

# In the Drought



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## 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](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

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# In the Drought

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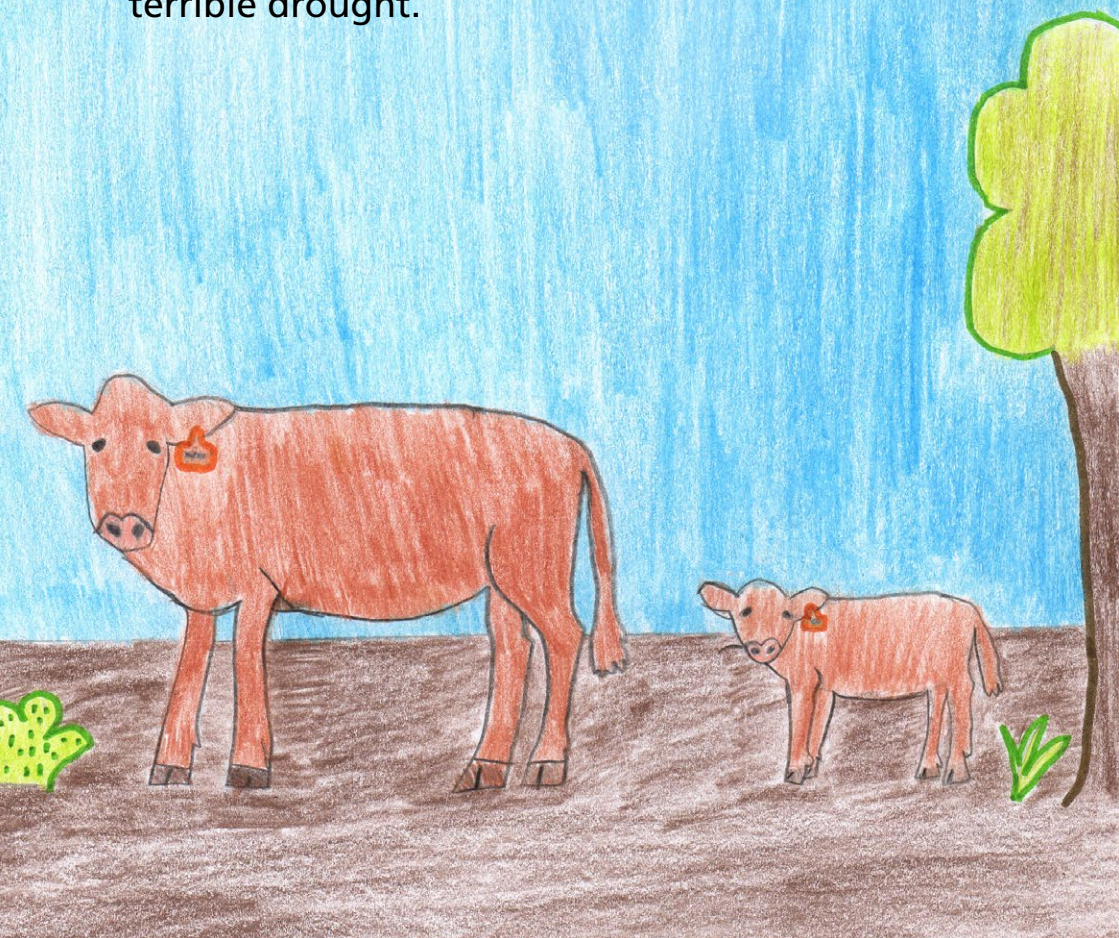
Kirkby, G. 2016. *In the Drought*. Cotton Research and Development Corporation, NSW.





Hi, I'm Blossom! I'm one of the Santa Gertrudis cows from Bruce's herd. I have a 2-month-old calf called Rosie and she is also a Santa Gertrudis.

At the moment I am really struggling as I have only just enough milk to supply Rosie. I hope we make it through this terrible drought.





This is Bruce. He owns and manages  
this farm near Bellata.

His herd is a mix of Santa Gertrudis,  
Hereford and Santa Gertrudis cross  
Hereford cattle.





Bruce's best mate is his Kelpie called Red. Red helps Bruce to round us up into the yards. He is twelve months old but he already knows what each whistle means.





