

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Hello and welcome to “Unstress”. I'm Dr. Ron Ehrlich. Where does our food come from? What are some of the challenges for people on the farms growing the very food we need to survive than if they're doing it really well and we support them growing the food we need to thrive not just for us now but for our children, our grandchildren and future generations? These are serious questions and some others include, what is low-stress stockmanship? What can animals teach us about stress? What's the difference between climate change and climate variability? Did you know that in a teaspoon of healthy soil there are six billion microorganisms and it's the soil that 7.5 billion people on this planet depend on?

Well, my guest today is Grahame Rees, farmer and educator. Grahame is a fourth generation Sheep and Wool producer who grew up on the family property at Ivanhoe in Western New South Wales. Now as you will hear he has a passion for people, livestock and the rangelands. Grahame has spent the last 20 years with his wife Roz and two children on their property Penina near Ivanhoe building on his knowledge as well as participating in grazing and management programs in Australia and around the world.

In 1999 Graham was inspired by an innovative approach to farming which ignited an interest in low-stress stockhandling. Over the next couple of years, Grahame and Roz experienced the benefits of handling livestock using those methods. And in 2002 Graham joined with some partners to deliver low-stress stock handling schools right across Australia. Now assisting thousands of livestock handlers to improve their livestock handling. I hope you enjoy this conversation I had with Grahame Rees.

Welcome to the show Grahame.

Grahame Rees: Hey Ron, how are you?

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I'm well, I'm well, thank you so much for joining us. Look, this whole story of connecting with the land bringing what's going on in farmers lives to the city so that we can all understand a little better. There's so much wanted to talk to you today about, but I wondered if you might share with our listener a bit about your own story how you got to where you are now?

Grahame Rees: Thanks, Ron. I think um it's interesting I grew up and spent most of my life in and out on an outback sheep station at a place called Ivanhoe near Broken Hill which is 900 kilometres west of Sydney. And it's interesting that at the time we're recording this I'm visiting my daughter in Sydney and I was only on the beach yesterday with her and I said, it's hard to understand there's anything out there. It's very I can really relate to how somebody in the city can't necessarily relate to somebody in the country and then there's me out there 900 kilometres away how do I relate to people. And I think that's part of this changing world we used to live in small communities but now we're a much broader world.

So I spent most of my life out there we ran a sheep station and I guess you went through all the challenges of running a livestock business whether probably more droughts and floods

and high prices and low prices, you go through the highs of the wool industry and the lows of the wool industry. And so, I guess one of the things that I was challenged with is how I build more profitability into my business and how do I build more sustainability into my business. And so, that led me on to a path of education and I think nothing's going to change unless we do start down a path of thinking a little differently. And so, I guess that's what started quite a long time ago 20 odd years ago when I went and learned how to manage my animals better, manage my grass better. And then in 1999, I had a gentleman by the name of Bud Williams come to Australia and he taught me low-stress Stockmanship. Now I thought I was pretty good at that...

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What a great name low-stress stockmanship.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. And I think that's what it fits right in with what you're doing under stress because what I put that into my own business but then learned how to teach it and so that's one of the programs I teach today is I go around teaching people how to handle animals in a low-stress way which in effect gives us a better product on the plate, it gives us better profitability and we have the animals less stressed, Ron.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yes, this is good. Graham we're going to be talking about low-stress stockmanship for sure. Yeah, but you go on this is 1999 when you were introduced to this concept. Of course, there are almost twenty years that have gone since then.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. And so, one of the challenges, when you live on an outback station, is you've got to educate your children and that's not too difficult to do for primary school. You can use correspondence school or the air home-schooling, the little school we had a little school down the road where we drove, we averaged three hours a day driving just to and from school. There was a school of six kids and five of them were cousins and so a great but a great upbringing for those children in primary school. But when it came to high school, we needed to look for something different and so it became boarding school and Ashley, our daughter she went off to boarding school, but we were still driving Brad those three hours a day and it just came a day where we said, "You know what, we can't keep this up. We've just done two and a half thousand kilometres this week just for school without any work." And so, to remove the stress I guess we moved to Bathurst and decided to put Ashley and Bradley into day school which open up a huge opportunity for me to start teaching.

