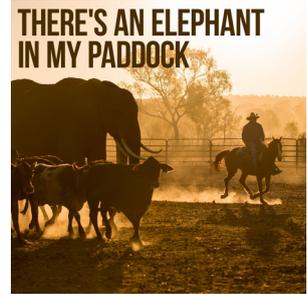


There's an Elephant in my Paddock



From her tiny kitchen on the family station 'Trafalgar' south of Charters Towers in Queensland, Jayne Cuddihy pauses mincing homegrown meat for sausages to take a phone call.

It's Fiona Simpson, the Chair of the National Farmers Federation, returning her call. As she gathers her thoughts and switches her brain from station cook, teacher and mother to journalistic hard hitter she glances out the window to check on her children.

Maeve, 6, and Ted, 7, have taken a break from school of the air and are having morning tea with their sister Margo, 4, and poddy calf in the warm Queensland winter sun.

The former newspaper journalist and ABC producer begins negotiating with the head of Australia's major farming industry group about questions and schedules to arrange an interview for Australia's fastest growing agricultural podcast, "There's an Elephant in my Paddock".

Podcasting for those who don't know, and don't worry there are plenty of you, is an audio file that you can download or stream on your smart phone, computer, Apple TV or similar device. They are like radio programs on demand, recorded conversations, monologues or documentaries, they come in many different forms and genres and most are free.

Podcasts have been around for decades but it hasn't been until the development of smart phones and better availability of Wi-Fi and cheap data that they have taken off.

One of the great strengths of podcasting is it is accessible both for the listener and the creator. Listeners can listen anywhere, while doing other activities like cooking, walking driving, the people creating them can do so with very limited technology; a

set up can be as basic as a microphone and a computer.

To make an hour long in-depth agricultural discussion podcast Jayne teams up with friend, and former colleague ,Nicole Bond who hosts the show from her home in Longreach. Both mothers, both working remotely from rural locations they connect with influential agricultural thinkers, researchers and others to deliver conversations about the 'elephants in the room' when it comes to agriculture. It's a lofty goal but something they are both committed to.

It hasn't been plain sailing. The podcast has changed and developed; both women were used to having access to a studio and tried all different techniques and technology to replicate one. Nicole is still known to hide under a doona to record the voiceover when the kids are home. The original idea was for the podcast to be a panel discussion but that is near impossible with the host and producer more than 700 kms apart, although there are more plans for live shows in the future.

Both women are very appreciative of the Rural Financial Counselling Service, North Queensland, a government funded service to assist primary producers at risk of financial hardship, who committed to sponsoring the initiative.

Jayne says she feels exceptionally lucky she can continue to practice her profession in a remote location, to have a bush lifestyle and raise her family and contribute to the agricultural industry through delivering new perspectives, ideas and discussions

Just like supporting your children through distance learning she says it is not always easy, but it is rewarding.

INSTANT APPLE SLICE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Chopped peeled raw apples
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 beaten eggs
- 2 teaspoons mixed spice
- 1 cup sultanas
- 1 1/2 cups SR Flour
- 125gm melted butter (let cool)

METHOD

- Mix all ingredients together thoroughly.
- Place in a greased 18cm x 28cm slice tray and bake in moderate oven for approximately 50 minutes.
- When cooked sprinkle with a mixture of sugar and cinnamon while hot.
- This slice is nice cold but can also be served warm with custard, cream or ice cream.

Lorraine Greenfield