

Changes in Farming



Imogen Hunt, Keith Tallent,
Charlie Cameron and Angus Donovan

Burrumbuttock 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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Our story is about three Burrumbuttock farmers. Burrumbuttock is located 30 kilometers north of Albury, New South Wales. Our story highlights the changes in farming over the last 20 years. There have been significant changes in machinery, chemical usage and technology. Each farm has a different story to tell us...

The Tallent Family



Greg and his two sons, Max and Keith

Greg Tallent is a third generation farmer. The farm has been in his family for over 50 years. He took over the running of the farm at a very young age. His farm, "Rockview", is located on Bethel Road, Burrumbuttock. Greg lives on his farm with his two sons, Keith and Max. The farm is 1100 acres (445 hectares). Greg farms sheep, cattle, wheat and canola.





Chemical Changes

One of the main changes on Greg's farm is that he used to plough the paddock to get ready for cropping; now he direct drills. Greg still burns off stubble so the paddocks are ready for direct drilling instead of ploughing. Greg uses new chemicals to spray the grass and weeds after burning off.

Greg used to drench cattle, now he uses pour-on to do the worming. With the sheep, Greg now uses injections instead of drenching down their mouth.



Technology Changes

The biggest change is 'auto steer' on the machinery. The tractors today will drive themselves! The tractors are connected to GPS and uses satellites to do the steering.

Livestock

There hasn't been much change in livestock that you can see. The changes are in the breeding. The sheep and cows are bred better now. Some scientists are toying with injections to chemically shear sheep - the wool will simply fall off the sheep!



Machinery Changes

The Tallent's are using more machinery now than in the past 20 years. The machinery has got a lot bigger. For example, the headers have more horse power and a larger and wider harvest implement.

Changes in Practices

The biggest change in practice has been in soil conservation. Greg no longer ploughs his paddock so the soil isn't getting tipped upside-down all the time. He is using more direct drill and less ploughing to conserve the soil.



The Cameron Family



Cindy and Grant with their four sons Doug, Charlie, Drew and Gus

Grant and Cindy have four boys: Charlie, Doug, Drew and Gus. They have two farms - one in Howlong and the other farm is west of Griffith.

The Howlong farm is 1300 acres (526 hectares), two thirds of which is cropped with barley, wheat and canola. This is dry area farming. The other third is for grazing cattle.

The Griffith farm is 6000 acres (2428 hectares) and is under irrigation. Mostly summer crops like rice, corn, soybeans, barley, wheat, canola and cotton are grown there along with some sheep.

Livestock

There have been a lot of changes, from livestock only to a combination of mixed cropping and livestock. Rather than prime lambs and ewes, only lambs are now at the Griffith farm.





Technology

Irrigation strategies are different than the old days. Watering is done only when it's absolutely necessary to limit the amount of water used. Lots of money is spent on laser levelling the land so machinery uses much less energy.

Most machinery is GPS controlled now, so crops are in straight lines with no wobbles. This saves a lot of money in seed costs, fertilisers and chemicals. Harvesting is also easier than it used to be.



The Ziebarth Family



Meryl, Eddy, Carl, John and Indi Ziebarth

John Ziebarth's main farm is between Howlong and Burrumbuttock. He also farms on a number of different properties around the district as well as one 65km away between Daysdale and Rand. John and his wife Meryl have three kids - Eddy, Indi and Carl. Wheat and canola are the two main crops John farms, he also grows some beans, peas, lucerne and clover. Sheep are kept for the non-arable areas, and to keep the grass down.





Machinery Changes

John now uses fewer machines, but they are much bigger and do lots more work. He farms using complete zero till cropping. This means that there is no cultivation. He tries to retain stubble rather than burn it off. These days, John uses a disk for sowing as opposed to a tyne machine. This method still relies on a lot of chemicals.



Technology Changes

Technology has changed a lot in the last ten years especially with GPS and auto steering. All the big machinery is now being controlled automatically from satellites. This helps a lot with accuracy and time, also everything now is mapped.

Farmers completely rely on mobile phones for communication between workers and suppliers. All this is organised from mobile phones, not from the office anymore. The cabins of the tractors and sprayers are their offices now. Phones, laptop computers or iPads are carried everywhere to record what is happening.

Every year is different; no two years are the same.





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