



2018 NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARDS

11 October
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Nominee: Garry Kadwell, NSW

Category: Australian Government Innovation in Agriculture Land Management Award

Fourth-generation potato farmer Garry Kadwell operates a 700-hectare property in Crookwell that is a model for the integration of conservation and farm management. By dedicating 32 percent of his property to conservation areas or ecological zones, Garry has increased productivity across the board, producing an average of 2000 tons of seed potato and 1800 prime lambs annually.

Integrated pest management on Garry's property has dramatically reduced the need for chemical applications and recreated an extensive natural wetland. Fencing off remnant vegetation and planting additional shelterbelts have also assisted the preservation of this area. Garry has secured a consistent water supply and drought-proofed the property, making it a fully functional wetlands and wildlife breeding area, as well as ensuring the farm's irrigation into the future.

The ecological zones Garry has set up work symbiotically with the integrated pest management program, combatting common potato pests such as thrips, aphids and leafhoppers. The eco zones promote beneficial insects and increased bird life, resulting in a reduced need for pesticides and chemicals on the potato crops.

Gaining a deeper understanding of plant nutrients has contributed to plants with a stronger natural immunity. Garry has also connected habitats to improve soil biology and shelter. This has helped to moderate the effects of extreme weather – including frosts and high winds – on crops and livestock. Garry allows weed species to grow out and then uses them to mulch back into the soil, improving the organic matter content of the soil and increasing carbon levels. Garry has also switched from traditional chemical-based fertilisers to a precision fertilising program, utilising manures and foliar sprays with sap testing to prescribe timing and quantities.

He is a regular participant in research projects such as identifying variability across seed potato blocks using precision farming technology. Completing a water efficiency course and his own research into moisture monitoring and irrigation drainage has led to major production gains, as well as ensuring the sustainability of the farm.

Garry works closely with seed company potato breeders and researchers, and the farm regularly hosts school groups, farmers, overseas visitors and environmental groups on field days. At the annual potato festival up to 1000 people visit the farm in a single day. Garry also hosts conservation events such as Land for Wildlife and The Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife. He is also a champion for rural mental health and suicide prevention, and has set up a local organisation to assist this cause.

Landcare is a grassroots movement that harnesses individuals and groups to protect, restore and sustainably manage Australia's natural environment and its productivity. Groups that fall under the Landcare umbrella work on a diverse range of environmental projects and include farmers embracing sustainable farm management and any community group that partakes in volunteer environmental activities. To find out how you can become a Landcare volunteer and for full details on all 2018 National Landcare finalists, visit www.landcareaustralia.org.au

This program is supported by Landcare Australia and the National Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.





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Web summary:

Fourth-generation potato farmer Garry Kadwell operates a 700 hectare property in Crookwell that is a model for the integration of conservation and farm management. By dedicating 32 percent of his property to conservation areas or ecological zones, Garry has increased productivity across the board, producing an average of 2000 tons of seed potato and 1800 prime lambs annually. Integrated pest management on Garry's property has dramatically reduced the need for chemical applications and recreated an extensive natural wetland. Fencing off remnant vegetation and planting additional shelterbelts have also assisted the preservation of this area. Garry has secured a consistent water supply and drought-proofed the property, making it a fully functional wetlands and wildlife breeding area, as well as ensuring the farm's irrigation into the future.

Pull-out quote:

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