Now, I never knew how to teach but I guess there's a book called "Feel The Fear And Do It Anyway" and you don't have to read the book you just read the cover and you go oh, well, I might be fearful of this but let's get into it. And today in that program I've trained over 3,000 producers, people in the whole livestock industry. So, that's been really rewarding and animals can teach us so much because they tell us when they're stressed very, very quickly whereas I think we as humans tend to kind of hide that.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now listen... surely and I think a lot of people think about this. You've grown up on a farm, your family has been farmers or you have gone to X school, what's there to learn Grahame? I know the answer that in case everybody listening is going 'what is this guy even talking about?' But it's the start of a conversation Grahame, please go on.

Grahame Rees: Okay, well, exactly Ron I think I suppose I've often said to you how does the dentist get into health and food and the way we live and how do it how do a dentist's get into one stress? Because it was the same for me, how does a farmer get into this? And I think one of the challenges we have is that a lot of education is very much about it's about production. In agriculture especially, we have become so production focused that we're missing the main point and that is profit and another program I teach livestock marketing school, we really recognise that the only thing that's going to allow people to remain profitable is that word to have some profit and often I'll be talking to a group of producers and they go now I never seen that word before.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Really? Yeah, we're about survival.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. And so, a production-based system will always give us more product but at what cost? One cost to the bottom line? The more we produce you know a good example is people go well we won't need to put a feedlot in as the overheads are putting that feedlot in. But then there are all the inputs of the grains that we're going to put in there, the hay we've got to put in there, the staff were going to have to run it and then there's we know we get sick animals so now we've got to give them all these injections. And so, I see a huge contrast, Ron between that sort of industry, that industrial agriculture if you like and the producers which are most the producers, I work with basically producing a grass-fed product, basically working with nature. And we're sitting here in November 2018 at a time when a lot of Eastern Australia is experiencing a drought that it's the biggest drought in 100 years. Talking to one of my clients near Broken Hill last week he had 22 millimetres sorry, it had 18 millimetres and that was his biggest rainfall in 22 months.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Wow. Yes, I heard this morning that western Queensland hasn't had a good rain for seven years.

Grahame Rees: Correct. So, my business colleague lives in he's been in drought for six years but it's about understanding that that's just part of the cycle and so, they're not actually in bad shape, they're in good shape, they have been proactive in some of the things they're doing. And I think again that's the difference. There're people that go and get some education and that's what we do we help those people actually understand a decision-making process and if you... we can't all make the right decisions but if we recognise, we've made a wrong one, we can easily correct them.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Just to put it in perspective for our listener Grahame, industrial agriculture the model that is very production based, what proportion of our agribusiness is production based in your estimation?

Grahame Rees: Look I think there are various degrees of it, Ron and I think we've got to be careful when we look at some of the information that we see especially online about industrial agriculture and feed lighting. And so, if we look at America a huge amount of livestock, for instance, finished in feedlots. And that's not necessarily the case here in Australia, it's much less, it's longer fed in America which is going to... that changes that whole omega-3, omega-6 ratio the longer they're fed we're much more short fed so it is less here but I suppose when I use the word industrial agriculture I'm talking about lots of

artificial fertilisers when it comes to cropping lots of chemicals, it's been huge debates about quite phosphate fungicides those sorts of things. And I think there's what's what we've talked a lot about in the past is a sustainable agriculture. There's a huge shift going on right now. It's with regenerative agriculture and so, Charlie Massey who you've had as a guest on the show, Charlie wrote a book "The Call of The Reed Warbler".

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Fabulous book.

Grahame Rees: Absolutely. And it's not Charlie's opinion all the way through, he's got case study after case study after case study and so there's a huge shift to thinking about regenerative agriculture and I think it's not just about fixing the land, it's not just about fixing the food it's about ensuring that those producers that are producing food or fibre in that regenerative agriculture space are actually profitable because otherwise and that doesn't mean just profitable from when I use the word profitable everyone just goes our dollar signs. It's going to be profitable also for the resource, we're really looking at building biological and the soil, building soil.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I wanted to talk to you and this is you've already identified some of the challenges that people face on the land and achieve that one-off educating the kids and that time-travelled is a huge imposter on your weak. I mean I can only imagine 2,000 kilometres in one week of transporting kids to and from school. You've also mentioned climate change in how vulnerable people are to that and then this difference between product and profit. But this difference between sustainability and regenerative, can you explain to our listener what's the difference?

