

Norm Smith – 2011 Farmer of the Year Finalist

Norm Smith is a leader in the Central West farming community, he believes in running his land sustainably while dramatically improving his profitability. A reluctant nominee, Norm was put forward for NSW Farmer of the Year by family, colleagues and friends.

Norm runs 'Glenwood' a 2800ha grazing property 29 km east of Wellington in a way that balances the needs of the environment, profit, family and community. Norm is a fourth generation farmer on his land and his wife and five children help him run the farm. The Glenwood merino stud has been established since 1929. All livestock are managed to minimize chemical use and mulesing ceased in 2005. Glenwood is 600 metres above sea level and averages approximately 650mm of rainfall per year which is neither summer nor winter dominated. Glenwood runs predominantly a SRS® merino breeding enterprise including 700 stud ewes and 3500 flock ewes. Norm sells about 100 rams per year. He has an on property sale at Glenwood and is also involved in multi vendor sales in Wellington and Cooma. Glenwood also engages in cattle trading when the seasons allow.

Twelve years ago Norm and his wife Pip completed a holistic management course through what was then Orange Agricultural College. The skills they acquired on that course saw them pioneer planned grazing management on Glenwood. Norm has encouraged greater diversity of desirable species with rotational grazing enabling short graze periods and long rest periods. The benefits of this have been numerous, including 100% ground cover, a huge increase in diversity of perennial plant species, an improvement in soil nutrition and microbial activity, an increase in soil organic matter, increased water holding capacity, no need for artificial fertilizers and reduced chemical use. Norm has recognized that with significant climate variability comes the need to have a very resilient land base which can adapt quickly to change. Not only is Glenwood now sustainable, it is regenerative and will be healthy and productive for many generations to come.

Norm has been quick to recognize the changing consumer trends and demand for products that are ecologically and ethically sound. He is well placed to take advantage of the increasing opportunities that this presents while ensuring the environment is in good condition.

In addition to applying contemporary grazing management practices, Norm is a leader in measuring the impacts of his management on the farm ecosystem. He is one of a small number of graziers who commenced an early stage land health monitoring program called "Ecocheck." This program monitors paddock changes each year and has documented very significant improvements to the health of Glenwood over many years. Norm has also been a pioneer in recognizing the important role that native perennial plants have in the landscape and is a recognized local expert in the grazing community on grazing management of perennials.

Norm is also very active in his local community. He has been a member of his local RFS for 20 years and is currently its senior vice-captain. Norm has been president of Wellington amateur swimming club since 2008. Norm co-founded a group of likeminded farmers called WAG who get together on a regular basis to share

knowledge, friendship and help each other through the tough times. One group event was to organise a two day mental health first aid course to raise awareness of this important issue. Norm and Pip are involved in a large number of community groups in his region.