

New farming practice provides more balanced lifestyle

Passion revived

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Ross and June Skene have rediscovered their passion for farming.

The Skene's, of Torrington, Cowra have undergone a shift in their farming practices, which has resulted in the shift in their attitude.

"I'm ecstatic," Mr Skene said.

"I'm just excited to see what is happening to our property."

With the growing costs of inputs, constant bad news with the weather and markets, and concerns about impact of chemicals on the land, Mr Skene said he had lost his fervor for farming,

The mixed farmer or "mixed-up farmer" as Mr Skene referred to himself, had a number of operations including fat lambs, trading cattle, winter cropping and lucerne growing. He was also contract farming to justify his machinery purchases.

"I wasn't enjoying myself; I was very disgruntled," he said.

On the second day of a seven-day holistic farming course, Mr Skene moved all his livestock into one herd.

That done he realised that "the rest of the property was resting."

Holistic farming recommends a whole-life, balanced approach to farming and among the other changes made to the farm, the Skene's have sold off their machinery and sheep to reduce the workload. They no longer crop, but don't rule it out in the future.

Paddock sizes have also been reduced. Their 26 paddocks now number 47, each approximately



□ June and Ross Skene are enjoying farming and the changes to their property after embracing holistic farming.

nine hectares.

With the cattle being moved every two days, the paddocks are now rested for a period of about 120 days at a time.

Mr Skene has also worked out a

feed budget to allow for dry times.

The landscape is also reaping the benefit with Mr Skene saying there is more ground cover, and the soils have increased their water-holding capacity.

There are also benefits in the bottom line.

"We considered that we used to be good farmers in the past," Mr Skene said. "Our bottom line (now) is similar to our good farming

years but with a lot less work, less risk and less stress."

Mr Skene said the holistic approach to farming has also left him with more balance and time for his family.