

Case study

Regenerative farmer:

Jeanie Wylie

Length of time on the RA journey?

Seven years

Industry:

Beef cattle, food forest orchard, market garden and restaurant

Location:

Nashua, NSW

Regional information:

Nashua is in the Byron Shire of NSW and has an average annual rainfall of 1580mm.

In 2020/21, the total value of agricultural output in Byron Shire was \$33m. Nurseries and cut flowers, accounted for 33.5% of the Byron Shire's total agricultural output in value terms.



Jeanie and Edward Wylie with their children on their farm.
Photographer: Kate Holmes

With 120 acres in the Byron Shire hinterland, Jeanie Wylie knows she is incredibly lucky. Her property, Frida's Field, was one of the area's original dairy farms and when her family moved there seven years ago, it was a "blank canvas". Through education and knowledge-sharing with her neighbours, Jeanie is continuing to learn regenerative practices to improve her land.

Making the transition

Jeanie and her husband, Edward, were working desk jobs in London when they realised England was much further ahead of Australia in terms of organic agriculture, sustainability and food provenance.

As the daughter of organic chicken farmers, it gave Jeanie the motivation to come home and be part of the shift towards regenerative agriculture.

"When we first came to the farm, it was under agistment and had been set grazed. The paddocks were full of fireweed and thistles," she said.

"We started off seeding rye grass over the winter, and then three years ago we started doing diversified pasture improvement with inoculated seed."

Achievements so far

- The 120 acres have been divided into 16 smaller paddocks.
- Cattle are rotated every few days using a cell grazing, holistic management approach.
- After about a year, there was a big reduction in weeds, including fireweed and tobacco plant.
- The quality and diversity of the pasture has improved, giving the cattle a better diet.

"We have listened to local, long-term farming knowledge and combined that with more progressive ideas. We didn't want to just throw everything out, and we've been lucky to have a great relationship with our neighbours."

Jeanie Wylie, farmer

Experience on RAMP

"I really enjoy knowing there are so many other people interested in this space," Jeanie says.

"RAMP has helped remind me of the importance of financial planning across all aspects of the organisation, because we had been doing it well for some aspects of the business, like the cattle and the restaurant, but I had been letting it slide in some areas like the market garden."

"The chef was able to give me estimates of what we would have spent if we had to buy that produce, and it was reassuring to know it at least justified the labour that went into the market garden."

Regenerative farming goals

Jeanie wants to continue to grow the business and diversify their income streams. She also plans to:

- Plant more trees.
- Get better at composting and using compost teas around the property.
- Work with Landcare to restore the riparian zone along their Wilsons River frontage.



"I've also enrolled in Southern Cross University's Regenerative Agriculture degree and I'm hoping to start that soon," Jeanie said.

"Another goal is to work more collaboratively, instead of trying to do everything ourselves."

Best advice for farmers transitioning to regenerative agriculture

Jeanie's top tip is to find others who are on their regenerative farming journey.

"I think it's just important to get started, experiment, and get feedback from your land. You don't have to do it perfectly, but you do have to start," she said.

"For me, the farm is a really beautiful place to spend time and I feel absolutely blessed to live here."

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