

Adam Dellwo: Agronomist



Kyeasha Ross, Stevi-Ann Rosenow
and Stephanie Vickery

Deniliquin North Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Local Land Services and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



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

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Local Land Heroes

In 2014, students involved in the **Creative Catchment Kids** program researched and wrote stories about 'Local Land Heroes' - people, businesses or industries who contribute to productive agriculture and healthy environments along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes acknowledges the United Nations 2014 International Year of Family Farming.
www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/



Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



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Meeting Adam

Adam Dellwo was born in Strathfieldsaye, just outside Bendigo. He spent much of his childhood visiting his Pa's mixed farm in Pinnaroo, South Australia. He studied agriculture at LaTrobe University in Melbourne, for four years. After university, Adam worked as an agriculture teacher at Longerenong College, just outside Horsham. Adam is now an agronomist at Elders, Deniliquin, and has been working there since 2004.



Hobby Farm

Adam also works on his own farm, running cattle and sheep. His property is 100 acres, half way between Deniliquin and Conargo. Adam enjoys farming as he gets to be outdoors, is his own boss, is physically active and can visually see the work he has completed. Adam lives on the property with his wife, Sandy, and their two sons, Angus and Ollie.

Adam counting ryegrass in a wheat trial



What is the Role of an Agronomist?

Agronomists advise farmers on what crops and varieties to sow, how much fertilizer to use and when to add it. They also help them with weed, pest and disease control. Adam recommends the correct time for irrigation, spraying, sowing and harvesting. He also conducts trials on some properties to experiment with different chemical mixes and timing of spraying to get the best yield.

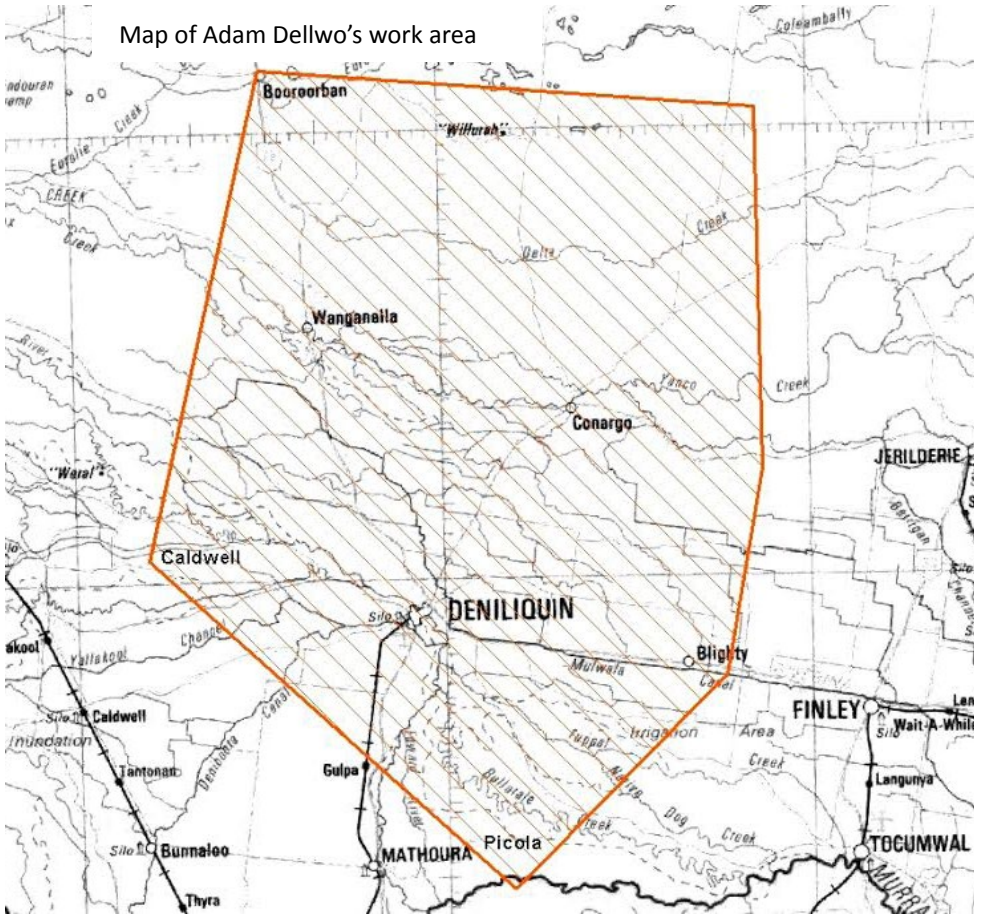
Harvesting rice



Looking after Crops

Adam looks after different types of crops. In the summer, he mainly looks after rice and lucerne. Corn is also grown in summer and is becoming quite popular in the Deniliquin area, because it requires less water to grow than rice. In the winter time, his focus is on wheat, barley and canola. Animal pastures are also grown at this time of the year.

Map of Adam Dellwo's work area



Adam's Work Area

Adam looks after the north-eastern region of Deniliquin which includes Conargo, Blighty and Mayrung. The area extends to Booroorban in the north, Picola to the south, Caldwell to the west and Blighty to the east. Adam has approximately 40 regular clients, some having as many as eight properties. The largest property Adam looks after covers an area of 30,000 acres.

Spray irrigation at work



Agriculture in the Deniliquin Region

The Deniliquin region is quite diverse as there are big differences in rainfall, soil type and landscape throughout the area. Properties range from small intensive irrigation farms to larger farms which are mainly used for dry-land grazing. This means being an agronomist in the region is very exciting and diverse with many different challenges to tackle.

Elders agronomists running a Field Day



Life as an Agronomist in the Deniliquin Region

Adam works nine hours a day, five days a week. There are two agronomists that work at Elders and nine altogether in Deniliquin. He speaks on the phone to other agronomists and together they highlight problems arising in the paddocks. Once a year, all the agronomists from Elders catch up for a week.



Being an Agronomist

Adam likes most things about his job. He especially enjoys being outdoors, as no two days are the same. He dislikes being in the office doing paperwork. The worst part of Adam's job is when the farmers are having a tough time, like in the drought. "It can be very sad when the farmers talk to you about their struggles," says Adam.



Significant Changes to Farming

In general, farms are larger and have become more intensive as farmers try to grow a winter and summer crop in the same paddock over a 12 month period. This allows for more efficient use of water to grow more crops with less water. There is also more cropping and there are a lot of young farmers in the area learning from their parents and each other.



Adapting to Change

Farmers are good at adapting to change to make the best of their properties. It has become normal to graze winter crops with livestock, and then lock the paddock up, to harvest for grain. This is known as 'dual purpose' cropping. Trials have helped farmers adapt to change, as they can visually see the results of experiments in local paddocks and make changes to improve farming practices.



Agronomists Helping the Future of Farmers

Agronomists help farmers to make farming more efficient, so that farmers remain profitable and their farms sustainable, into the future. For farms to be sustainable, farmers need to balance making money from agriculture with biodiversity, use of natural resources and caring for animals. Farmers take care of their land so it stays in good condition and is around for future generations to enjoy.



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