

Ecological literacy, connection and community

Claudia Benn 2024, Queensland



Research Purpose

- This topic stemmed from a curiosity about building resilience, exploring the world of biological relationships (between soil, microbes, plants, animals and people), and finding a balance between long-term ecosystem health and productivity.
- Throughout my travels and personal experiences, lessons emerged from people, landscapes, livestock and farming systems about key traits that underpin resilience, and how farmers are incorporating these into their lives, businesses and farms.



Key Learnings

Key traits contributing to nature's resilience:

- Adaptability (particularly in the face of adversity)
- Complexity and diversity
- Community and connection
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer

At the heart of these traits lies a common thread – resilience is built through relationships among soil, microbes, plants, animals, people, and communities.

The same traits that sustain natural ecosystems can help us build farming cultures and rural communities capable of weathering change, together.

Travel



Case Studies

- Matt Marshall (QLD) has increased his wheat protein from 9% to 16% with the use of multispecies cover crops and biological fertilisers.



- Dr Nan Bray (TAS) has achieved a 27% increase in wool production per sheep, a 30% improvement in fertility and fewer parasite treatments since supporting pasture diversity, nutritional wisdom and running a multigenerational flock with no weaning, docking or mulesing.



Recommendations

-  **Embrace change:** it is inevitable, the opportunity lies in how we respond and adapt. Focus on what you can control.
-  **Build ecological literacy:** get to know your farm and landscape intimately. Observe, question and experiment. Look for feedback and adapt management practices based on what your system is telling you.
-  **Foster complexity and diversity:** get curious and creative about ways to incorporate these into your system. It could be multispecies forages, biological fertilisers or managing your mobs to allow for the expression of nutritional wisdom.
-  **Build connection and community:** through all aspects of food production and consumption. When we connect deeply with ourselves, the land, animals and our communities, farming becomes more than an economic transaction.

Thank you to my sponsor



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