

# Dan Fox

## *Our Young Farming Champion*

Securing  
Our Region



Year 3 to 6 students

Stockinbingal Public School



## **Creative Catchment Kids**

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners 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.

**[www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/](http://www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## **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](http://www.wirraminna.org)**

## **Enviro-Stories**

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeekKdesigns, 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](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

# Dan Fox

## *Our Young Farming Champion*

**Authors:** Lilly Large, Emily Nielsen, Christopher Tinelt,  
Jeffrey Harris, Angel Armstrong, Adam Mayor, Zachary Armstrong,  
Hayley Bowditch, Grace Large, Ted Caldwell, Harvey Holt,  
Sam Reid, Harris Lloyd and Danniella Berghuis

**Teacher:** Colin Trickett

**School:** Stockinbingal Public School

## Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

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



Local Land Services



Australian Government



Our story is about Daniel Fox and his farming family from Marrar. Daniel was chosen as our Young Farming Champion to give us an insight into agriculture and the challenges that face farmers now and into the future, as part of the Archibull project, which connects students to the land to ensure they have an understanding of how our food and fibre is produced.







## **Our Young Farming Champion**

Our young farming champion is Mr. Daniel Fox, a fifth generation farmer from Marrar, located near Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. His farm is ten kilometres from the township of Marrar. Daniel's farm is run by three generations of his family, with his granddad, his parents and himself.

Dan acted as our mentor in an agricultural project that we participated in this year.

## The Fox Family

Dan had always wanted to be a farmer for as long as he could remember. He studied hard at school completing some high school subjects early, but he missed being outside on the farm. Dan is a qualified teacher but his career as a farmer and working with his family is his dream. When Dan has spare time he likes to play football.

Dan's grandparents, his mum Cathie and his dad David, his girlfriend and Dan all live on the farm. Dan's grandfather's knowledge is invaluable. Dan thinks of his grandfather as the rudder of the family farm.





## **Farming Gladlea**

Gladlea is a mixed produce farm with 500 head of merino crossbreed sheep. Dan protects his sheep from feral animals by using alpacas to frighten off the foxes. The reason people crossbreed sheep is to create a new breed of animal that suits the climate and growing conditions of the area and to produce good quality meat and wool.



## Farming Gladlea

Gladlea is a property of 5000 acres with 80% used for cropping and 20% for sheep. Daniel grows wheat, barley, canola and lupins. Dan rotates his crops by planting three cereal crops then a pulse crop to replace the nitrogen in the soil. Dan does not grow any genetically modified plants at the moment but does not see a problem with this solution to food production.





## A Boy and his Toys

When we went on a visit to Dan's property he showed us some of the machinery they use for cropping. The large machinery such as headers, tractors and air seeders make the job quicker. This allows Dan and his family to produce more crops each year. This is great because the more food he produces the more money he makes.



## **Sustainable Farming on Gladlea**

Dan says, "Sustainable farming is doing more with less. To grow more grain and stock with less water and chemicals while looking after the land."

Dan minimises chemical use by spraying crops less. He also conserves natural resources such as trees, soil, water and animals by keeping his farm healthy. He recycles nutrients by not burning stubble. This makes Dan's farm sustainable and profitable.

## Biosecurity

Biosecurity are the procedures intended to protect humans or animals against disease or harmful biological agents.

Weeds are serious pests on Dan's farm. Weeds are starting to reject chemicals and they steal the nutrients from crops, which affects crop growth and wastes Dan's money when spraying.

To avoid spreading weed seeds Dan always cleans his boots and machinery when he has been to another farm. This is a form of biosecurity.





## Feral Animals

Foxes were introduced to Australia in the mid-1800s. They have played a major role in the decline of some native Australian animal species. They also affect Dan's farm by preying on baby lambs so he uses alpacas to protect his sheep.

Feral rabbits and hares were also introduced in the 1800s and are also a problem on Daniel's farm. They eat his crops and burrow into the soil, which can cause erosion. This decreases profitability.