Grahame Rees: Okay, well, I think just something you mentioned there so when we talk about is like a lot of conversation about climate change. And I guess language is important for me and how I communicate things and so, I don't think of it in terms of climate change I think of it in terms of climate variability. And I think that helps us understand a little bit better than no climate change is kind of it just comes down to what various opinions are and we're going down this path, but the reality is this planet has had climate variability since Godot living when I talk to my producers about living inside the boundary fence. And so, what can I do to work with climate variability and inside my fence and so sustainability is really about status quo and boy, the status quo isn't where we need to be regenerating land, we need to be regenerating the water resource. A good example is some Gabe Brown has just written a book and if people haven't read that book "Dirt To Soil", it really will open up your eyes to what's possible over a 20-year period. When Gabe he's in North Dakota started I think he's in the 20-inch rainfall, but he had a water infiltration rate of 30 minutes for two inches of rain to go into the soil.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: So, that means it has to rain for 30 minutes before you get two minutes absorption into the soil? No, two inches absorption into the soil.

Grahame Rees: Well, yes. So, he basically poured the equivalent of 2 inches onto the soil and it took 30 minutes for that to be not lying on top of the soil of infiltrator. It now takes 11 seconds.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Wow, wow.

Grahame Rees: You don't need to know any more than that's like Wow. And so, that's the interesting thing when we talk about climate change of climate variability is that it doesn't matter whether we got more rain or less rain, what's relevant is how much did I keep on getting into my soil it can infiltrate it in the soil. So, if I have a better soil water infiltration rate based on Gabe's figures, we actually need a mind you'd amount of rain to if I had a very poor infiltration rate.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, because that's a double-edged sword isn't it you're hanging out for rain the ground is so dry and poor that when it does rain it washes away your resource your soil.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. And so, that's what we work with the people, we work with is destocking inappropriate times keeping the ground cover in this soil. I mean I manage a place at Bathurst where people would say oh well that's a high rainfall area. We've had no stock there now for 20 months and because it's very much about the long-term making sure that we get the soil so when it does rain properly, we've got productivity and proper productivity not just we're not mining, we don't want to be mining our land we need to be farming it. And that requires some change in thinking some education and some confidence that it's going to work because farming can be a very precarious place to be where you're not guaranteed of an income or every year.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now you took people I know we had a chat about this and I was so interested to hear this story you took a group of farmers on a tour in the United States, it was about regenerative agriculture, I wonder if he could share with our listener what that was about and some of the highlights.

Grahame Rees: Yeah, so, Ron we have a mastermind group that's part of our KL art marketing program and he back in 2003 I'd done a road trip with Bud Williams and I just said one day I want to bring some people back. And so, this year I took 22 people over to the US and our goal was to look at profitable regenerative agriculture. It was very important that it was profitable because it's all very well to do things that are going to be great for the land but if we're not profitable that doesn't keep the right people there. So, and we were really going to look at we keep it pretty basic we're not really that much in we're not in the cropping all that some of our people are. We went to look at grass money and livestock. How those three interact. And we landed in Dallas and hired five cars and we went on a tour up through Missouri, Kansas on Colorado, Wyoming, Montana. And what was extraordinary was what was not well just what we saw but the people we met and the first day we met Walt Davis in Texas. Walt is somebody who what'd he says I went to university and then it took me 20 years to educate myself out of all that. And he sat there very serious he looked at us and he goes well, I want to be really honest with you. I was once a serial killer. We are like what? He said yep I spent all my days trying to kill everything. I tried to kill every year bug every insect every weed. I just sprayed so much chemical out trying to kill things. And he said I realised that I was killing some of the very things that were going to build my soil and he said your wealth is in the health of your soil. And Walt's in his 80s and so he was he was very enlightening into somebody who really now today understands this stuff. And even to the

point where he said it really is important if you don't just farm for the farm. He said I neglected my family and he said if I supposed to say something to you today your young people, he'd say get a balance in your life. You want to balance which is what you really talked about getting balanced in your life.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's a challenge for all of us.

Grahame Rees: It is absolutely a challenge. So, at the end of that day the whole group said well, that's paid for the trip.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: On day one.

Grahame Rees: On day one.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Fantastic.

