

## Case study

### Regenerative farmer:

Julie Humphris

### Length of time on the RA journey?

Four years

### Industry:

Braided system family farm (cows, sheep, goats, chickens, turkeys, fruit, vegetables, herbs)

### Location:

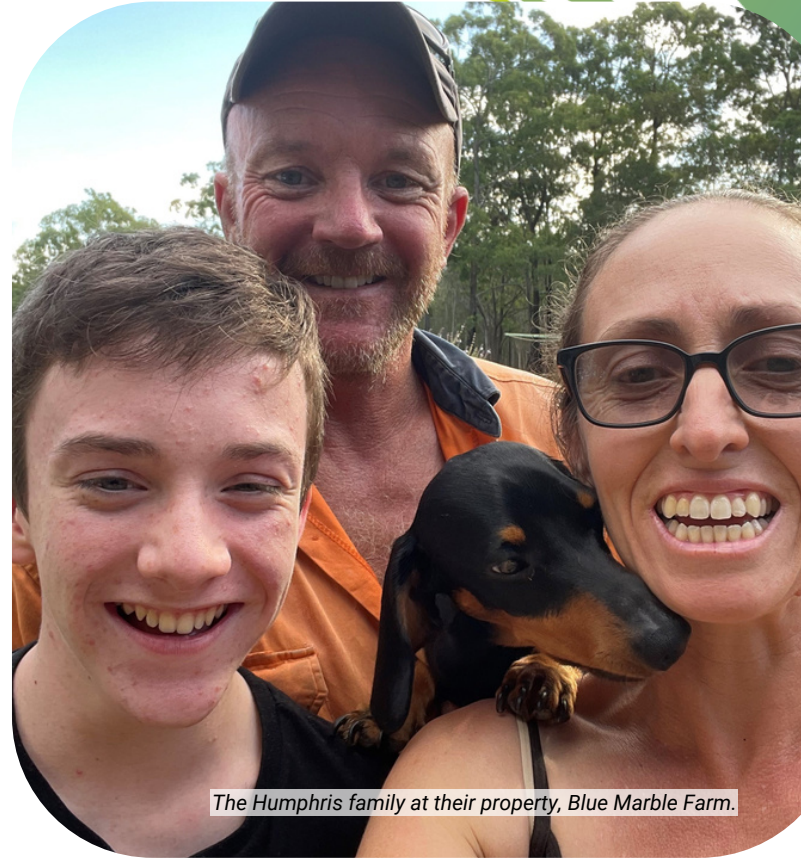
Barraganyatti, NSW

### Regional information:

Barraganyatti is in the Kempsey Shire of NSW and has an average annual rainfall of 1230mm. In 2020/21, the total value of agricultural output in Kempsey Shire was \$59m. The largest sector is livestock, which accounted for 31.9% of the Kempsey Shire's total agricultural output in value terms.

After yet another 14-hour day in an unfulfilling job, Julie Humphris came home one night and said: "I want to buy a farm."

With the unwavering support of her husband, Shannon, they bought 40 acres of "uncared for land" and developed a vision for Blue Marble Farm. Their dream is to turn it into an intergenerational oasis that will make their family self-sufficient.



The Humphris family at their property, Blue Marble Farm.

### Making the transition

The moment Julie and Shannon drove through the gate of their property, they knew it was "The One". But it wasn't perfect; in fact, it needed a lot of work.

"We never wanted to farm conventionally," Julie says.

"We've got hard, rocky soil and lots of bush and scrub. There was no life in the soil when we first arrived. We couldn't even grow grass.

"We planted as many plants as we could, heaps of diverse species, and we brought in chickens, rabbits and turkeys to go over the land.

"It was amazing. This green-blue grass started coming up three or four days after the turkeys. The soil started changing."

### Practice changes so far

Julie uses permaculture, biodynamics, holistic management and regenerative agriculture practices on her farm.

- Animals are rotated through paddocks, then paddocks are rested for regeneration.
- No sprays are used.
- Heavily-scented herbs help reduce pests, especially around fruit trees.
- Natural processes have been allowed to return to the land.

"We plant things that other people say we shouldn't. Maybe we're a little crazy, we aren't afraid to try new things. But someone has got to be the first to give it a go."

*Julie Humphris, farmer*



## Experience on RAMP

Drawing on mentor Brian Wehlburg's holistic management experience has helped Julie understand when to move her animals into particular paddocks, and when to take them off.

"Brian is incredible, and it's been great to make connections with the other farmers," Julie says.

"I love finding out how people do things on their properties and getting ideas about things I could try at our farm."

## Regenerative farming goals

Julie would like to plant perennial food corridors for fodder around the perimeter of their paddocks. This would be a multi-species crop of bana grass, pigeon peas, vegetables, banana trees, tagasaste and more.

Other farm priorities include:

- Finalising a holistic management grazing plan.
- Trial the use of electric fencing.
- Continue to practice biodiversity in plants and animals across the property.

"Blue Marble Farm is a health journey for us - our health, the soil's health - and we want to leave the land in a better condition. This is life, not work."

## Best advice for farmers transitioning to regenerative agriculture

When Julie first started on her farming journey, there was one question she continually asked: "What can I do to let the land fix itself?"

She also says it's important to seek information and soak it up.

"You need to be mentally prepared to learn and to be prepared for success or failure. There is a lot of short term pain for long term gain. Every single thing we do on our farm is about making life easier for ourselves in 20 years."

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