



Steph: Hi, Charlie, and welcome to the show.

Charlie: Steph, thank you for having me and hello, I'm glad to be here.

Steph: Yeah, I'm really excited for our conversation today. I've been following you for some time and I really wanted to introduce you and your work to my listeners. Because you do speak about such an important topic and it's never been more relevant than now in 2020. But before we dive in, could you share a little bit about your journey and introduce yourself and set the scene as to where you started as an industrial commodity farmer?

Charlie: Steph, I guess, well, I was born and brought here in our family farm, Boorowa and into a... I guess we could say a pretty conventional farming situation and very common I guess in Boorowa and in Australia. I guess we were a mixed farm. We had sheep, cattle. We grew lots of crops. We grew lucerne and we were as I say commodity trader.

So we were producing a lot of goods, a lot of products and selling them and not really thinking too much about where they were going. We weren't focused so much on... We were focused on quality, but it wasn't end user quality or quality of their experience with their product.

We weren't thinking about what we were growing as food essentially, and neither of this didn't dawn on me for many, many years. So I grew up here, wonderful farming family and experience here. Very busy. I went away to boarding school for 10 years and came back on holidays and worked like a dog and it was just a wonderful upbringing.

And I was in, I guess essentially I was in nature every day. This is all... I guess what I'm saying is all reflective or upon reflection, at the time when I was doing all this it was just life. It was growing up on a farm, with my brother, mum and dad and dogs and cats and whole show of cattle.

And my relationships, not really until more recently though I think about my relationship with nature, wasn't very... it wasn't deep. Nature was in some ways from a farming point of view a resource, we had dirt and we had trees and we had water in the field and so on. And we used that to farm and grow stuff.

So that's one way of looking at it. The other way was, me being in nature was a playground, which was lovely. And we really enjoyed it, but I guess I didn't really have a... it wasn't a two way relationship. I wasn't really aware of I guess the energetics of nature, the healing powers of nature the nature of nature, what it really was.

As I said, it was more of a playground. So wider school, did university, four years, rural science degree at UNE, University of New England. Very science based, which is reflective of I guess my upbringing, my schooling and the way we should have farmed here in Boorowa. Did a few other things, worked in pubs, went pearl diving up in the Northern Territory for a year and did lots of wonderful things.

And then in 1997, I arrived back here to Boorowa to manage our farm. And again, I managed it in a way that was reflective of what I'd learned in my education. And I guess my understanding of farming and my paradigm, I brought my paradigms that I've developed over the many years back here and found out why.

And that's not saying it was a bad thing, it's certainly different to what we do now. I was doing that style of farming for quite some years until there was a point at which I just started looking at things very differently.

Steph: I want to share that journey with you because you're very well known as being a regenerative farmer now and I have heard your story before. But I'm curious for you to share with us when you had your epiphany, when you started to see nature differently and appreciate that two way relationship. Can you recall?

Charlie: Yeah, totally. I guess it's funny, Charlie Massy in his book the Call of the Reed Warbler, anyone who's interested in this stuff I just also support on reading that book. Big book, big story, but really important. He calls this turning point, the change event, the tension event. It's often... and he did a PhD in this. It's often a point at which, and this is going to be not just a farming related thing, it could be life related.

Steph: Health related. Definitely.

Charlie: Well, health, yeah. There's points in people's lives where it's almost like the pain, the tension of the current situation is too much to bear. And it can go one of a number of ways. The good news is or the good way I guess is that people see this as an alternative. And they just can't bear that pain anymore.

This point is wallowing in fear understandably. And for those that can get through it, it's a wonderful pivot. It's a wonderful time. It's a result of breaking paradigms. And aside for me, there was one particular point which was I guess I pinpointed as the beginning of my journey.

There was an ad in the local Boorowa newspaper called... for a one day course called profiting from the drought. I read it and went oh, that'll be hilarious or it'll be of some value, I don't know. I didn't know what to think. It really changed my life I think so far as it made me think about the decisions I was making, it made me ask myself much better question.

People were or the facilitator was speaking, was asking me Sean Martin is his name. He was asking me questions I've never been asked before. One, the most poignant one was when lunchtime we're going down the shop to get a pie or something. And he said, yeah, let's go find it, are you happy?