Grahame Rees: And I said you ain't seen nothing yet. And Buds passed away now but his wife Eunice she brought a group of people together and we had what she called the International Budd Summit and one of the guys there was two quotes that I pulled out of that one of the guys there that's using the bugged marketing principles and Stockman share piece and we were talking about I suppose things like drought or things like poor management and he said in government subsidies and he said if you kept failing you're going to cap success. And what he was saying is that when we subsidise people who are managing their business properly or subsidising people through various situations, he said when you're capping failure you're capping the success of the people that are doing a really good job. And I thought that was hmm that was that was really important. And I think the other one that Wally Olson he said most people procrastinate about starting something. He said just start something and then you can manage it and I think whether it doesn't matter whether it's a meditation practice or maybe it's an exercise program or maybe it's eating differently, whatever it is just start I mean those otherwise we'll just get caught and procrastination.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Because Budd Williams who you mentioned, he introduced you to this concept of low-stress Stockmanship and I wondered just pausing on the tour for a moment Eunice his wife has just held this Budd meeting, what is low-stress Stockmanship?

Grahame Rees: Well, yeah, great question Ron and I think Budd had spent most of his life studying animals and they work the way they work, and he spent the last nine years working in a feedlot in Canada because to me that's where you can measure things. And that's the reason why I did it but if we think of it this way for thousands of years we've interacted with animals and we've either interacted with them in a predatory way or a non-predatory way. In and the way that we handle animals today in most situations is in a way a predator handles it. And so, the animals are stressed they're just wanting to survive there and so changing the way we work around those animals in a non-predatory way can actually get better results for us. Things are quicker, faster, easier but also those animals are putting on more production for instance. An animal that is low stress on average will graze for 45 minutes longer than a stressed animal. A sheep can recognise up to 50 human faces for two years. So, we really don't know much about animals, we're still learning but it's extraordinary what you can

achieve in terms of the way animals they're easy to work, they're easy to achieve something with but is also very rewarding for the people. A lot of your listeners won't relate to this but if they've ever been in the stockyards, I often talk to a group of farmers and I go, you wouldn't believe this, but I've just been to Western Australia where some women have stormed off and their husbands in the yards because they got yelled at. And women all put their hand up now it happens here too. Or the kids say it's okay to swear in the yards and I go well actually no, I'd rather you swore in the kitchen because those animals don't need your frustration and anger around them. And so, it's kind of interesting that we run livestock, but most people get out of bed in the morning and think it's going to be a bad day in the stockyards, I don't. I get out excited and go wow, I wonder what I'm going to learn off these animals today.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: It's interesting because as humans if we eat when we're stressed, we could be on the best diet in the world or taking the best supplements in the world but because we're stressed blood not circulating around the digestive tract, it's circulating around muscles and so you just don't absorb your nutrients. So, that's actually I keep on learning these things Grahame, veer similarities between the oral microbiome the gut microbiome the soil microbiome diversity is resilience. And here you're telling me lower stressed animals are healthier animals because they graze longer and probably absorb their nutrients better.

Grahame Rees: Yeah, exactly. And one of the things Budd said to me said feed and water are important to animals but he said proper exercise, especially in a feedlot. It is so important because you want to free their mind up you want to relax them just like us you think about it if we were if we were sat down in a couch and someone kept bringing us chips and lollies for the next 90 days or a hundred days what sort of a mental state would be being? We know can't get out of the couch, that's it and that's in essence what it is. So, proper exercise is those sorts of things can really, really help. And so, yeah, I think it's so important because we have a saying attitude is everything. And your attitude is really going to influence those animals because we communicate with people whose body language same with animals they're reading that stuff all the time then I'm sure you don't in your dental practice use an electric product but if you hit someone with a like if you hit an animal with electric prod or it's going to release cortisone which we reduces the ability of the immune system to react. And so, those sorts of situations we can make it better and it's been so exciting to be able to share and teach that that with people right across Australia.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: This is a 21-day tour and we're up to day two with unions to teaching us or reminding us about low-stress stockmanship and Gabe Brown talking to us about water infiltration right? Go on give us another highlight.