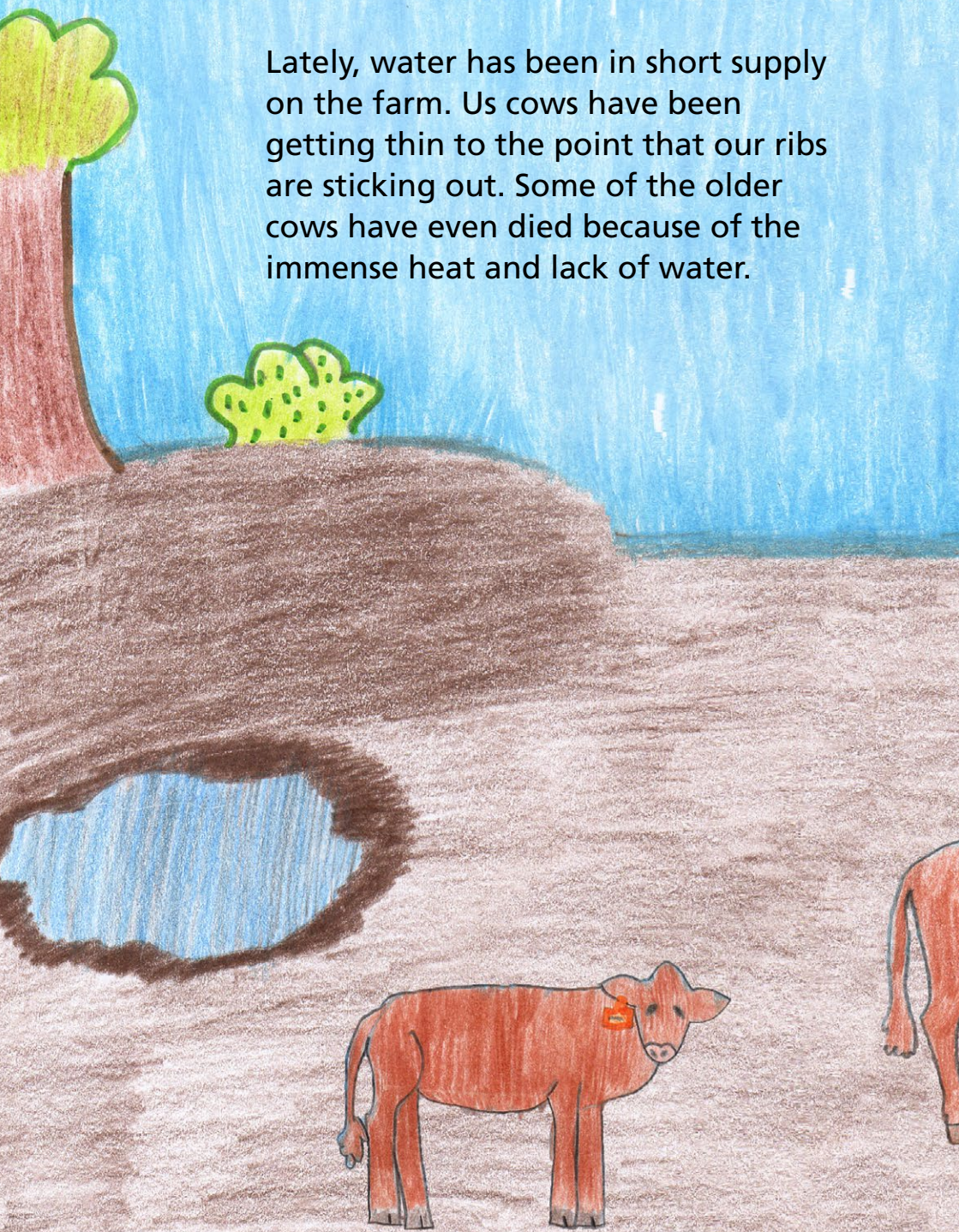
Bruce breeds his own cattle. Most of us  
were born and bred on this very farm.

The herd has grown over the years and  
there are one hundred and fifty breeding  
cows, two bulls and thirty five heifers.





