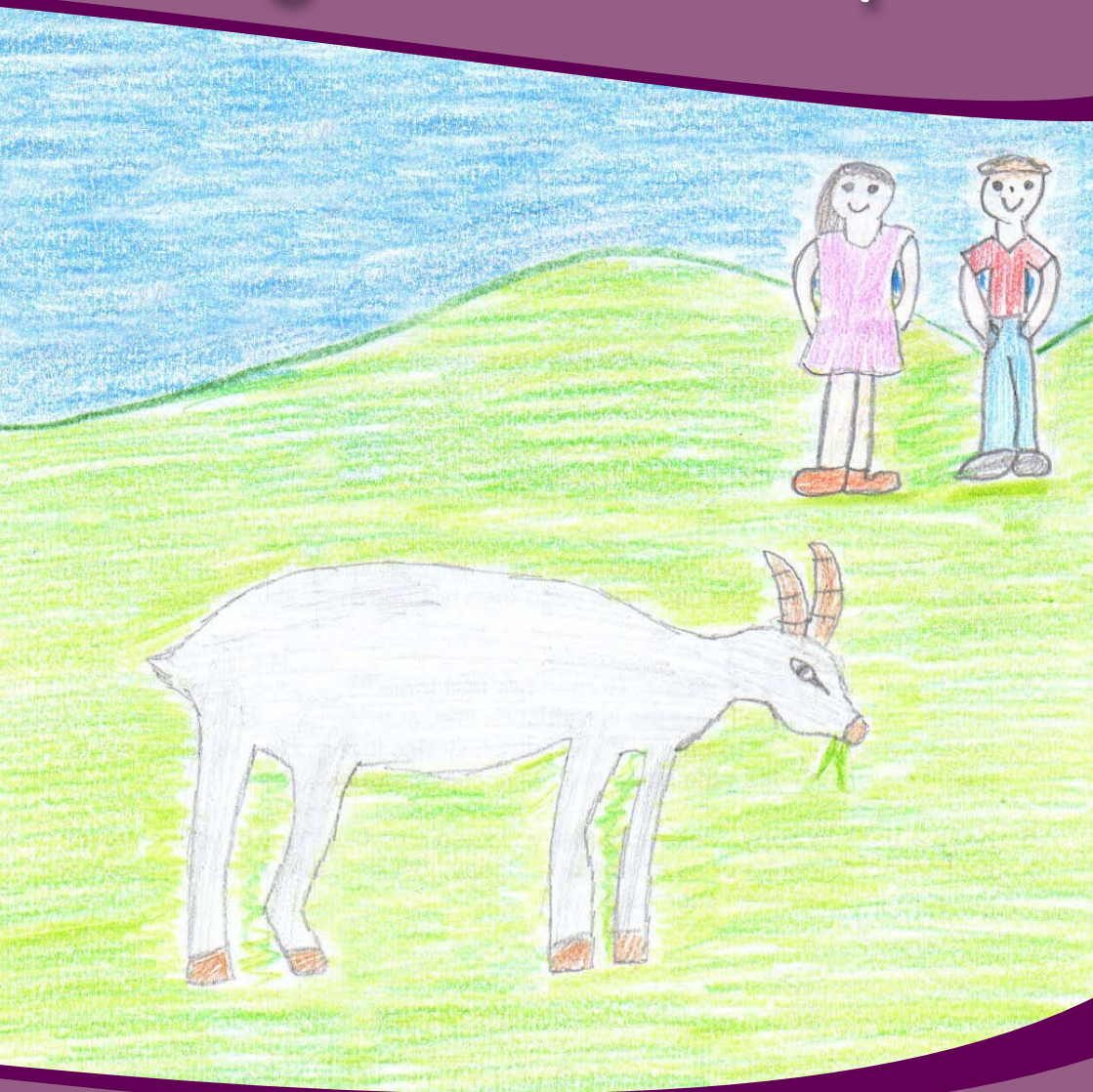


Billy's Great Escape



Written by Jessica Ferraro

Illustrations by Jessica Ferraro, Kimmy Trappett,
Jack Wallbridge and Sorelle Thomas

Dubbo South 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

Central West Local Land Services

The Central West Local Land Services region is home to around 110,000 people and covers the central west slopes region around Grenfell, Forbes and Wellington to the western plains of Nyngan and Coonamble.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centralwest

