

SUSTAINABLE FARMING WITH A SIDE OF BROCCOLINI



Jessica Parker, Damian Bordingnon,
Susannah Stone and Lacey Ingram

Griffith North 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/

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

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

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Susannah Stone and Lacey Ingram

Teacher: Celia Adams

School: Griffith North Public School

Our Community

In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their local community and how local individuals, couples, businesses or industries have made a difference. The program was generously funded by Riverina Local Land Services and the Australian government's National Landcare Programme.

Creative Catchment Kids - Our Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



Tony Catanzariti is a horticultural farmer at Tharbogang, near Griffith, NSW. He works closely with his brother Frank who is also a farmer. They have their own farms and share a farm together. Their main farming is with a company called Perfection AgriFresh Riverina.

We spent some time with them to learn about their farming practices; which include environmentally friendly farming and sustainable farming strategies.





Tony has owned his farm in Tharbogang for about 30 years. Part of his farm was passed down to him by his father. This land has been used for farming for a very long time, probably as long as about 100 years.

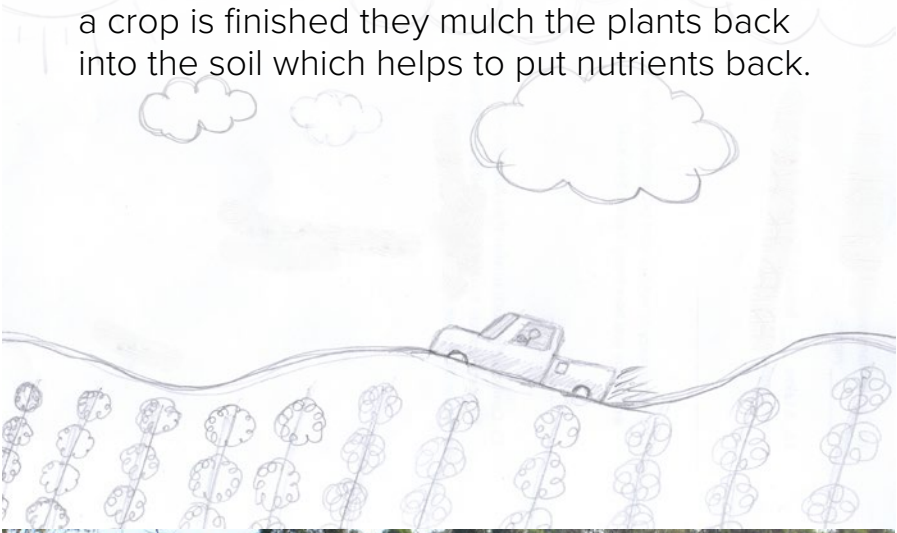
Because farms are used for a really long time, they need to be looked after so that they can keep being used to grow good quality produce.



Tony and Frank work together to grow broccolini, mini capsicums and oranges. They have chosen these particular crops because they are easy to grow, produce a good harvest and are easier to manage than some other crops. They are always looking to expand their varieties. They are currently trialing a new variety of raspberry.

SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Tony and Frank use sustainable farming techniques. They use dams to hold channel and rain water. They use a drip line to water the vegetables directly at their root systems which means there is no water wasted. When a crop is finished they mulch the plants back into the soil which helps to put nutrients back.



ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Frank and Tony also utilise environmentally friendly, safe pesticides on their farms. The main pests they have are white fly, snails, diamond backed moth, aphids, moths and caterpillars.

They prefer to use natural and safe pest controls rather than harsh chemicals because they eat their own products almost every day. They don't want to eat chemicals in their food and they don't want other people to either.



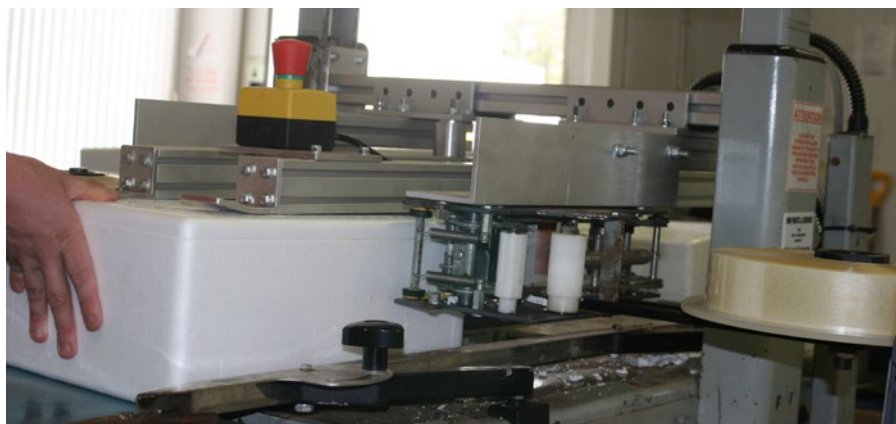


FARMING CHALLENGES

The main challenge that Tony and Frank face on their farm is the weather. If it is too wet they can't get into the paddocks to do the work they need to do because they will get bogged. If it is too dry they have to work hard to keep the water up to the plants so that they will produce a good crop.

