

Lower Blackwood Land Champions



GEMMA TODD

MULTI TASKING ALL IN A DAYS WORK

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Immersed in all aspects of her farm, working off farm assisting the elderly in their homes and an attentive mother of two teenage boys, farmer Gemma Todd is one of those inspirational women in agriculture, juggling her many and various roles with a genuine smile. “Being here is not hard” she says, “I love the outdoors and I love animals”.

Gemma grew up on the land she now farms with her husband, her parents bought the Warner Glen property when she was 3 years old to farm cattle. She went to school in Karridale, Margaret River and Busselton then left the country life to gain a tertiary education in Perth. Attaining an occupational therapy degree, her journey off the family farm continued, working regionally in Esperance where she met her husband Justin and then Narrogin. They continued to travel for work in regional areas such as Townsville and Orange, but they both knew they would return to an agricultural life on the land.

Ten years ago, with their young boys in tow, Gemma and Justin made the move back to Warner Glen. They purchased the land off Gemma’s folks and took the reins with both (all four) hands. “It’s all about diversity”, Gemma and Justin farm merinos for wool, fat lambs for meat as well as grapes and olives. This year Gemma and Justin had 24 orphaned lambs on their hands, “the kids were excited for the first week, our neighbour’s girl and even the backpackers joined in with the hand feeding. They all had little jumpers on and this year the theme for naming them was Star Trek”.

Gemma is passionate about small family farming, “we’re always wanting to improve how our farm works, make it more sustainable both economically and environmentally. We are mindful with every decision we make”. Gemma and Justin together are working toward creating better systems for managing their farm. They’re experimenting with different seeding in their pastures and soil testing to better understand how to improve their yields.

And Gemma loves being back in the region with the diversity it offers. She tells me that many of her generation who left the area to do other things are also back, “we get together for barbeques and catch up whenever our workload allows. But the farm always comes first”. Such hard work and dedication to her farm, especially her animals seem to be not a burden for Gemma, but rather a vocation that she relishes. It’s been wonderful to meet another of this region’s true land heroes.

Story by Katrina Lombardo Nov 2018



Lower Blackwood Catchment

Land Conservation District Committee

A HEALTHY CATCHMENT STARTS WITH
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