Central Tablelands Local Land Services

The Central Tablelands Local Land Services region is located in central New South Wales and covers an area of approximately 31,365 km². It includes the major towns of Bathurst, Blayney, Cowra, Lithgow, Molong, Mudgee, Oberon and Orange.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centraltablelands

Invasive Animals CRC

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is Australia's largest integrated invasive animal research program. The Invasive Animals CRC creates new technologies and integrated strategies to reduce the impact of invasive animals on Australia's economy, environment and people.

www.invasiveanimals.com | www.pestsmart.org.au

Billy's Great Escape

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This book has been published as part of the 2015 Feral Animals Enviro-Stories program which was supported by the Central West and Central Tablelands Local Land Services and Invasive Animals CRC. The 2015 Feral Animals collection consists of the following books:

- Billy's Great Escape
- Carl the Carp
- Farmer Bob and the Red Fox
- Just Too Feral for Meadow Flat
- Nigel the Nasty Rabbit
- Rabbits Running Rife
- Some Help for Harry
- The Invasion
- The Twins and the Mouse Plague
- Who got the Chickens?

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Farmer Matt's farm, near Dubbo, used to be a fantastic place to grow crops. Everyone wanted to buy his food because it was the best throughout the region.

As of two months ago, everything on his farm changed. A pest, known as the feral goat, moved in and soon became out of control.



Billy, the feral goat, had led his herd onto Farmer Matt's property. He and his feral friends stomped around the farm squashing, eating and trampling all over the crops and pastures.

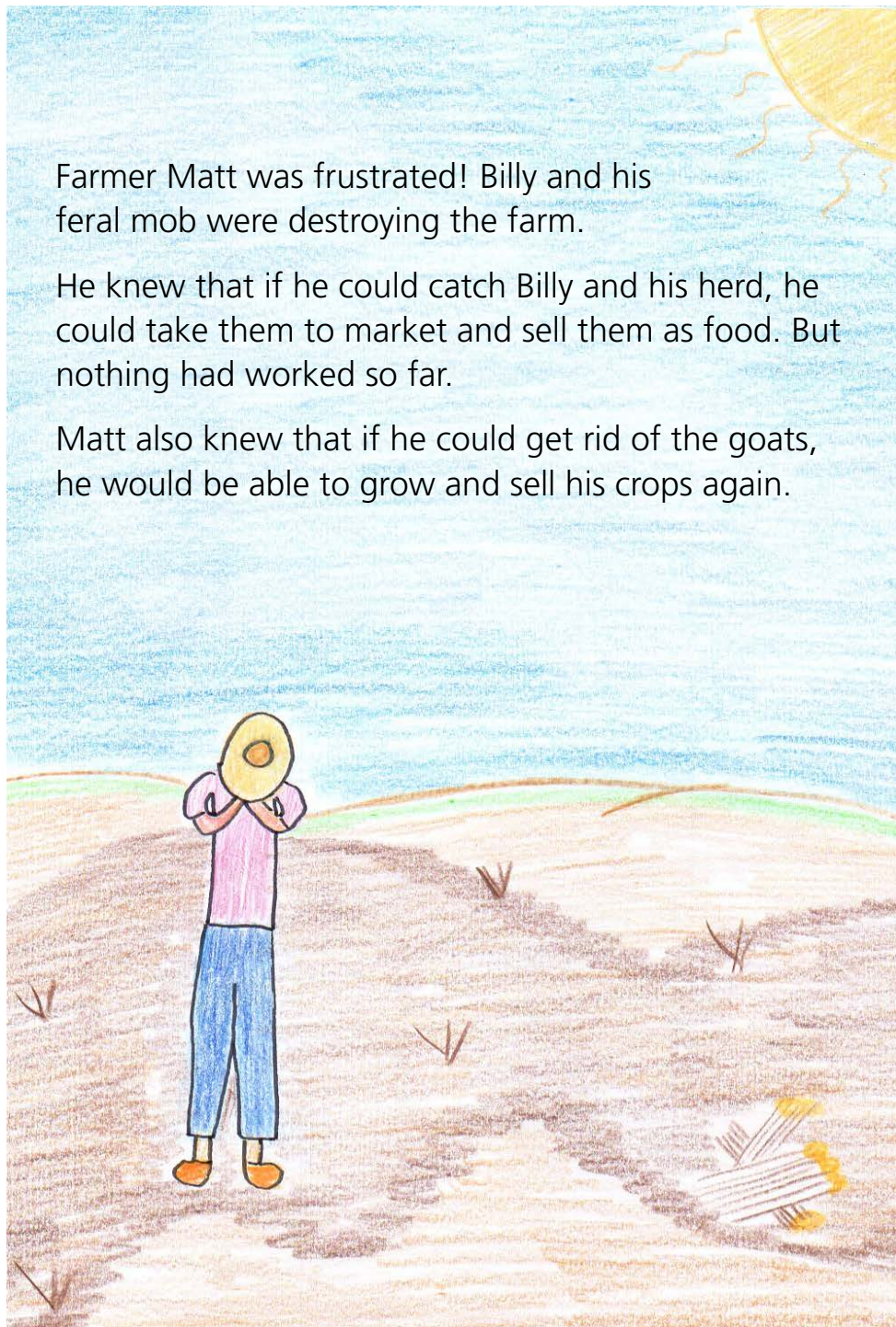
Matt tried time after time to catch the goats. He tried so many times that he had lost count.