After picking, all the broccolini and mini capsicums are sent to the packing shed. In the packing shed, Tony has lots of workers. These people are 'backpackers'. That means they are travelling around Australia, working where they are needed at different times. The backpackers work hard to wash and tidy the food ready for sale.

We watched them bunch up the broccolini. Then they are packed into polystyrene boxes, covered with ice and pushed through a cool machine which tapes the lid to the box. We found this process very interesting.





WHERE DOES IT GO?

After packing, the boxes are packed onto a pallet, loaded onto trucks and delivered to a company called Perfection Fresh. Perfection Fresh then send them to supermarkets all over New South Wales such as Coles, Woolworths and Aldi. From the supermarket, people can then buy the broccolini and take it home to eat. Yum!

INTO THE FUTURE

Tony is always looking for alternative ways to help make his farming business better and easier. He foresees robots in the future to lighten his workload. He imagines that machines and robots will be able to harvest and pack his produce one day.



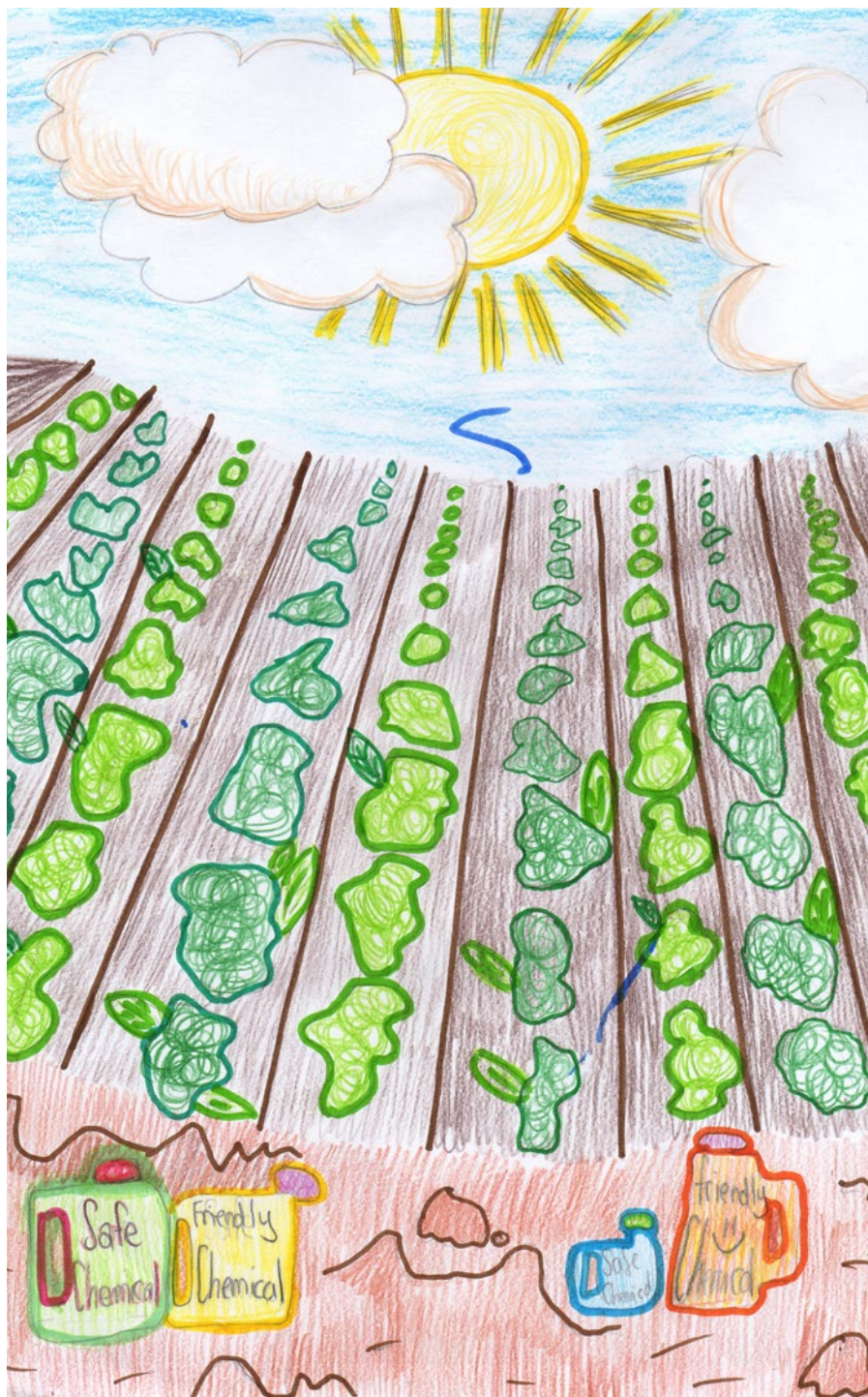


THANK YOU!

We would like to thank Tony and Frank for taking the time to teach us about farming and how we can look after the land for future generations. It was especially interesting to see the process that brings our food from the farm to the table!

Thanks to Mrs. Adams for organising this experience for us and guiding us when we were writing this book.

Thanks also to Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre for making this experience possible, it has been a great learning journey!





Damian Bordingnon, Susannah Stone,
Jessica Parker and Lacey Ingram

2016 Year 6, Griffith North Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

