

CASE STUDY

Rennylea Angus

Property Snapshot

Rennylea Angus is an Angus cattle stud in southern NSW which grew out of an original farming business started in 1870. Lucinda and Bryan Corrigan run Rennylea Angus along with their son, Anthony, and daughter Ruth, who are the fifth generation. The business has a workforce of 10 people.

The Corrigan family supplies elite Angus genetics for the beef industry. Rennylea Angus bulls are sold all over Australia.

The enterprise is operated out of four properties near the town of Culcairn - *Ellerslie Park, Hope Farm, Wyuna and Kalinya* as well as the original *Old Rennylea* at Wymah.

There is a long history of voluntary re-vegetation across the properties, much of it initiated by the Corrigans who have also been instrumental in establishing and supporting Landcare in the district.

Location: Culcairn district, NSW Riverina

Size: 3,800ha including some leased country.

Enterprise: 3,500 head Angus cattle including 800 bulls, 1500 cows and young stock



Challenge

Rennylea Angus needed to drought-proof the enterprise and ensure it remained profitable and sustainable through dry times. There was a need to introduce more flexibility and fodder security on-farm in order to reduce the need to buy in feed and to allow young cows to mature at targeted growth without degrading existing perennial pastures.

Rennylea Angus has noted the impact of climate change through declining rainfall over the past century and in response has developed plans to use the available water more efficiently. This will take the form of a small irrigation system supplied by groundwater and accessed through existing licences, used to produce home-grown, high-quality fodder for female weaners particularly over summer.

Rennylea Angus submitted a notification under the Equity Section of the Land Management Code to remove a small number of paddock trees enabling the installation of the new irrigation system.

Fact file:

- 3,800 ha enterprise operating as a 3,500 head Angus cattle stud
- Running 800 bulls supplying elite genetics for the beef industry
- Fifth generation family farming operation with a workforce of 10
- Development of a 40 ha paddock for irrigated fodder to produce a secure, on-farm feed source as a drought-proofing strategy
- Removal of a small number of paddock trees with no set aside requirement due to past voluntary re-vegetation practices
- Reduced risks of groundcover loss and erosion by feeding young cows on fodder
- Over 100,000 trees planted across the enterprise in recent decades with further plantings planned

“The purpose of developing this irrigation system is to bring a class of livestock through the drought with minimal impact on the rest of the farms in terms of overgrazing and potential erosion and really using the water licence we have available in the most efficient manner. Our use of the Land Management Code is about removing paddock trees on 40 ha and for us it’s been incredibly flexible for what we want to do. Working with Local Land Services has been seamless, straightforward and delightful.” **Lucinda Corrigan, co-owner, Rennylea Angus**



Local Land Services

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Work to be undertaken

The development on a 40 ha paddock on the property *Wyuna* will involve renovation of an existing bore and installation of a new efficient irrigation system for improved yield of fodder crops. The investment will total around \$250,000.

Due to a long history of voluntary re-vegetation on the Rennylea properties, an overview of the holdings showed there to be 14% native vegetation cover. As a result, the ability to remove paddock trees will not require any further set asides be put in place.

Rennylea Angus plans to continue its current annual voluntary planting program to ensure shade for stock, soil and water health and amenity.

Logs from the removed trees will be offered to the Soil Conservation Service's River Murray Works Unit for streamside rehabilitation works, helping reduce bank erosion, improve water quality and provide habitat for fish.

"Every year I get a lot of joy from seeing the trees we have planted mature and seeing the bird life. I ride my horse along the tree lines and see the honey eaters and the kingfishers. We just didn't have the smaller birds in the landscape when the trees were all just scattered isolated, mature trees. We've developed some really excellent habitat for the smaller birds." **Lucinda Corrigan, Rennylea Angus**

On-ground achievements

The irrigation development using the Land Management Code is part of a package of drought proofing strategies being implemented at Rennylea Angus. They are designed to make the enterprise viable and sustainable in the long term. This will give certainty to the Corrigan family and aid in future planning as the next generation joins the business full time.

By being a successful and profitable family farming operation, Rennylea Angus can continue to support the Culcairn community by employing 10 staff, including family, and spending locally on trades and supplies.

The creation of a new home-grown feed source removes the need to buy and truck fodder to the Rennylea Angus farms. This will take pressure off existing perennial pastures, avoiding the risks of overgrazing, groundcover loss and soil erosion.

Rennylea Angus now has flexibility to use existing on-farm resources to their full productive capacity and efficiency to respond to seasonal and climate changes.

The environmental stewardship shown by the Corrigan family has been recognised under the new framework. Rennylea Angus can proceed with the removal of a small number of paddock trees without additional plantings or set aside areas - rewarding past practice in voluntary re-vegetation of the land. The plantings now total more than 100,000 trees across the farms.

