

Farmers making waves

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Presenter: Bruce Reynolds

In this report: Katie and Peter Barton, David Toole and Hamish Munro.

Ten farming families have banded together in the Central West of NSW to change their farming practices to more effectively manage drought, through the "ripple effect" project.

The group was formed in 2005 to develop water and wire projects on their properties, aiming to enhance grazing management.

The families get together as a group and discuss issues which affect their properties and work out ways of solving them.

They have subdivided their properties into much smaller paddocks and have made water available in all the paddocks.

This has seen less stress on the pastures and a greater time for pastures to recover before the next grazing.

This has led to three significant changes:

1. Environmental benefits, with animals having less impact on pastures, which has enabled perennial pastures to recover and plant populations to increase, reducing weed burdens. The producers in the project have seen far more pasture available even during the current drought conditions.
2. Financial benefits, where the changes in farming practices have substantially lowered costs, thereby improving profitability.
3. Time management, with the project freeing up time for lifestyle, family and other business opportunities.

The Ripple Effect Grazing Management Change Project has been funded 50 per cent by the Commonwealth Government's National Landcare Community Support Program and 50 per cent by the producers.



Farmers examining pastures. (ABC Rural)