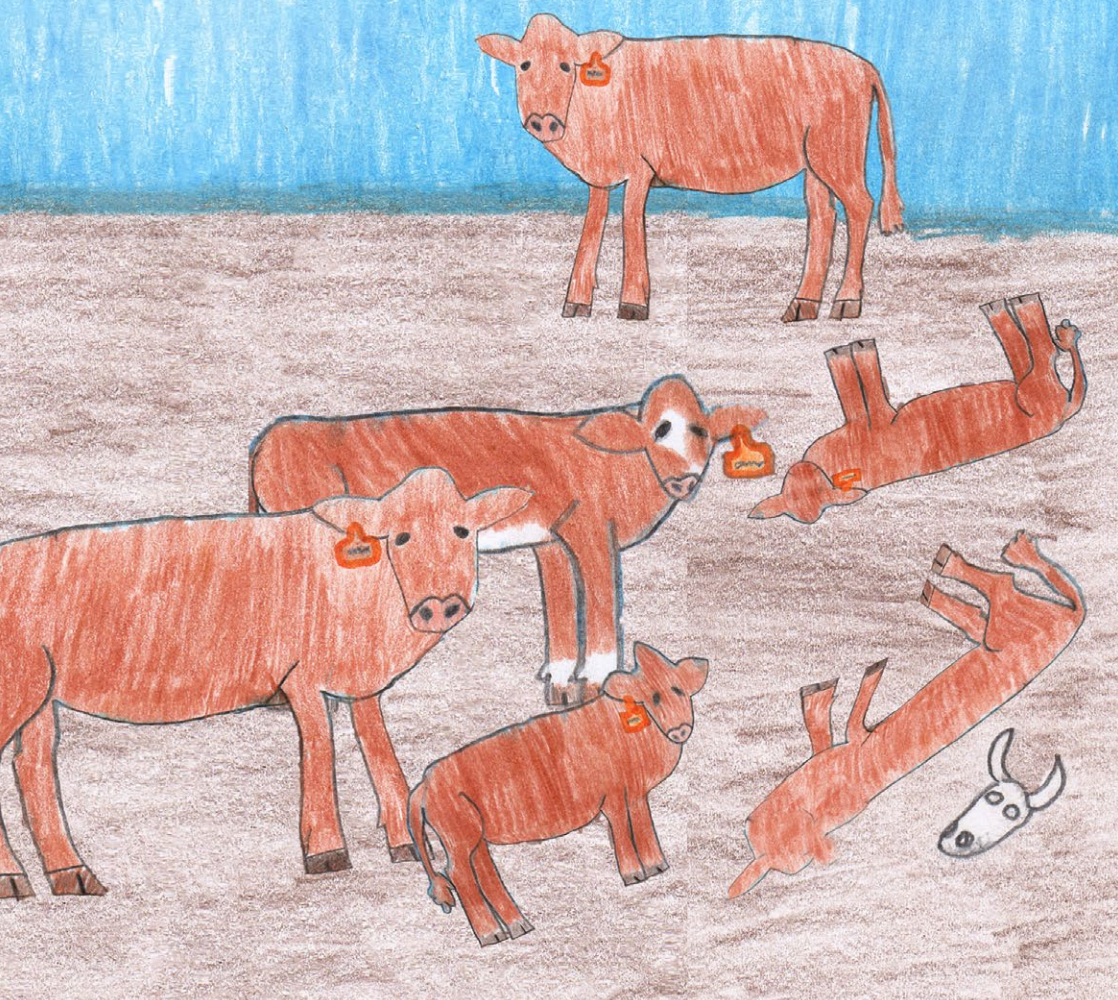
Lately, water has been in short supply on the farm. Us cows have been getting thin to the point that our ribs are sticking out. Some of the older cows have even died because of the immense heat and lack of water.





Wow! Today was extra hot. There's barely enough water for all of us.

Lots of cows are just skin and bones as there is no grass and very little water. Some more calves were unable to make it and sadly have died from exposure to the extreme heat.







My heart sinks as I see my best friend Tulip, a Santa Gertrudis cross Hereford cow standing over her calf.

Oh no! How could this happen? I moved close to my calf Rosie and wondered if I had the strength to get her through the drought.



