

Regenerative Farmer Profile: PG, SA & DM Ford



KELLY & STEVEN FORD run a mixed farming operation at Williams with Steven’s parents Glen and Sheryl. The 2,226ha property produces cereals, lupins, canola and sheep.

The family is actively involved in their community through sports clubs and other businesses while managing a successful farming enterprise. They realised the need to change how they managed their farming enterprise, to reflect the values within their home.



Steven & Kelly Ford with their boys, Xavier, Finn, Riley and Tyson.

Then

Steven returned to farming with his father Glen after working as the local livestock agent in Williams. They were eager to implement ideas he had picked up from others in the district and took over the cropping operations, with instant success. As a result, their percentage of cropping increased and so did the size of their farm—capitalising on the opportunity to purchase land on two occasions.



Now

The Fords are in their second year of biological farming. The results so far have inspired them to continue, and confidence is growing. Last summer, 35ha of cover crop (left image) carried 1,000 hoggets for 3 months and stood up to the change of season without erosion. The root systems on the 2018 canola plant (right image) will boost its resilience for a strong finish to the season.

“Having the vision of what we want to create for our family has given us the courage to ask questions, seek advice and take action...”

Why the Change?

As both their farming enterprise and family expanded, they focused on healthy eating and reducing toxins in their diet, and this led to a clash of values between home life and on-farm practice.

The success they had experienced with their change of lifestyle gave them the confidence to seek alternative farming methods.

“... and knowing that life is filled with challenges, we are happier choosing the ones that inspire us”

Outcomes

Through connecting with Agronomist Colin Bowey and other like minded people they have been able to implement a farming system that enhances the biological function of the soil resulting in greater resilience of the land, crops, livestock and people.



Canola planted in Spring 17, photo in March 18

Challenges

Managing the risk associated with changing from what you know, (and comfortable with) to an alternative method of producing food and fibre,

Once they get runs on the board they are then able to demonstrate to others how to have a profitable farm while building a resilient system,

Supporting the practice with independent research rather than from product suppliers will help others interested in changing practice.



RegenWA Field Walk with Charles Massey, Feb 2018.

Future Goals

Be able to share their knowledge to support others who seek alternatives to current mainstream practices

Seeing community members having more time off farm without compromising family and farming responsibilities

An environment with reduced toxins for families to enjoy




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