

Regenerative Ag

A Farmer's Story



Jo and Jess Conlan run an 800-hectare property at Runnymede in central Victoria with annual rainfall between 450 to 500mm. The property is mainly grazing with prime lamb and vealers.

"Most of the property is sown down to perennial pastures such as phalaris and lucerne, traditionally we have set stocking and monoculture crops. Since we have joined the group, we were looking to enhance the soils on the property, maximise what we are growing and develop the property to its full potential," said Jess.

"When we joined the group one of the things that stood out for us was the use of multi-species cover crops, using multiple species instead of monocultures to enhance and prime the soil. It seemed a logical fit to the type of system we wanted to incorporate into the property and potentially grow a lot more pasture.

"One of the paddocks we decided to do a trial consisted of an old lucerne pasture, the lucerne was still good but there were a lot of open bare ground between the plants, and it wasn't producing as much feed as it potentially could. We sowed this paddock with a winter multi-species mix using a disc seeder, this species mix consisted of grasses, legumes, and brassicas, sown at 35kg per hectare, with 75kg per hectare of single super fertiliser.

"It has been a good year to establish multi-species cover crops and once it was established 400 lambs were put into the paddock to start grazing. Jess said they are hoping the cover crop will provide multiple benefits for the soil and additional feed for livestock."

The plan going forward for one of the paddocks on Jo and Jess' property is to prime the soil and maintain ground cover over summer.

"If the conditions are right, we will sow another multi-species cover crop to keep rejuvenating the soil. At this stage we would like to do this for two seasons and in the third season sow a perennial pasture," said Jess.

"We have been really happy with the trial results so far, by regenerating a tired lucerne paddock with a lot of bare patches, it's been amazing to watch this paddock come of life in such a short period of time.

We are hoping to create a farming system that is less reliant on synthetic inputs, we are planting a lot of trees to encourage beneficial insects. We are rapt with the results

of the multi-species cover crop and eventually we would like to sow down the whole farm."



Jess Conlan, farmer at Runnymede