



managing native
vegetation
and biodiversity

improving farm profits
through biodiversity

LandWater&Wool

Shaping the future



Australian Government
Land & Water Australia

another australian wool innovation
• limited



WOOL PRODUCTION & BIODIVERSITY

Fine wool, healthy profits and healthy landscape the ideal equation

Rob and Annabel Dulhunty's family is at the core of their vision for a profitable, aesthetically-pleasing, biodiverse farm, that provides a home and lifestyle to which their children can return as they grow up.

Financially, they have been able to turn their business around, expand the operation, develop a Merino stud, improve all the livestock enterprises, diversify their investment base and achieve a high level of productivity despite two major droughts in 10 years.

Environmentally, they have transformed their property 'Nant Lodge' in the New England region of NSW by restoring shade, shelter and healthy aquatic ecosystems to the property. All these initiatives have had both productive and beneficial environmental outcomes. Biodiversity is valued and actively managed across all three of their properties.

The Dulhunty's are one of 25 farms participating in the Northern Tablelands Project, under the *Native Vegetation and Biodiversity* Sub-Program of *Land, Water & Wool*. By working with woolgrowers, the project is showing that biodiversity has a range of values, can add wealth to a business and can be managed as part of a productive and profitable commercial wool enterprise.



Photo courtesy of Karen Forge.

Land, Water & Wool (LWW) is a joint investment between the wool industry's peak research and development body, Australian Wool Innovation Limited, and the nation's premier investor in natural resource management research, Land & Water Australia.

Native Vegetation and Biodiversity is one of eight *Land, Water & Wool* sub-programs. The others include:

-  Benchmarking and Evaluation
-  Sustainable Grazing on Saline Land (SGSL)
-  River management and water quality
-  Managing climate variability
-  Managing pastoral country
-  Future woolscapes
-  Sustainable Grazing Systems Harvest Year

More detailed information is included in the full version of the *Wool Production & Biodiversity Case Study on the Dulhunty's property* (see back page for details).

Rob and Annabel Dulhunty own three properties near Glen Innes on the NSW New England Tablelands: 'Nant Lodge', 'Hillside' and 'White Rock'. They manage an unregistered Merino stud of 500 ewes of Nerstane bloodline. 'Nant Lodge' wool is lustrous, stylish and soft, with a long staple. 'Nant Lodge' is also registered for the EU beef market.

In many ways, 'Nant Lodge' and 'Hillside' are opposites, Rob says. "'Nant Lodge' was run into the ground by 150 years of farming. Meanwhile, 'Hillside' demonstrated the productive capacity of a healthy resource base, and was my inspiration to address resource base decline," he says. A major capital works program was undertaken to bring 'Nant Lodge' back into full production.

Many native species persisted or volunteered on 'Nant Lodge' and Rob appreciates the diversity of native and sown species, saying, "Pasture diversity is good - the more diversity, the better, to fill the pasture growth gaps that occur in any season and balance out production across the year.

"On 'Hillside', there's a much greater diversity of native pasture species, shrubs and trees and therefore more even feed availability through the year. I see it in terms of better wool quality in the commercial flock," says Rob. "Biodiversity adds to the stability of the system."



Photo courtesy of Karen Forge.

MANAGING FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Rob's father was one of the pioneers of rotational grazing in the district, and Rob now adapts his grazing management according to situation, using the advantages of rest and brief periods of intensive grazing.

Rotational grazing with large mobs means demand for water is high. This, coupled with two major droughts since 1994, motivated Rob to implement water and drought strategies as part of his farm plan.

About 17 per cent of 'Nant Lodge' is managed for outcomes other than productive pasture, including the riparian zone, farm water supply and wetland, aerodrome, tree corridors, homestead and outbuildings.

Rob and Annabel have planted 30,000 native trees and shrubs in 9.5 km of tree corridors in the 10 years since 1994, to re-create a milder, more productive tree and shrub micro-environment.

