

case studies

Noel Kinsey

Wirrimah, near Nevertire, NSW

Noel lives on the 1800 hectare 'Wirrimah' located 22km from Trangie and 11km from Nevertire. His family first purchased this mixed farming property in 1946.

Prior to Noel taking on management of 'Wirrimah' in 1980 the property produced sheep, cattle and cropping using conventional cultivation and herbicide in-crop for weed control. Noel runs a mixed farming system based on sheep and cattle.

Approximately one third of the property is cropped to support livestock. A rotation of three years of wheat followed by lucerne is implemented.

Specific paddocks are used for livestock where native grasses and pastures are maintained and monitored to prevent overgrazing or grazing pressures.

The property has self-mulching black clay soils, with red loam soils in some areas. The average rainfall for the Nevertire area is 450mm.

Motivating factors

Up until 2000, Noel researched different no-till options used by other farmers and attended field days and seminars.

Noel's no-till system began using a Shearer combine, an International scarifier with air seeder cart and a 10m chisel plough. Noel then purchased a larger tractor with a 13m chisel plough with a 37.5cm tine spacing to reduce the impact of soil throw.

The purchase, in 2004, of a 27m spray rig with satellite-GPS steer enabled Noel to reduce his use of contract spraying.

In 2007 Noel successfully applied for 'On-ground Implementation of Conservation Farming Project' funding to place press wheels on the 13m chisel plough.

Acknowledgements

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Benefits

Some of the major benefits Noel has recognised have been:

- greatly reduced wind erosion
- less time and wear on machinery
- not as many in crop weeds
- a better life

Unforeseen problems

The self-mulching soil at Nevertire is noted for its fertility but has inherent problems with cracking and slumping resulting in surface roughness during sowing and spraying. More recently, the availability of chemicals and increased chemical costs are an increasing problem.

Plans for the future

Noel has recently invested in press wheels. This means learning to use these appropriately in his no-till system.

The management problems associated with butt grass are something he plans to deal with.



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