Grahame Rees: Well, we headed off across Kansas and it was its fairly pretty funny oath in the states because they all put the other state down and so we're in Texas and they said we heard you're going across Kansas and I said yeah. They said did they're building a scenic route across there they're putting in a tunnel and so, I wasn't sure what to expect when I got to Kansas, but cropping is not my deal, so I don't know a lot about cropping but two of the group really insisted that we go and have a look at cover cropping. And cover cropping is basically instead of there might be a cash crop or like in their case wheat barley corn soybeans something like that, so they'll grow that cover crop and then and then the ground will remain bare for the rest of the time but the same as we do here. And cover cropping is

very much about putting a cover in over that so they'll use an example is we arrived at a fella called Michael Thompson's ranch and he took us out and we're standing in a field, there were about 20 different species everything from radishes to sunflowers to everything and the reason I plant many different species is the soil microorganisms get different things from different plants. And in that field, he said 30 days ago we harvested wheat we came in right behind the harvester and sowed this. And there we were standing in this field of a beautiful, beautiful stand of cover crop waist-high and we had a soil probe and the moisture was just unbelievable. It's just as even a long-term time farmer within the group who was more traditional said if I didn't see this with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe it.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Because what so what typically happens in Australia, I mean the cash crop being the week the barley the oats go in and it usually takes how many months between sowing and harvesting?

Grahame Rees: So, normally the wheat crop would be put in around that April/May period in Australia and it probably through June and then it's harvest at any time from October through or probably in the South December, January. And then it's harvested and then it's left and it's very it's very much high input high input type farming. And so what that's not doing is it's not building the soil we're putting in lots of artificial fertilisers or premium chemicals.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: In that period between October, December and April when the new crop is put in the ground is bare?

Grahame Rees: The ground is bare and it's very well and has the stubble but it's very much about controlling moisture, they get a rain now gold so some they will spray those weeds, but this is very much about building.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: So, what Michael was doing was putting in all these cover crops in between.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. And so, there's a book called "Against the grain" and I've been listening to it it's a very long book but it goes back right back to the beginning of time really and in this book, he talks about how they drained all the marshes and they put water on the drylands so they really looked that up this is in the Middle East there but it was ten thousand years ago when grain was introduced. And the reason wheat and barley the reason wheat and barley were introduced ten thousand years ago wasn't for food. What he says in that book is that that's what it was able to allow the state to start to control people because now we could get people living in one place and so now, we've got a bit of control of people. The second thing was that why they grew wheat and barley was Italy it was very predictable when harvest happened so, therefore, the taxman knew when to turn up and pick that up. It was very easy for a raiding army to come and steal the grain it was very easy for a raiding our me to come and burn all your fields. That was and then there was a group that just wouldn't conform, and he called them the barbarians and they grew things that could stay in the ground for three or four years like potatoes. And the analogy here's when the raiding army came, they said here's a shovel go and dig it up. But why I bring that upon is what we've what we got then was the tax men now we have the tax mean the fertiliser men, the chemicals at the end the new equipment salesman, the bank man. And so, that probably addresses a lot of your

industrial agriculture question earlier is that is that everybody is taking up out of the system but we're not regenerating the very thing.

So, take Michael Thompson for instance. He shared with us that he's one of three producers at his local bank that's out of a hundred and twenty that's profitable. He uses one hit of a nitrogen fertiliser when he sees his crops no more. He uses no fungicides, no herbicides no insecticides at all. His neighbours would use anything from eight to fifteen and he's harvesting about the same amount of grain of those crops but he's I think he gave me two figures but he's doing less and making more which is he's using that free ecosystem of sunlight water keeping water on his land, making sure the effect and farming like nature made us be farming and getting good returns every year not just riding the waves.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I'm intrigued by that. Three out of a hundred and twenty that are profitable surely I mean are we so stuck in our ways that those hundred and seventeen other farmers aren't turning around and going, Michael what are you doing that makes you profitable? Can you please share that with me because I want to be profitable too?

Grahame Rees: Oh, we're funny for human beings, don't we? I'm sure I could ask you the same question. I'm sure there are not many dentists come and say Ron, how can I be more holistic with my dental practice?

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, we love this. It's an interesting question though, isn't it? Because we love certainty and even if that certainty is wrong, we somehow feel very comfortable there.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. Well, there's plenty of research that shows that we would rather stay with what we know even if it's being a victim, even if it's not a place where we want to be to step outside is it's fearful. And if there's not enough support for people to really help them through that process there's another great book which I never read I just saw it in the bookshelf and when I got it and the title of that book was "Plan your own destiny or someone else will". And I think there's plenty of people would like to try things and do things. And that's what's been unique Ron about the group we went with is that whilst most of the people didn't know each other before the tour. In fact, there's a couple I didn't know and by the end of it there were we added up there were over 5,000 hours of conversation but that group over after 22 days is so tight in their communication. In fact, it at 12 o'clock today we're having it we have a monthly call and so we'll actually be talking to Michael Thompson and so they want to keep it going and keep supporting each other. The other person we visited while we're in Kansas is a fella called Gail Fuller. And Gail's got a long story and people could go and look up Gail Fuller online because there are huge videos of him and actually Walt Davis. But Gail Fuller was pushed to the brink really with government subsidies and not being paid out. And so, he's had to work with very little capital to actually build up his enterprise but what he's learned along the way was very important. It was a unique day because he provided lunch for us and every single thing from the meat to the salads to the wine had been grown on his place. And he related the soil ecosystem very much to the human gut biome, he related those very much two things. And I think it was very good how what he shared with us one of the things that that here's a few research people went look for, but he said don't worry about phosphate. He said what you want to worry about is RNAI technology.