And I it was a bit off the cuff, well it probably wasn't off the cuff, it was probably quite intentional. And I said, well, I'm not unhappy. Which was really a pretty ordinary answer on reflection. So that one day really sent me in a new direction, a month later I did a week long course with the same organisation, Resource Consulting Services Australia.

And from that point on, that was when big changes happened because again, I was focusing on what I was in control of. I was asking myself much better questions. I was questioning my role as a farmer. Was I happy? What was I doing? Is this what I want to do forever? Is this the style of farming I wanted to do?

And I guess the good news is all these questions and all these prompts that we were subjected to through courses and phone calls and this whole experience, with this organisation, they apply to anyone. I'm just thinking about the people listening to your show and for good reason, listening about health and vitality and fitness and so on.

These are some questions that you can ask yourself about your own life. So they're really robust, and important questions. So I asked them, I didn't like the answers I was getting from myself which was crazy. And then the change started taking place. Having said all that Steph. There was also, I guess, a slow burn. We'd been through a series of pretty tough years drought wise. We were sending cattle on agistment, which is basically when you track your cattle to someone else's property and their grass and you pay them for it. We had cattle at Tamworth, which is out at the end of the state from here, and even up in Queensland. And it was just what we used to do. So it was a slow burn. There was pain I guess you'd say along the way, and then this sort of pretty serious pivot happened. This change in events. And then I guess just to add to that, if I can, that's the pain side of it. That was the bit that really got me not wanting to be where I was. And then what the good news I guess in this current time, but even back then, that there was an alternative. It wasn't like, "This is not what I want to do, but I don't know what else to do." There are alternative strategies in terms of farm management, in my personal development. Before that I didn't know what personal development was. I guess since then, I've done Tony Robbins, I've done all sorts of different personal self-development type courses and workshops and I've really understood how important it is to not just focus on your so-called vocation, career-type stuff. But I mean the richness of your career is really dependent on how strong you are mentally and how much work you do personally.

So again, the good news was there was alternatives. There was sort of like a push away from what I was currently doing, and there was a pull towards, I was being drawn towards this alternative. In the ideal world whether, again, you talk about health or schooling or I don't know, farming or whatever. When you got both these forces going on, it's really helpful. And luckily for me there was pain and pleasure at the same time because there was a potential pleasure, so-called pleasure of relief of a different way of farming and a different way of living.

Steph: Yeah. I love that. Obviously, the timing was quite right for you because as you say, there were quite a lot of events that were changing the way you were already farming and I guess that opened the possibility for you to consider that there was another way. I do really want to hear about some of the hurdles that you faced when you transitioned from industrial ag to a more regenerative style. But I'm curious just to help our listeners understand the point of our sort of exploration today is when you went to the Profiting From the Drought Seminar, did you understand the relationship between soil and human health already or did learn about it for the first time then?

Charlie: Well, it's a great question. No and no, I think. I can extrapolate. I didn't know much about it at the time and I didn't learn anything at that course. For me, stage one was, and I went there with a business hat on, it was identified to me that there's different ways to do business and there's different ways to think and be. I guess my journey in relation to soil, food, human health, grew out of that over a period of time. And that's as a result of me just becoming more comfortable, me being more aware, me having more experience. And also there's a lot more of it out there. I'm a big fan of Dr. Zach Bush.

Anyone who hasn't heard of him, he's a lovely bloke. I did some work with him back in March, I think it was, here in Australia. And he has a really good angle on that in so far as he appreciates... And he comes from a very conventional medical background. Triple board certified. He was working on chemotherapy and the development of chemotherapy as a cancer treatment. And through that he realised that we were on the wrong track. That it was much deeper than just the straight symptoms. As you're well aware Steph and probably most of your listeners if not all of them, soil, that's where you grow food and that is the foundation of health.

Steph: But are we aware of that?

Charlie: Well, definitely I think as a-

Steph: I feel like we're not.

