

# case studies

## Justin & Toni Fuller

### Tarawonga, near Gilgandra, NSW

#### Acknowledgements

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PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

In 2004 Justin and Toni Fuller purchased 'Tarawonga', a 610ha property 30 km south of Gilgandra. Average rainfall is 533mm.

The undulating property has predominantly duplex sandy loam soils with sodic clay at depth and some self mulching clay soils.

In addition to cropping, Justin and Toni operate a feed lot enterprise as grain and livestock prices allow. Justin also works off farm.

#### Motivating factors

Faced with erratic seasonal conditions, Justin was convinced that he needed to conserve soil moisture and that conservation farming would work. Initially, Justin purchased a converted chisel plough and air cart. On receiving incentive funding and advice from NSW DPI and the Central West CMA he fitted press wheels. This has improved seed soil contact and the ability to retain all stubbles.

More recently, they purchased a GPS guidance system. They did this to increase the efficiency of spray operations and reduce input costs.

#### Benefits

Justin and Toni have noticed that retaining stubble conserves moisture which in turn has meant less surface crusting. This has resulted in more timely sowing.

They have also found that they have less capital invested in machinery. They now need only a seeder and a spray unit.

#### Unforeseen problems

Speed of sowing has slowed down but this is offset by not having to cultivate. Justin thinks that getting through heavy stubble in wet conditions at sowing may be an issue in the future.

#### Plans for the future

Justin would like to be able to cease off-farm work. Not only would he then be able to concentrate on the farm but he would also be able to attend conferences and field days.

They intend to start a program of adding lime and gypsum to further improve the soil and counter acidity problems.

