

## What Lies Beneath

### Northern Slopes Landcare and Green Triangle Farmers



**An on farm field day to investigate the importance of looking after your 'underground livestock' - increasing on farm biodiversity to improve soil health, increasing soil carbon and moisture retention to build resilience in your landscape**

#### The issue

There is more and more awareness being raised about the importance of soil biology in fertility, production and nutrient levels in our foods. Green Triangle farmers are looking to address the lack of knowledge and understanding of this issue and partnered with Northern Slopes Landcare Association and North West Local Land Services to hold an on farm field day to show first hand the difference that changing management practices can make to soil biology and increase farm resilience in a variable climate.

#### The solution

Justin and Lorroi Kirkby, NSW Landcare Farmers of the year 2019 and finalists in both the National Landcare Farmer of the year award and the Bob Hawke Landcare award 2021, opened their home to 88 interested landholders who had travelled up to 5 hours to attend. Justin and Lorroi were joined by Kim and Angus Deans of Reinventing Agriculture (formerly Integrity Soils) and Martin Williams of Nyngan Seed Graders to speak on the benefits of looking after and managing your underground livestock - mycorrhizal fungi, nematodes, arthropods, bacteria and protozoa. Kim and Angus spoke of how protecting your soil microbiology will increase the fertility of your soil while also increasing your soil carbon levels. They also detailed how to reduce your chemical inputs and increase the health of your soils.

Biodiversity on your property was another important message on the day - both through increasing diversity in your pastures and crops as well as planting native trees and shrubs to increase overall biodiversity on your farm. The benefits of this are many and include attracting more insects and birds to assist in naturally controlling unwanted pests in your pastures and crops, reducing soil erosion, and assisting in building resilience to combat future dry times.

#### The impact

The day was very well received, with most attendees stating that they would like to make changes to their farm management following the day. There were also several requests for more field days on similar topics. Many farmers are looking for ways to improve the overall health of their properties and increase the fertility and nutrient levels of their produce and the methods demonstrated at the field day gave them some options to try out themselves.



#### Key facts

- 88 landholders attended the soil health field day
- The health of your microbes can affect the health of your soils and therefore your plants
- Multi Species pastures and cover crops can improve your soil health and increase nutrient availability to your plants and livestock
- There is an increasing number of landholders looking at sustainable farming practices

#### Project Partners



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