Charlie: Well as a population, I think you're probably right. I mean people listen to your podcast because they're hungry for it, they're curious. And that's a wonderful thing. And I think you're right, we generally don't. Dare I say, supermarkets are some of the biggest companies in Australia in terms of the food industry because people buy a lot of crap food. And there's some good food in there, but people are used to cheap, accessible, convenient, empty food, and they don't know better. That's the generation we've been growing up in, or it's happened for a few generations now. So I think you're right. There's a lot of dare I say misinformation and there's just ignorance at the end of the day. I'm not sort of having a go at anyone, it's just that I was ignorant. I was an ignorant farmer, I was an ignorant consumer of food. And as I said earlier, I was growing food, I was growing commodity. I didn't really care about who ate it at all.

So I guess as my journey proceeded into the regenerative ag space, which is a pretty new sort of term really generally used. I certainly appreciated that the soil is the foundation of our absolute life. And I'm still learning, I'm no expert by any means. Its role in producing food, its role in our health. And it's not even just the health of the

food that is grown in that soil and we eat. It's the health that nature, soil being a foundation of nature, gives us when we're walking in nature, we're walking on the soil. I'm walking past a beautiful pinot in our garden here now and it's just magnificent. It's utilising the soil and it's breathing, it's producing oxygen, it's cycling.

Everything for me comes back to the health of soil. And that's I guess a defining feature of regenerative farming or agriculture or people who are farming in partnership with nature is we're looking at improving the quality and quantity of soil, and from there stems life, essentially, and health.

Steph: Beautiful. Beautiful summary. You will probably know the stats better than I do. But my understanding is, and forgive me if it is a little bit simplified, but my understanding is, is that we technically only have one more generation left of crops if we continue the way we're going. Is that about right with the way our soil quality is depleting so significantly and the impact of I guess not farming in partnership with nature?

Charlie: Look, there's lots of different numbers floating around and I guess that your yours is probably a good summary. I've heard of eight years. Eight years of crops left. I've heard of 60 crops. So they're all a bit vague, but I guess the really important thing is that there is a limit. There's a fair bit of science around the extent of the depletion of our soil, and when that's happening, and it is the source of all life, I'm not trying to be too dramatic about it all, it simply is, then we should really be a little concerned. And not just concerned, I mean, we're all about us farmers producing food now, not commodities, nutrient dense food. It's the choices that people make, the stuff they put in their mouths and their children's mouths, it's really important and knowing where it's from, and demanding from their retailers to know where it's from and that they supply them with nutrient dense food and I'd go a step further and say, "Get to know a farmer."

I've got a thing that I bang on about, which is ask people, do they have a doctor? Everyone goes, "Yeah, Doctor ..." Know them by name, "Yeah, Doctor whoever." "They're important in your life and yourself." And they're like, "Yeah, of course." "How often do you see that doctor?" "Oh, I don't know. Every six months, whatever, once a year." And then I just simply tell, "And if you've got a doctor, who's your farmer?" And then they don't know what to say, they can't answer, because they don't.

And they go, "What do you mean?" I go, "Well, how often do you need your farmer?" It dawns on them that they need it three times a day. And it's kind of crazy and at the end of the day, with all due respect to doctors, if everyone had a farmer and sourced directly from a farmer and had a relationship with that farmer, we wouldn't need Doctors as much, you know?

Steph: Oh, I know.

Charlie: Yeah. That's another podcast series in itself, isn't it? The whole sort of farmer and health and agriculture, it's a big one. That's it, exactly. And that's a really big topic and it sits right beside climate change and global depletion of resources and the whole thing. And I say to people, because it's a big responsibility for farmers to shoulder and there's a lot of discussion and media and whatever else about farmers

have the solutions, yes, and we're pretty much the reason why it's so bugged anyway. We've got to fix it and that's probably fair, but for a farmer to keep hearing that and seeing it and feeling responsible and feeling eager and feeling guilty, that's not helpful.

So I say, because to be given the cross to bear, you got to save the planet. That's a big call, but what I state to farmers, "Do you know what? It gets back to focusing on what you're in control of." I say, "Just where the boundary of your property is, that's your universe. That's your world. That's what you can influence. That's where you can grow beautiful food and produce wonderful soil and live in a sanctuary with your family and have a lovely life. Your contribution is that. No one needs to make you feel guilty about what the neighbour's doing or beyond that. You just focus on what you're good at and what you can do in there. That's your contribution to save the planet."

