

# BEEFING UP BUSINESS



Peter and Simone Lawrie, Esher, Westwood, made a decision a year ago to sell down their stock and agist their paddocks.

**W**HILE the drought is spreading its tentacles into central Queensland, one couple's management system meant they made their move almost a year ago.

Peter and Simone Lawrie own a 4860-hectare cattle property, Esher, Westwood, and are a new generation of graziers constantly educating themselves and willing to take calculated risks.

Twelve months ago, the couple made the decision to reduce their own cattle numbers and take on agistment.

"We felt there was more opportunity to sell our grass rather than tying up our own capital in a depressed market. Having plenty of grass meant we were in a position to sell our grass and to help out other graziers in drought-stricken areas.

**Inga Stünzner**  
in Rockhampton

inga.stunzner@fairfaxmedia.com.au  
(07) 4927 9422



"Six months into it, we could see it was a good decision for our business," Mrs Lawrie said.

Their bold decision-making has been part of their management style since they took ownership of Esher and their surrounding properties, which are half an hour west of Rockhampton, through succession in 2007.

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cashflow. The first move was to sell off their breeders and become a full cattle-trading enterprise as it was too long a gap between breeding and then turning off weaners, Mr Lawrie said.

Young cattle are sourced mainly from the Gracemere Saleyards the stock are put onto forest country and finished on 80ha of leucaena and then sold

to feedlot operators.

Further diversification took place when Mr Lawrie began his own truck contracting business 'One Haulage' and for the past three years has been contracting himself out to any industry that needs him.

The fact he will never say no to a job means the phone can ring at any time.

During the course of our conversation, he gets a phone call – this job is taking pipes out to Dingo. One moment, he is dressed as a man from the land. Next minute he is in his orange high-vis shirt, complete with One Haulage logo, ready to take on the resources sector.

"It's never a dull moment in our business. We are very fortunate to have the education behind us to manage the many

different areas of our business. We are a great team and enjoy working together," Mrs Lawrie said.

Meanwhile, Mrs Lawrie has been managing the property for the past three years and then being busy mum to her children, Ty (15) and Brooke (13).

She manages their third income stream 'SquizzboardS' – selling billboard space on their land, which runs along both the Capricorn and Leichhardt Highways.

Last week, she secured a contract with Beef Australia for two billboards promoting Beef 2015 and Mr Lawrie and Ty spent the weekend putting these up.

"I always say those billboards help pay for my kids to go to school," she laughed.

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