

## Bore access brings hope at Walgett

Nigel and Rae Cochrane, who farm 2700 hectares in the drought-ravaged Walgett region, secured a water lifeline to a piped bore with a loan from the Farm Innovation Fund.

The Cochranes borrowed \$74,000 to pay for the infrastructure to access Youendah bore scheme, including 10 kilometres of piping, five tanks and eight water troughs.

Nigel, a fourth generation farmer who took over the family property in 1985 and has been running it ever since, said the opportunity to join on the end of a new bore scheme was one they jumped at.

"Except for the bore scheme we'd be in all sorts of trouble – our dams, creeks and lagoons have all but dried up," said Nigel.

"It's providing crucial water that's just not coming out of the sky."

The Cochranes farm winter crops – wheat and legumes – as well as running livestock, mostly sheep on their north west NSW properties.

"This is the second winter we've had virtually no crop in," Nigel said.

"Last year we planted 400 hectares of wheat – about a quarter of the area we would normally plant – and the yield per hectare was down to almost a half of normal.

"This year we've planted nothing – it's just too dry.

"We bit the bullet and sold almost all of our livestock 12 months ago because there's just no feed."

Nigel said the region has suffered one bad summer and two bad winters – and right now it's not looking like rain.

"If there's no rain soon, there will be more hardship around here," he said.

Access to the bore will now secure vital water reserves during times of drought.