And we talk about biodynamics and the use of that in creating better, more vital, and nutrient dense food and soil. And that's the simple and really cost-effective way that any farmer or gardener or community gardener or market gardener, whatever, who's growing food can use within the boundary of their herb garden, their 5,000 acre property, their market garden, as an example of what they can contribute to all this. And then getting back to your question about health, it's just that's what farmers ... That's our job. We're really the doctors of the givers of health. The doctors are there to fix up the stuff we've bugged up.

Steph: I've never actually look at it that way.

Charlie: Look again, big conversation.

Steph: It is. I'd never actually thought of it that way because I can imagine now there's so much conversation around the issues with industrial ag and farmers obviously need to be supported, like you were initially, to consider how they're possibly going to change because I'm sure things were set up initially for the economical result. And I don't imagine it's just an overnight change to go from conventional farming to regenerative agriculture, so what was some of your hurdles?

Charlie: Well, the funny thing was I did try and do it overnight.

Steph: Overnight? Oh.

Charlie: Yeah. No, no, no. Well, I tried. I tried and I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. I went cold turkey. Literally in the middle of the week long course, I mentioned it before the Grazing for Profit course, I rang some of my staff back here and said, "Look, put these mobs together and do this and do that." And I was just swept away with it all, which I wouldn't recommend.

Steph: That's in getting your animals together.

Charlie: Yeah, putting them together. It relates to sort of grazing management and instead of having five different sheep mobs, put it all together, put them in one mob and then you get much better grazing management, whole other benefits related to that. I guess it's my personality, once I knew it, I couldn't unknow it. I couldn't put that

aside, but that was a bit silly because the tool in the hand of an ignorant or ill-equipped person is it can be quite dangerous. I royally screwed up quite a few things because I just really went gangbusters, so I wouldn't recommend it. But what I would recommend is people do ... I did a course called Grazing for Profit and it's farming related. I mean, there's another one, sort of a series of courses called Holistic Management, HM, run by some wonderful practitioners around Australia.

And in a lot of it you'll go, "That's farming stuff." Well, yeah it is. That's the context, but more than most of it is relating to you and you being in that scene, that vocation and having a career, but it's about creating the person that can be the most functional, well-developed person in that situation. Back to my transition, so I say to people, "You got to change the padding between your ears first, going in with tools as it were and knowledge and sort of, that's fine. But there's sort of degrees of competency and understanding, and I didn't have that. And that's fine. I don't really necessarily regret that, so I just say to people, "It's about changing paradigms in your head and really believing in what you're doing and understanding it and it being part of you and it being the driver of your passion for what you do."

So that's, I guess, a bit of the head stuff and the physical stuff, I say to people, "Look, farmers, and again, it's pretty applied to most businesses. You're taking something on you, don't go cold turkey. I wouldn't suggest, just pay a farmer, cropping personnel, or whoever is growing animals. you've got a budget per head or per hectare of land and whatever, just carve off 10% and put that into a biological fertilizer or do something that you understand will be more regenerative in its approach. And just see what happens. Don't go and break the bank. Don't scare yourself the whole season, waiting for the result. Just step on it lightly. Talk to people, find a mentor, read books, join a regenerative agriculture in Australia or around the world. There's a wonderful Facebook page. It's called The Regenerative Agriculture Group page, and it's just growing daily.

And it's people from around the world contributing to that. And that's just a great example of the support networks that are out there, so you don't have to be stepping into this dark room and think you're going to get bashed. This is, wow, I'm stepping into the light and all these people around that can support me, there's information. I'm going to stumble, I'm going to trip over and fall on my face and I hope people do because that's where you learn your best lesson.

Steph: Yeah. I love that. That's great advice. And certainly, you mentioned Doctors at Bush and you've been talking about biodynamics. I want to start to link some of these concepts because, I guess, the issues that we've got with the conventional, the industrial ag is the mono-crops, the pesticides, we've got glyphosate in our farming chain. There's a whole host of issues, health and environmental and sustainability that we need to be really aware of. Can you talk to us more about that and define biodynamics for us?