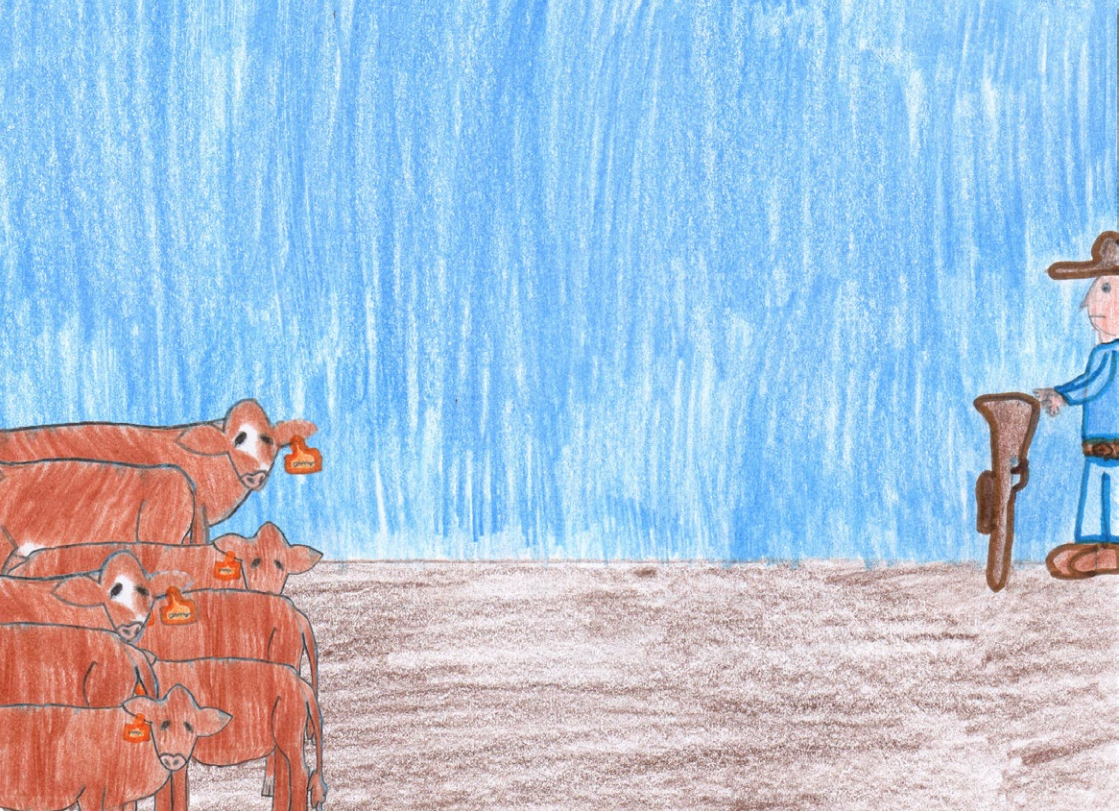
Tulip moved towards Rosie and I. She had an extremely sad but determined look about her.

Tulip told us she would help with Rosie as there was no point wasting all of her milk. The most important thing was for some of our next generation to survive.

This kind generosity gave me a small glimmer of hope that we would make it through.







Over the following weeks Bruce would sometimes come out to the paddock with the dreaded shotgun.

It was hard for all of us, but some of the cows were so thin and weak that if they laid down they couldn't get up. In these cases it was more humane for Bruce to put them out of their misery.

As sad as it was to say goodbye to friends, we all knew that it was for the best.





One day Bruce and Red rounded us up and brought us into the yards.

He chose some of the cows who were way too thin and loaded them on a truck to be sold. Luckily it wasn't Tulip or I and we were safe for the time being.

It was sad that our friends were sold, but hopefully we would now have enough food and water to go around.





Bruce bought some hay and dropped it in our paddock. We all concentrated on eating as much hay as possible, so hopefully we would get a bit fatter and increase our strength.

Whilst we were eating some grey clouds started forming in the sky above. We didn't notice anything different until a big wind came.





We all headed for some shelter to protect us from the strengthening gale. A cluster of trees blocked out most of the wind, but there was still a strong breeze that swept through the thicket.





We woke up the following morning to the smell of rain. I became excited, but then decided that I should put it out of my mind as I knew I was probably imagining it.

Things were so desperate that I thought I was hallucinating.







All of a sudden big fat drops of rain started to fall. A trickle at first, but then it got heavier. Finally the drought may be broken.

We trotted out of the thicket of trees and galloped around in the rain enjoying the feeling; something we hadn't felt in months.

We drank deeply from the puddles until we had our fill.



Consistent weekly rain over the following months broke the drought. There was thick, lush green grass and we had plenty to eat.

Bruce and Red even bought us some new friends to replenish our herd.

Tulip, Rosie and I had made it through and hoped that we would not experience anything like that ever again.











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