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Hang on, hang on now. Glyphosate, of course, is a roundup.

Grahame Rees: Correct.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: But the other one was...

Grahame Rees: I think it's something like RNAI technology.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I was going to ask you to spell that but then I realised...

Grahame Rees: Yeah, it's something like that but it's genetic manipulation but it doesn't need any approval. And so, what they're doing with the particular plant he was talking about what it'll do is suppress the reproductive desire for insects and it'll suppress their appetite. And there's been no research at all on what effect that might have on the food chain human, the human biome or anything. So, he lifted a lid on things that we'd never heard of it was amazing to spend that day with Gail. And so, it opened up my eyes about cover cropping and what's possible and I think that's the thing is as again as humans we kind of think about what's impossible and we need to start to think about what's possible. Nothing's impossible everything's possible we just got to find a way. I mean hell we never got to the moon if we do think it was impossible.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, look, I know I guess one of the other challenges facing everyone farmers particularly is isolation and one of the nice things about modern technology like you are today going to be talking to Michael Thompson and I guess your group are spread around Australia.

Grahame Rees: Yeah, exactly. That's right, they came from five states.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. So, I think what I'm kind of and I know you are too Grahame, I think we're both optimists and I think we can see great potential in our ability to communicate which is one of the reasons why you and I are sitting here today and talking.

Grahame Rees: Exactly. It's a small world and that does allow us to, it allows the individual like yourself Ron to have a podcast and get the message out there because in the past that was controlled by the TV stations and the media owners and in there still to some extent today controlled if you want to go traditional but that's the beauty of had a podcast and anybody anywhere can listen to this and get the most up-to-date thought-provoking information.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now Grahame one of the things I feel pretty passionate about I think this is for more people in the city to connect with their food and by that they have to be connected with what goes on out on the farm. If you were talking to people in the city who want to do that, what would be a couple of tips you would give our listener to say hey here's how you can engage?

Grahame Rees: Well, Ron, one of the things that really got me on this path was I'd interviewed Dr. Christine Jones about soil health. She's one of Australia's leading soil scientists and one of the world's leading soil scientists actually. And it was kind of funny I

interviewed her because I do a similar type podcast Huber's and she said to me there are six billion organisms in a healthy teaspoon of soil and seven billion peoples are relying on that. And she said at the end of the call she said you know what? If there's somebody called Nora Gate has come into Australia, I reckon you should interviewer her. And that's how we met Ron. You sponsored and brought Nora out here and we met at that time. And what hit me when I, when I met Nora and heard what her story was the connection, is between food health, human health and soil health. And there's an absolute direct connection to that and so, I kind the phrase life in a teaspoon because life very much relies on that teaspoon of healthy soil. So, what I think is we see a lot of conversation about paddock to plate. In the farming industry if people are studying how can we take our food from the paddock to the plate. Well, I think what it needs to be reversed because I think it's from the plate to the paddock. So, people that aren't in farming maybe they've never been west. I'm using Sydney as the analogy but any city, but they've never been Penrice as far west as they've been in Sydney and so, they haven't actually seen the country. But they can still start to ask what this food on my plate, where did it come from? This meat, is this grass-fed meat or is it feedlot meat? Are this these plants grown...? There's organic and there's a misconception that organics the best. One of the challenges is that organics have so many rules around them that sometimes essential nutrients are missing. So, I like to use the phrase more biodynamic. Is this food coming from a biodynamic farm? How do I connect to my food? And so, we have farmers markets and the like, but I'd invite people in the city to connect with a farmer go and connect. Farmers don't donate \$20 for a bale of hay can't connect with the farmer and spend a day with a farmer walking. Especially someone who's a regenerative farmer walking about his field that is learning what happens and he could learn a lot from you as well. That's we used to have a time Ron when we had city cousins and country cousins and, in the school, holidays the city cousins got sent out to the country, so their parents could keep working. We don't have that today. And so, we have kids growing up and it's not their fault and it's everybody's trying to get on with their life, but I think we need to connect people more to food. If a very small amount of our income is spent on food, we will go and spend it on Netflix and then not all of those things' entertainment, but we get very tight on I don't want to buy grass-fed meat because that's too expensive but it's a very nutrient-dense food is what we need to be looking for. And boy, it's so much about our health. I did a podcast with someone yesterday they interviewed me, and it wasn't to do with this really it was about me in my life and they said here you are at 60, why aren't you taking pills and be unhealthy? And I said well because it's related to the food I eat. I eat a more ketogenic diet, I eat a clean diet, I'm eating food that that is going to enhance my health, regenerate my health. Lots of people would say at 60 oh well you're oh you're over the hill but when I had turned 60 I said well, I feel like I'm 21 I reckon I've lived about 50% of my life so I still got another 60 to go. So, I better do a few things to give that every chance again.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Music to my ears Grahame, music to my ears. Listen to the last thing I just wanted to ask before we finish up. And taking a step back from your role, bringing this message to so many farmers and to the public. Taking a step back, we're all on a health journey in our lives, what do you think the biggest challenge is today for us as individuals on our health journey through life in our modern world?