Charlie: Okay, cool. Good question. That's fine, that's a good question. So I guess looking at the one side of all that is industrial farming, high input farming of generally chemical, it might be pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, more generally man-made and pretty nasty stuff. We're dealing with what was left over from the Second World War and that sounds like, wow really what are you talking about? A lot of the base of these chemicals were used in chemical warfare in the Second World War,

that's just a fact. When they'd finished, they had a whole lot of stuff leftover and said, what can we do? And they worked out that it'll kill plants, not just people. So they morphed it into a number of businesses that relied on this stuff to be involved in chemical ag. So that's a place where we sat very fairly and squarely for many years in that world.

And that grew food, well, it grew plants, right? But not nutritionally dense, not healthy, but they were there and they were sold and they could be eaten. But that chemical, more often than not, I'm yet to see any evidence that any of it doesn't go through the system. It goes on a plant or animal and it'll end up and you'll eat it, so that's not something you want to be doing too much of. Glyphosate for instance is, and Zach Bush has done a huge amount of work on this, is essentially an antibiotic. And our soil is made up of millions, billions, trillions of bacteria and fungus and viruses and the whole thing's a menagerie of wonderful biology. And when we spray glyphosate in a paddock, which essentially if you don't know, it's called Roundup or was commercially called Roundup and it kills plants.

It's an antibiotic. That just doesn't kill the plant, it kills a lot of the biology and bacteria in the soil, which knocks it out of balance. So your soil is not balanced, you're not going to grow decent food. And that's just a fact, that's almost the end of the story there. So we are conventional farming, industrial ag is a producer of pretty crap food. I have to say. I don't think anyone could argue against that. In terms of, not quantity, because this is what one of the things about industrial ag is they grow a lot of stuff, but it's the quality. And what does it do? We put it in our mouth. Why? To feed us and to keep us happy and healthy. It's just not happening.

So there are alternatives to this. And one of them that we use is biodynamics. And it essentially slips into a regenerative ag farm situation and the principles of regenerative agriculture really well because it uses resources from your farm. It's very cheap, it's very effective and it's all about you as a farmer being in relationship with your land because you're utilising the resources available to you, in many cases in biodynamics of cow manure. It doesn't have to be from your land, but we use ours because it's the most appropriate to use in this land. So we make different preparation based on cow manure and we throw some other biodynamic compost preparations into some of the preparations. This is all soil based preparations. Fertilizer if you want to call it that. So there's a substance side and, dare I say, scientific side to the biodynamics in that we're basically using a compost, we're creating a compost to improve soil health. We spray it on or we can make big piles of compost and we can spread it, literally off the back of a truck on the paddocks or in gardens. It's wonderful stuff.

There's also, I guess, an energetic side to biodynamics, which I guess sets it apart from all other organic practices and principles in that we're tapping into energies that exist and forces that exist that connect us as individuals to the land and to the universe, to the planets. Just like the moon can have an influence or does have an influence on lots of things on the earth. Now the outer planets do as well and they are subtle, but they exist. We do a number of different things, we make it do. We can create some really powerful substances, there's a bit of alchemy in there, I'm sure, to improve the health of the soil and then that grows decent food.

I hope I've answered your question. I've probably gone a long way around that, Steph, but now there's a lot in it. We have a choice as people who eat food.

Steph: Yeah.

Charlie: We can eat stuff that's empty and we can just go to the convenient place and buy cheap food and that will fill us up, but we will be overfed and under nourished. Or we can choose as parents, as individuals, as families to eat better food and source it from people who are growing it and do it directly if you can and nourish ourselves. We don't just nourish our bodies, we nourish our mind, we nourish our souls.

I bang on sometimes about soil for soul. There's only one difference there, it's the 'u' and 'i'. That's the only difference in the spelling and it brings us together. When we nourish ourselves with food that comes from decent soil, we are nourishing our soul as well. And we can go deep on this stuff, Steph, but at the end of the day, I think it's really important. And look, if people choose just to on the back of this conversation or one of the books they read or whatever, decide to eat better food and they go to the shop and say, give me some organic food and they cut out the stuff that's got chemical on it. That's fine. I totally support that and I think that's a wonderful stage runner. If that's as far as you go, that's great and you're going to live a better life for it. People want to know more, whether it's biodynamics or something, I'd just support them, because it's so much more than just a fuel. People think about food as a fuel. It's not a fuel, it's life.

