



Leonie Cridland feeds Cassie on her "Yallambee" property at Hargraves.

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# Making the move

**I**F ALL your time is spent packing, preparing and counting down the days to that next trip to the bush, it's probably a sign it's time to make "the big move".

This was exactly the story of Leonie Cridland and her husband, Jeff Bultitude, who now live at "Yallambee" in Hargraves, on the Central West Slopes of NSW.

Originally from the Northern Beaches, they had tired of corporate life and the stress of daily commuting to Sydney's CBD.

The couple kept discussing the idea of a tree-change "before we become too old to use the land we buy".

Which was where we came in: the couple spotted a Farming Small Areas Expo sign on the way home from a country trip and suddenly the ball was rolling.

"It was like the universe was conspiring to help us. From seeing that banner everything just happened," Mrs Cridland said.

Indeed, it did. They discovered Wiltshire Horn sheep at the expo.

Then Mr Bultitude began a TAFE course on farming small areas and the next year they found themselves on 13 hectares (32 acres) at Hargraves.

Three years on and they couldn't be happier with their decision.

"Wild horses wouldn't drag us back," Mrs Cridland said. "It's the best thing we ever did."

"After three years it's still our favourite topic: to tell people about our experiences and show them around the farm."

Easy-care Wiltshire Horn sheep were chosen because mulesing and crutching were unnecessary.

And, because the sheep shed their wool, no shearing was required.

They also make good mothers, typically having

By **KIM CHAPPELL**

twins or triplets, and have good body length and carcase weight.

Mr Bultitude said they had been looking for stock they would be able to run and care for as they got older.

"When we moved to the country it wasn't just to sit on a large block of land - we



wanted to do something, we had to develop an enterprise," he said.

They also run a few Wiltshire cross sheep on their property, but aim to weed them out during the next two years.

Mr Bultitude said growing wool was never in their minds, because it was "impossible" to make money from it on a small block.

"It might seem like you are, but when I sell our wool, while it looks like I'm making a profit, I'm actually working for five cents an hour."

"Yallambee" now carries 50 sheep, chickens and a pig, which is destined to be Christmas lunch.

The couple also grow their own vegetables and have more than 30 fruit trees.

They are building up their Wiltshire Horn flock, and intend to market them as a natural, grass-fed lamb alternative.

Mrs Cridland said they had also set up a website to help others who wanted to make a tree-change.

It incorporated information about the environment, fire prevention, fencing, house-hunting and a chat forum to allow people to discuss issues.

"There's a lot of stuff people need to understand before making the move," she said.

"You have to be prepared for the hard work side of it; you've got to be prepared to look after the property."

One of the

biggest changes Mrs Cridland faced was adjusting to a new work routine.

The graphic artist was able to bring her work with her, but found it hard to knuckle down when there was so much happening outside.

Just the other day she lost an hour watching lambs being born, but rationalised it was an hour that in another era would have been spent sitting in Sydney traffic.

She said the change was not about getting used to new things, rather getting "un-used" to what she knew.

For example, there was no more waking up to an alarm or the sound of the garbage truck - instead, she rises when ready to the sound of birds and no longer looks out the window and sees the neighbour's house.

"Now we go outside and can't see another house," Mrs Cridland said.

"When we lived in Sydney we knew our immediate neighbours but nobody else. Here I know people for miles and miles."

■ Visit [www.yallambee.net](http://www.yallambee.net) or [www.seachange-treechange.com.au](http://www.seachange-treechange.com.au)



To find out what is going to be at this year's Farming Small Areas Expo, turn to p23.



Jeff Bultitude and Leonie Cridland feed shedding Patsy and her lambs on their property at Hargraves.