After discussing Robert and Cooper's pest and pollination problems, the farmers all said in unison that they needed to encourage some beneficials on the farm. Robert and Cooper were puzzled having no idea what they were talking about.

They told them that they should use fewer pesticides and develop habitats of messy native vegetation for beneficial insects and animals. These beneficials would then help the crops.



They quickly explained that beneficial animals were helpful insects and animals that both ate pests and helped pollination. Robert asked them how he could establish their habitat. They replied that he needed to have messy native vegetation with plenty of fallen logs, tall trees and hollows.



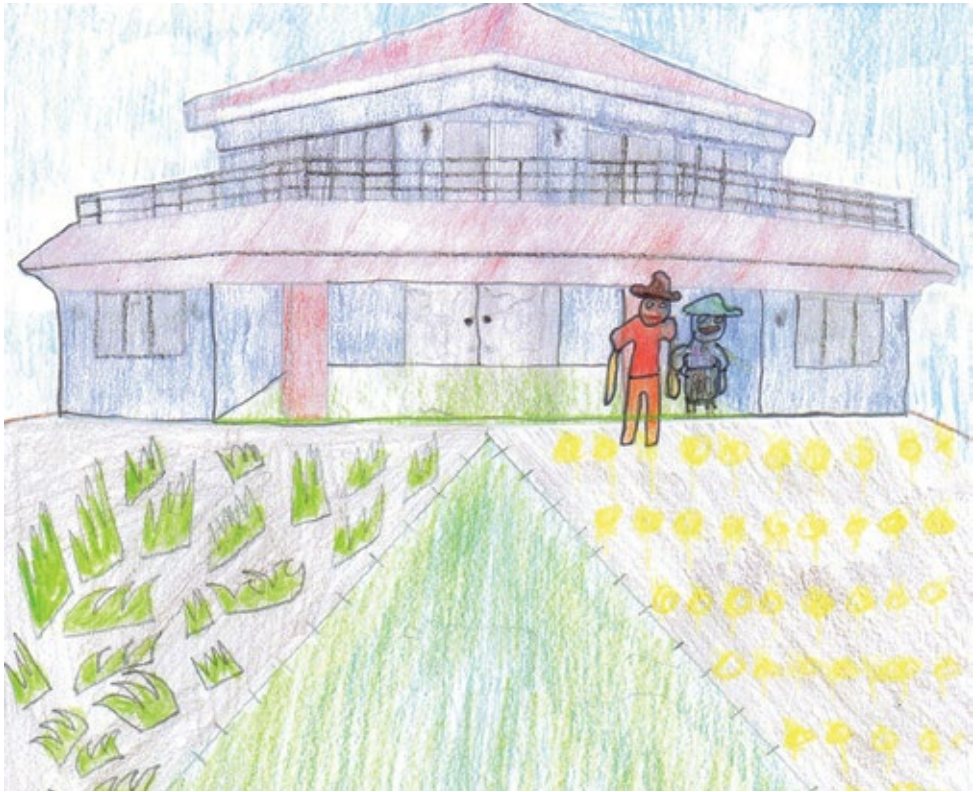
As soon as Robert got home he did some research and told Cooper how to establish the habitats. So with Roberts help, Cooper got to work to encourage beneficalials to the farm.



They removed invasive weeds and planted flowering native plants to attract the ladybugs, bees and other insects. To encourage birds and bats to the farm, they built homes for them which they placed in existing large trees. They left fallen branches and dead trees with hollows so the beneficial animals had places to live.

Lastly, they made huge compost bins and worked to improve the soil to attract earthworms and other healthy insects and organisms that live in the ground.





Years went on and because of all the work that Cooper, Chloe and Robert put into the farm it looked fantastic. It looked beautiful, well cared for and all types of wildlife lived there.

The crops were healthy, the soil was fertile and they spent a minimal amount on pesticides and fertilisers.

Cooper and Robert came out of their house every day to survey their farm with massive smiles on their faces.



Thomas Wieringa
Narrabri Public School, Year 6 2014



Australian Government
**Cotton Research and
Development Corporation**



**Local Land
Services**
North West



**Local Land
Services**
Northern Tablelands