Steph: Yeah. I think that's a beautiful summary again, because going back to what you were saying before about the farmers feeling guilty or feeling like they've got to save the world. It's supply, demand. Consumers in the West have been shopping the way they've been shopping. And we vote with our dollar. And so yeah, it does start with us as well. And just like the farmer might not do everything overnight. I'm sure you don't expect and I don't expect people to go straight to organic and buying their meat from a farm overnight, although they can. It'd be much easier than a farmer to do things so quickly.

But there is another way, there's another way to shop. And, there's always this argument, which drives me crazy, but because regenerative, holistically managed lifestyle is not common, that means that it can't happen. But just because it's not common, doesn't mean it's not possible. But we have to vote with our dollar and we have to educate, simply the world that the way we've been operating is essentially causing our demise. But there is another way and it doesn't actually need to be... To me, it doesn't sound too expensive or too challenging. If you are using the resources that are already on the farm, it could even be more affordable. Am I right?

Charlie: Yeah, absolutely. And that's it, you're not relying on someone else to supply the inputs, that in themselves create a pretty vicious feedback loop or a treadmill of input, because the way a lot of the chemicals work, there's one in particular that you spray on pastures to kill, spray on crops, to kill a little thing called the red-legged earth mite. It's a native little creature, because it sucks the sap out of the plants. Now that kills it. Yes, it does. They're probably going to kill the farmers using it over many years, who knows. However, it kills a lot of the friendly bugs, the beneficial bugs, so you then get that out of whack. You kill it, you knock out a red-legged earth

mite, the thing in the hierarchy of sort of things to get eaten, the one below and the one above that creature are affected.

So, and then you need something else to come along to try and... Well, they never balance it. They try and address that problem and then it rolls on. And then that leads into the same with plants when you're trying to kill weeds in a crop or something. So that's not a good thing. And just on your point about from an eater's point of view, to think about your health long-term and you'll hit pocket. If you've paid for cheap food now, it's going to cost you later in your health and you're going to be paying doctors bills, and I don't think Medicare is going to cover all of it. Putting the finance aside, how you are you going to pay for it? What about your quality of life? There's no escape. You will pay at some point, and I'd rather pay the farmer now than pay the doctor later on.

Steph: A hundred percent, absolutely agree. So I wanted to shift gears just slightly and talk about our current situation, because we are still in the middle of COVID-19 at the point of recording. And what are your thoughts on agriculture now and I guess, yeah, what's going on with the current time that we're in?

Charlie: Okay. Steph well, I'm no Robinson Crusoe in saying that we are in the middle of a great opportunity to change. Everyone's saying it, and I'm glad they are, whether they're health practitioners, farmers, politicians, whatever. So the good news is there is an opportunity. It's a wake up call. It's a message to us just like weeds in a crop are a message to the farmer that say, there's something out of balance here, nature is trying to address a problem, by recruiting a weed to do something about it, whether that's a nutrient imbalance or a compaction layer in the soil, or the ground is bare, weeds are the message. This is to me a kind of message. It's, you know what? We thought we had it all right. And we sort of, weren't too conscious about a lot of things, we took a lot of things for granted.

And now, when a lot of things are taken away, we've got the opportunity to go, hang on, a, did we really need them? And how essential were they? Can we survive without them now? What's my life going to look at? And I think now it's sort of a pity that we often have to experience pain to change, getting back to what I was saying, but this is, let's just not waste this opportunity. And for some the pain is a lot more than others. I totally understand. There's farming we're okay. People are going to keep eating food and we can just keep growing it. I'd suggest hopefully more farmers will move across to more natural ways of farming. But from eaters' point of view, now, there's that opportunity to just think differently about what they're putting in their mouths. And, for a lot of retailers, it's really hard and restaurants are shut wholesalers are doing a tough... But the wonderful thing is a lot of them are pivoting really well. And they're doing online delivery stuff, they'd never thought of.