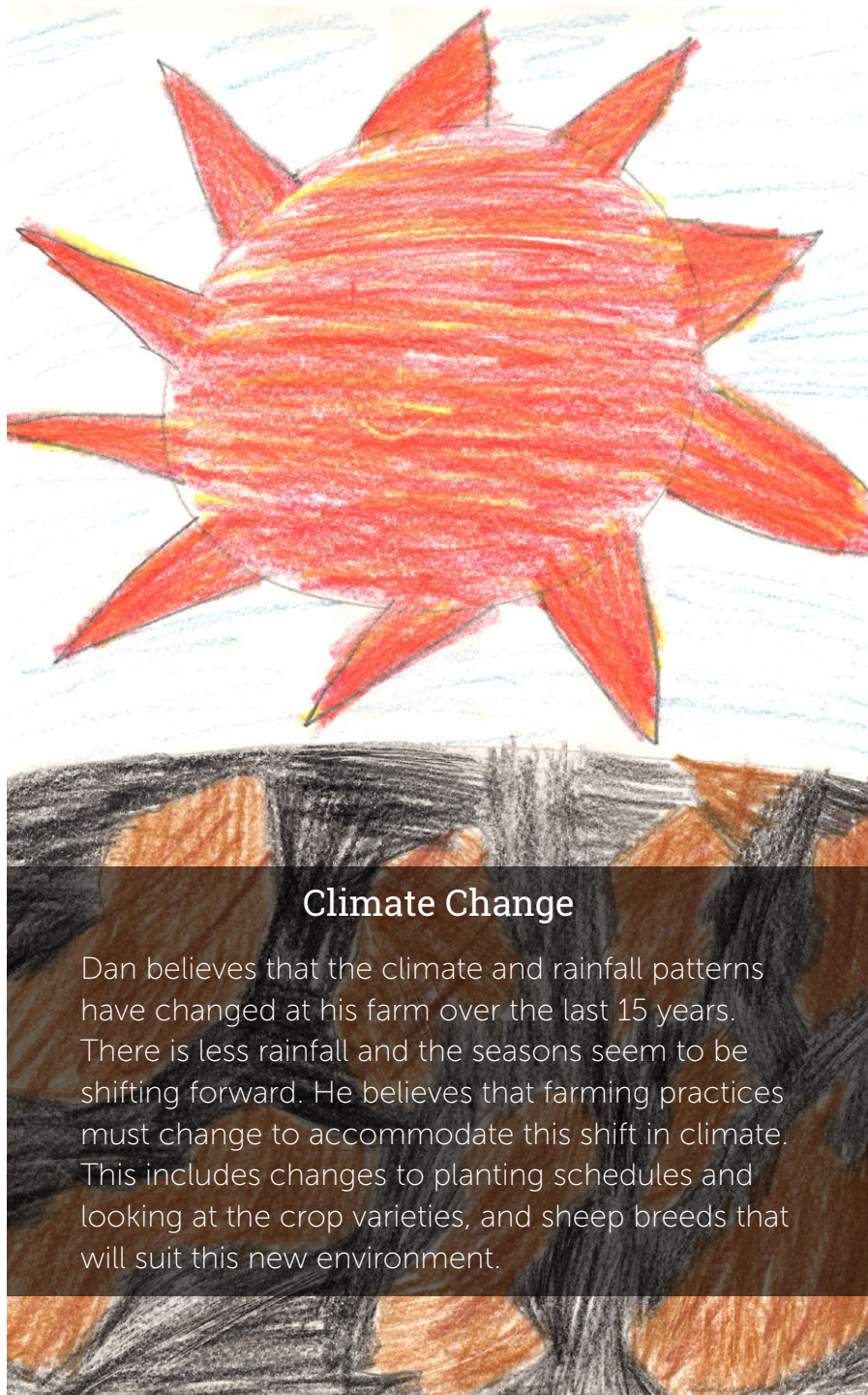




## Issues Facing Farmers Today - World Population

In 2015 the world's population is 7.3 billion people and farmers are struggling to keep up with feeding the rising population. In another five years time the world population is expected to rise by 2.3 billion people. How will farmers feed more people with less land to farm, due to housing pressure, mining and pollution? Something everyone has to think about.





## Climate Change

Dan believes that the climate and rainfall patterns have changed at his farm over the last 15 years. There is less rainfall and the seasons seem to be shifting forward. He believes that farming practices must change to accommodate this shift in climate. This includes changes to planting schedules and looking at the crop varieties, and sheep breeds that will suit this new environment.





Year 3 to 6 students

Stockinbingal Public School, 2015

## CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the 2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land Services