Farmer Matt was frustrated! Billy and his feral mob were destroying the farm.

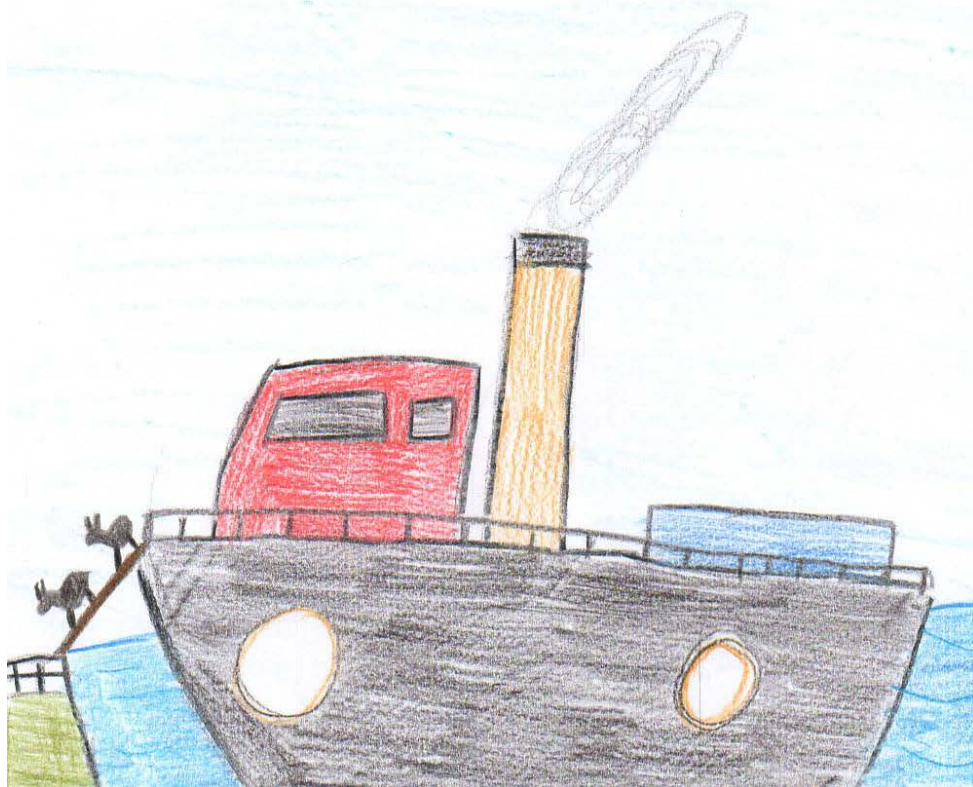
He knew that if he could catch Billy and his herd, he could take them to market and sell them as food. But nothing had worked so far.

Matt also knew that if he could get rid of the goats, he would be able to grow and sell his crops again.