Grahame Rees: Well, I think it is stress and if we go back to the ages when we were cavemen it's kind of logical that you'd think you get out of bed in the morning and I got to go on kill a

dinosaur for lunch kind of thing and you think that's pretty stressful but actually those people didn't really have much stress because whilst they might have had to have they might have been in a fighter or something like that or had to go on and get in a dangerous place to get an animal, they actually spent the majority of their time very relaxed and they didn't continually spontaneously get out our stresses up. Whereas today we get out of bed and we're stressed and then if we if we turn the news on, we're going to be more stressed and then we get in the car to go to work and we can be going along and we're either jammed up with the traffic and stress. Or often note myself when I'm driving, and a policeman comes in behind me I'm not even breaking the law, but I feel the stress of the head guy behind me. And so, I think that's in the same with farmers. So, I think this busy life can get stressed and that's why it's so important to get food right, get some proper exercise, get things like meditation. All of those things are so, so important and is not only going to enhance our longevity but it's going to enhance probably what's more important than longevity is the moment we've got right now.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Graham what a great note to finish on. Thank you so much for joining me today. I'm going to have links to your KLR website and you've got some great resources there and podcasts and hopefully we can get more people in the city connecting with more people in the country. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Grahame Rees: Thanks, Ron. It's been great to have a chat with you.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: It's so important for us to hear about the challenges that people living on the land have because they are so essential to our own health and well-being. I feel really passionate about this idea that we in the city need to connect with those on the land. Quite literally our health and the ongoing health of the planet is in their hands. So, understanding and supporting those people is I believe really import. In February 2019 then I'll be going up to Armadale and presenting a workshop called "Unstress" and simply be well in association with the local land care group. I'm hoping to stop him along the way and visit some farms and record some of their stories for this show. I'm also struck by similarities. Whether we're talking about the soil gut or oral microbiome the more diverse, the more resilient and the healthier they all are. The story of glyphosate or roundup keeps re-emerging. Go back and listen to that podcast with Charles Massey author of that fabulous book that we refer to "The call of the Reed Warbler". And of course, that episode with farming legend Joel Salatin, "Folks this ain't normal but it could be". A stressed animal is not a happy or healthy animal in the same way as a stressed human isn't. And low-stress stock handling is clearly on the agenda for a growing number of farmers. We, humans, have had a long relationship with animals throughout our evolutionary history and the last 40 or 50 years of industrialised farming practices based on production. Well, we seem to have lost sight of not just a more humane way of dealing with animals but a healthier way for animals and humans. And alike and importantly, and this is really important a potentially less stressed and more profitable way of life for farmers themselves.

Grahame mentioned a book by Gabe brown "Dirt to soil" must have a look at that one and we all have links to Grahame's website KLR marketing. We've got a lot in common Grahame and I but in the coming and we're coming at it from different perspectives, I hope we can do more stuff together. So, until next week, this is Dr. Ron Ehrlich. Be well.



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