There's plenty of people you could pull out of the quote machine on Google that reflects that these opportunities are here. It's a tough time, but this is what we're here to take advantage of. This is the opportunities and it's these negatives, or so-called negatives actually create the pivots. I mean, there's a great one. I don't know who said it, but, "The success is the confluence of preparation and opportunity." If people are prepared for this, oh, or should I say, prepared for the next one, because there'll be another one, unfortunately, then there'll be another opportunity. Whether that's to improve your health, create a more robust business, just think

differently. I think it's wonderful. And as I said, farmers are, we're right in the middle of this. We have an opportunity to... The drought was a great opportunity for people to think differently about how they farm.

Do I want that soil to be blowing away in the wind next season? Probably not. Well, what do I do about it? And stepping right back and going well, how do I change that? And stop looking at the symptoms and look at the cause, and that's again, that's another series of podcasts, that we can talk about another time.

Steph: I'm writing a list Charlie. But what I've loved is, I shop, we buy our meat direct from the farm, right? And I suggest this to all my clients and they think I'm crazy. They think I'm a total hippie because I bought my own deep freezer. And then, the minute people couldn't get what they wanted from the supermarket, I had an email conversation with my farmer about, how much they've sold out for so many months. And, a lot of people were coming to them to finally appreciate what it means to shop local. And then there was another example where we get our organic veg delivered and they're based on, they're on the North side. And they were barely delivering over here. They were just starting out. And then within a matter of weeks, they were fully sold out, they weren't taking any new clients. They were only servicing subscription clients for their organic fruit and veg box.

So people were forced to shop differently because either Coles and Woolworths were sold out, or they didn't want to leave the house, or they were finally starting to realise the importance of nutrient-dense food. For me, that was such a celebration to see that consumers were changing the way they voted with their dollar. I only hope it continues when life goes back to "normal". But like you said, there was an opportunity and I've loved seeing the way, I guess, the world or the Western world has responded to this challenge. And there are some really great silver linings that are coming out of it.

Charlie: Yeah. As you say, farmers are doing okay. And the ones that were sort of offering these services and had their food available to people and there was some people taking pleasure in that and they would buy them and that was right. And it was all a little bit fluffy, so it wasn't a necessity. But now there's pain, there's pain of "I can't get that meat", or "The butchers are selling out by lunchtime every day," and just stuff wasn't around. It's the pain factor that actually got people to... We respond more to pain than pleasure, at the end of the day. And that's kind of like... That's okay, that's what has got us this far, and it's kind of sad that we can't avoid some of that pain by learning from our mistakes, or other's mistakes, and stepping into a new paradigm. But as I say, it's a wonderful opportunity and you're right, people couldn't buy deep freezers, there just wasn't stuff around. But as you say, I trust that people don't go back to the old way, they really take advantage of this, they really learn from this and do things differently.

And it's a real boom for agriculture, for those who are doing a really good job, and I guess supply and... And actually, I meant to talk about supply and demand, back to one of your earlier points that we are demanding stuff, and it's generally pretty ordinary. At the same time, in the world of industrial ag, we're supplying a lot of stuff, we're growing a lot of stuff. And we did exactly the same thing, we grew it and didn't know where it was going to go. We didn't really care, we just knew it had to be sold, and we grew it without knowing where it was going to end up. That's a

supply based economy, and that's not a healthy one. What we need to do, and what's a really healthy alternative, is a demand based economy, where people, whether it's computers or whether it's food or whatever, if they demand it because they want it, then supply will follow.

It may be a bit of a lag, but you'll get the quality, you'll get the... People will not be just producing stuff to hopefully sell, so it's a much better business model for them, and the people who are receiving it and demanding it... Well, they know exactly what they want. You're creating an economy that is based on people's wants and needs, and that should, it also works, play to the wants and needs of the people who are going to supply. They don't want to over produce, they don't want to sell stuff cheaply. They want to know, like when we sell a pig here, for instance, we know where it's going before it leaves the paddock, or a cow or a sheep. We didn't used to do that.

But yeah, wonderful opportunity, Steph, and I trust your listeners are considering how they can learn from not just this discussion, but their own experiences, and some of them would have had a shit of a time, whether it's a retailer or a restaurateur or whatever. I hate to think what it's like to those people that haven't got a job. And then, there's another big story there, but for people who are not necessarily affected in their business this way, just personally, how they are going to eat better, that's a great place to start.

Steph: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. I'd love to hear more about what you've got going, personally, at the moment, because I know you've got some workshops, some webinars and a very exciting project that you're launching soon. So tell us more about where we can learn from you further, because I know you do a lot of education and that's such an important part of changing the landscape.

Charlie: Thank you, Steph. We're in the middle of building our new website, which we trust will be, or our intention is for it to be, a source of information, not just for farmers, but for chefs, for doctors, for eaters, families, anyone, to get sort of a first step into, whether it's regenerative farming, agroforestry, food, health, whatever. It's not going to be an encyclopedia, but it's going to be a space that they can land and sort of think, "Okay, what category do I fit into? What journey do I want to go on? What are the steps along the way?" And get to the end of their little website journey and go, "Okay, well, that's cool. I know a book I could probably read, a bloke I could talk to, a website I could visit, and a course I can attend." Something like that.

So that's in the making. We run webinars, biodynamic based webinars. We do introduction to biodynamics, we've actually got one in a couple of day's time. For people who want to know more, they're curious, whether it's from a health point of view or a farming point of view, or whatever. Because biodynamics seems to encapsulate so many things, not just how to grow food. And so we run those webinars every quarter, and we also run webinars for the graduates of our courses. And those courses are, essentially, an introduction to biodynamics, they're a two day workshop, we have them all over the country on farms, and we also do community gardens. And anywhere, really, anyone wants to run one. And so that allows people to really immerse themselves in biodynamics for two days, we do lots of theory, we do lots of practice, you'll go away with some stuff that we've already

made, and you'll have the knowledge to just literally go home and the next day and do something.

So we love that, we love sending people off from our courses with information and practical things they can just implement straightaway. And then the other exciting bit of news, Steph, is where we're launching our own podcast called The Regenerative Journey. I'm not sure when this is going out, but it's certainly at the end of May, we'll be launching that one. And it's interviews I have done with people in that regenerative agriculture space, and again, I hesitate to say just the regenerative ag space, it's people related to it. And this first series is very gratefully supported by Landcare Australia, through an award I won, the Bob Hawke Landcare Award, a couple of years ago. And so I talk to farmers, I talk to Damon Gameau, who produced and wrote the film, directed the film 2040. If anyone hasn't seen that, go see that. Joel Sullivan, who's sort of quoted as the world's best farmer, wonderful group of people who I've interviewed and had a lot of fun doing it, and I trust that people will enjoy that too. So that's our most exciting couple of projects there, Steph.

Steph: So exciting. I'm really looking forward to tuning in and learning more from you and your guests, so we'll stay tuned for that. I believe it's going to be on Apple podcasts and Spotify, so wherever you normally get your podcasts, guys. Charlie, it was so fantastic to have you on the show today. As I said at the start, I've been wanting to speak to you for a long time, so I'm really glad we could kick off this conversation. And of course, you're welcome back any time, I've got a huge list of topics we can explore together, so I do look forward to speaking again soon.

Charlie: And look, Steph, thank you so much for your time and asking me to be on the show. I'm a big fan, and the more people can sort of immerse themselves in this sort of stuff, the better. Quick shout out to Marcus Pearce too, who I know sort of looks after The Wellness Couch, which we can find your podcast on. Lovely bloke, and been very helpful to me, too, with getting our podcast and the show together, so-

Steph: Oh, has he now? Good old MP, he's a legend.

Charlie: Yeah, he's a lovely guy, and he's been a wealth of information and so I'm really, really grateful for that. And I just think it's a wonderful platform, because to be honest, I had spoken with Cindi O'Meara and her team there, a couple of months ago, on Up for a Chat, and I think is so wonderful if anyone can guide us to where to find the health and wellbeing type stuff, that wellness captures is definitely the place to go.

Steph: Awesome. Well thank you again, and I look forward to having you back on the show very soon.

Charlie: Steph, I can't wait. And again, thank you very much, and thank you to all your listeners for lasting the duration and listening. And I trust they've learned something and they can take it home and implement themselves.