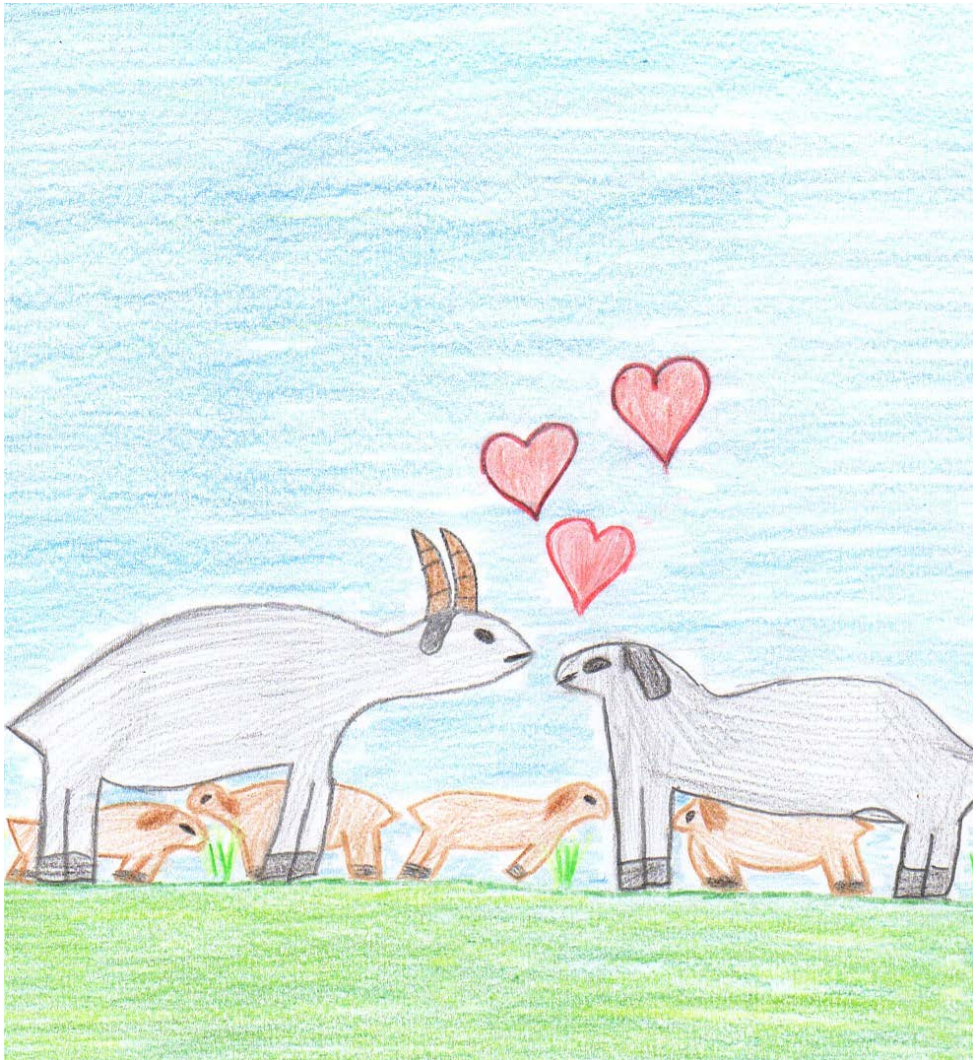


Farmer Matt decided to research feral goats so he could learn more about them.

He found that Billy's ancestors were brought to Australia by settlers during the 18th and 19th centuries to be used as a food source. Some of these goats escaped or were released in the hope that they would provide a source of food in emergencies. These goats adapted extremely well to Australian conditions. They now pose a threat to both our farmland and native bushland.



One of the main reasons it was urgent for Farmer Matt to catch Billy and the rest of the goats, was because they kept on reproducing. After doing his research, he knew the goats could breed whenever, and wherever, they wanted. Unless Matt acted soon, he may never get rid of the goats.



One day Farmer Matt's daughter, Lucia, was riding her old bike up the driveway with the mail in her hand when she saw Billy, alone in a paddock. She did not know his real name, so she decided to call him *Capra hircus*.





Lucia called Billy "*Capra hircus*" because her father said that was the proper scientific name for goats.

Lucia was excited about seeing Billy and she saw an opportunity. She knew that if she caught him her father would reward her.