The extensive, healthy belts of native timber on 'Hillside' and 'White Rock' have high conservation value as remnants of the original vegetation. Rob and Annabel value these areas for their high winter production but they also appreciate the wallaroos,

swamp wallabies, echidnas (common in the timber), and yellow-tailed black cockatoos that nest there.

For the Dulhunts, undertaking Landcare works also makes financial sense. The tax advantages, coupled with funding assistance, means that only 20 per cent of outlays on improvements are a real cost.

“Investing in improvements to our natural resource base flows through to improvements in productivity.”

Rob and Annabel Dulhunty, 'Nant Lodge'

“The increased capital value of the property alone means I am ahead, even assuming no production gains result,” Rob says. “But I think there are production gains from clean water and shade and shelter belts that double as biodiversity corridors.”

fast facts

Location:

Glen Innes, New England
Tablelands NSW,
Border River Catchment

Area:

'Nant Lodge' – 247 ha;
'Hillside' – 630 ha;
'White Rock' – 420 ha

Mean annual rainfall:

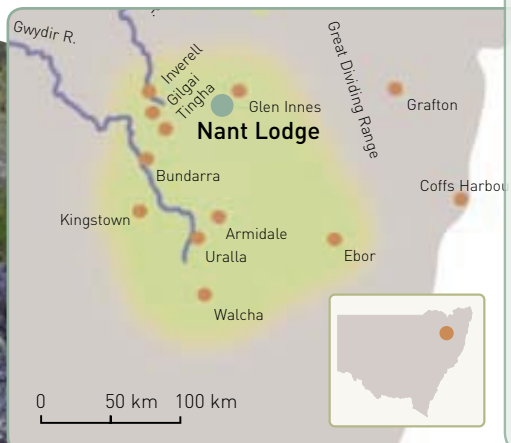
865mm to 965mm

Enterprises:

Stud and commercial fine wool
Merino flock; beef cattle fattening

Landform and soil types:

'Nant Lodge' – heavy black/brown basalt cracking clay flats with low slopes of red/brown basalt loams and ironstone ridges;
'Hillside' and 'White Rock' – red/brown stoney basalt hill country and black/brown basalt clay flats and gullies.



DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this publication is intended for general use, to assist public knowledge and discussion and to help improve the sustainable management of land, water and vegetation. The information should not be relied upon for the purpose of a particular matter. Legal advice should be obtained before any action or decision is taken on the basis of any material in this document. The Commonwealth of Australia, Land & Water Australia, the authors, and Land, Water & Wool and its partners do not assume liability of any kind whatsoever resulting from any person's use or reliance upon the content of this document.

PRODUCT NUMBER: PF050837

1. Having a property plan is not only useful when talking to your bank manager, it helps make sure you have considered all your wants and needs.
2. Pastures with a high level of species diversity save you in hard times - they fill seasonal growth gaps and balance out production across the year.
3. Use grazing as a primary tool to achieve pasture health - grazing management is best adapted according to situation, using the well-known advantages of rest and brief periods of intensive grazing.
4. In most cases, good grass management is better for erosion control than planting trees and shrubs.
5. Repairing the landscape will involve pest management, at least in the short-term, but it may be simplified as a result of the environmental repair works - you know where your pests are!
6. Off-farm investment is critical: it can allow you to achieve your goals faster.

For further information, contact:

Ms Karen Forge

Southern New England Landcare Ltd
Tel: (02) 6772 9123
Email: snelcc@bigpond.com

Assoc Prof Nick Reid

University of New England (UNE)
Ecosystem Management
Tel: (02) 6773 2759
E-mail: nrei3@une.edu.au

Visit us on-line at www.landwaterwool.gov.au



Wool Production & Biodiversity Case Study

PLEASE POST ME:

- ☐ One copy of the Dulhunts' 'Nant Lodge' Case Study
- ☐ Other fact sheets and case studies in the Land, Water & Wool Northern Tablelands Project series

Name _____

Postal Address _____

Fax this page to (02) 6771 2656.

project partners:

