Tech transforms 'dead' water

BY KATE O'NEILL

A SMART piece of technology is transforming "dead" water into a productive asset on a property at Bedgerebong, near Forbes.

Farm manager Scott Darcy says a water conditioning system installed two years ago has completely changed the quality of their bore water, boosting soil health and productivity.

The property was purchased in 2018 by Highbank Pastoral Company to grow winter cereals and lucerne.

But it soon became clear the bore water was "pretty crappy", Mr Darcy said.

"We identified there was an issue with hard water," he said.

"Put it this way, you couldn't lather a piece of soap to save yourself in the water. You'd rub your skin off before you got a bubble."

The Hydrosmart system soon after it was installed on the Bedgerebong property. Picture supplied

It had created a biological dead zone in the soil, locking up fertilisers and leaving crops struggling to respond to even the heaviest flood irrigation.

But since a Hydrosmart water conditioning system was installed there has been "phenomenal" change.

"We've got algae growing in the drains now, we've got yabbies growing in the drains ... we've got turtles all over the place, frogs - anywhere where the water is," Mr Darcy said.

"It's a healthy ecosystem, put it that way.

"Before, we had nothing. We didn't have worms in the paddock. Now we've got worms in the paddocks.

"The root development in the paddock is better because the worms and the microbes and all the bugs are in the paddock, where before there was nothing.

The system has brought the water and soil back to life, significantly increasing the productivity of the property. Pictures supplied

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>
> **Farm manager Scott Darcy**

"We could put as much organic matter on the paddock as we liked and it wasn't getting broken down because there was nothing there to eat it."

He said the improved water quality had increased the productivity of dry matter by about a quarter.

"The response we get from watering now compared to what it was is amazing.

"When we first took it over it had lucerne in there - you'd have to put a heap of water on it, and get very little growth. Now you see a response after two days.

"It's phenomenal. It's completely changed everything."

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