Billy was eating with his tail facing her. She quickly tiptoed towards the fence.



Quietly, Lucia climbed over the gate with some rope. She tied a noose in the rope and spun it around in the air above her head as her father had shown her. When it felt right, she released the rope and perfectly lassoed Billy.

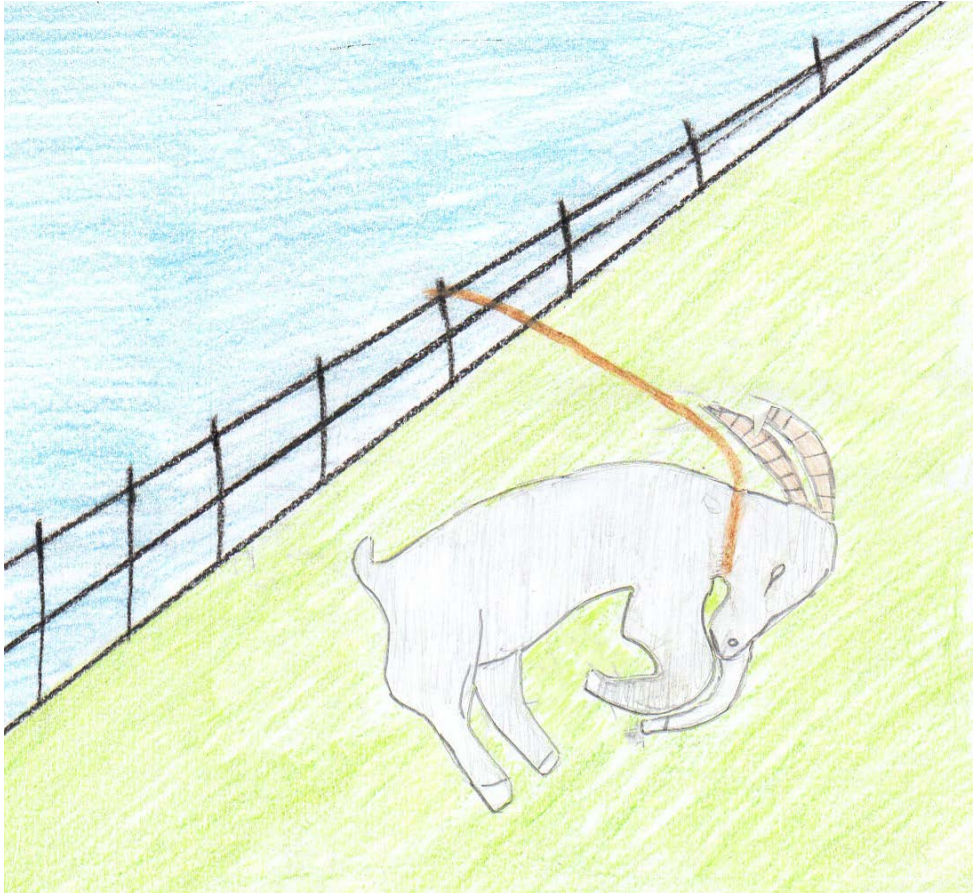
Lucia sprinted back and tied the other end of the rope to the gate. She couldn't believe it; she had caught the troublesome leader of the goats. She got on her bike and raced home to tell her father, Farmer Matt.



When Lucia got back to the house, she sprinted inside to tell her Dad what had happened.

He was so surprised that he didn't believe her. Matt wondered how, with all his failed attempts, his daughter manage to succeed in capturing Billy.

Lucia screamed that it was true and told her dad that he had to come and have a look.



They walked back down along the fence line towards the gate. Matt was shocked, and pleasantly surprised, when they saw Billy bucking and bleating; trying to get the rope off the gate so he could get away.

Farmer Matt was enormously impressed with the skillful farming girl that his daughter had become. He was so pleased that he decided to reward Lucia by getting her, her very own puppy to train.

When Billy calmed down, they took him to a very small paddock where they could contain him.

Soon Billy's herd wondered where he was and tried to find him. They followed the sound of his bleating into the paddock where he was held.

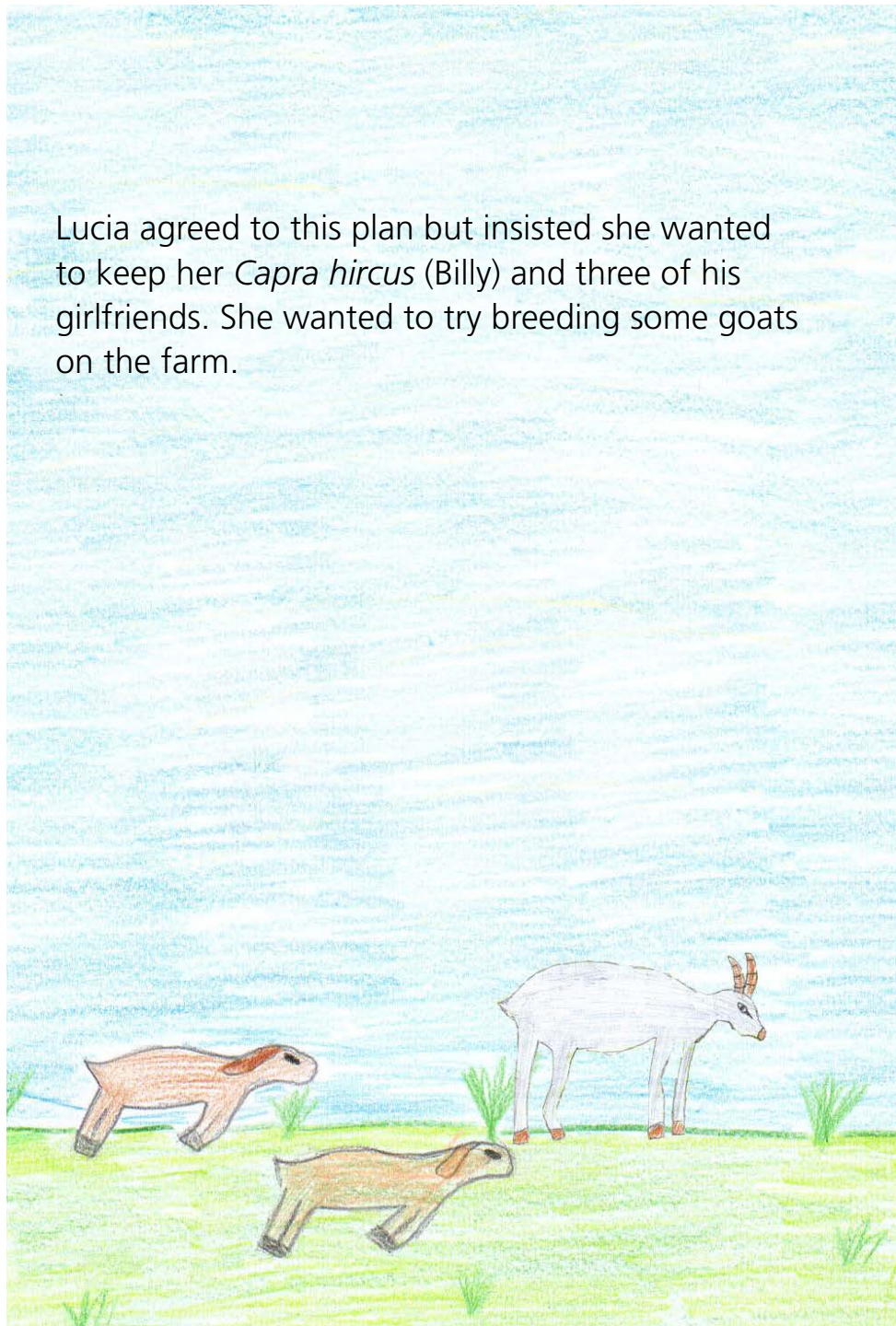


Lucia sprang into action and shut the gate behind them. Finally, they had caught all of the goats. Now they could not cause land degradation.

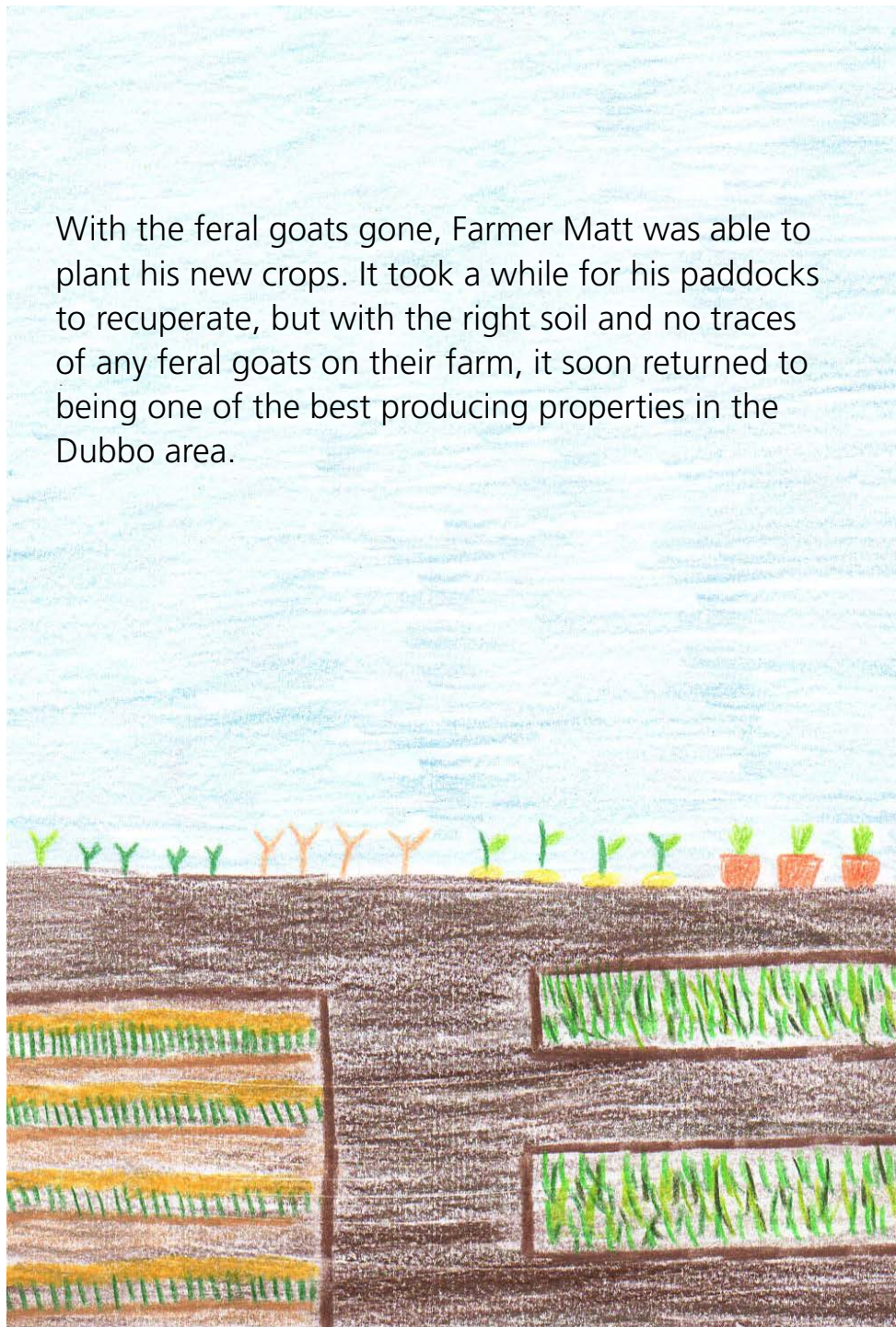
Matt told Lucia that the goats were agricultural pests, but that they also had a commercial value as they could be harvested for meat.



Lucia agreed to this plan but insisted she wanted to keep her *Capra hircus* (Billy) and three of his girlfriends. She wanted to try breeding some goats on the farm.



With the feral goats gone, Farmer Matt was able to plant his new crops. It took a while for his paddocks to recuperate, but with the right soil and no traces of any feral goats on their farm, it soon returned to being one of the best producing properties in the Dubbo area.





Farmer Matt kept his promise and rewarded Lucia for her awesome work. He took her into town to have a look at the Animal Pound.

Lucia found a perfect puppy that she could train to help on the farm. She named him Billy Junior after Billy the feral goat that she had caught.



(L-R) Jessica Ferraro,
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Dubbo South Public
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Local Land
Services



Invasive Animals CRC