

case studies

The Peart Families

Acknowledgements

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



Australian Government

Major Park, Tooraweenah, NSW

Brothers, Bevan and Ashley Peart and their families have owned and operated the 450 ha 'Major Park' since 2001. They also crop another 750 ha of share-farming and leased country.

'Major Park' lies west of the Warrumbungle Mountains on a predominantly light clay loam soil type.

In 2003 the Pearts converted from mixed farming to a complete cropping program.

Motivating factors

The decision to adopt conservation farming concepts was easily made after attending numerous field days. The Pearts saw advantages in storing moisture through retaining stubbles and improving soil structure, soil health and crop yields.

Bevan and Ashley also wanted to minimise machinery outlay, reduce wear on expensive tractors, cut fuel costs and not have to watch top soil blow away on windy days.

The seeder, a Rogro planter with 30 parallelogram units, was purchased second hand during the conversion period. Each unit consists of a coulter, narrow tyne, single press wheel and a short covering chain. The planter also has the ability to sow small seeds by dropping this seed directly in front of the press wheels.

Benefits

Main benefits include:

- being able to take advantage of stored moisture in the spring
- not spending weeks on end on the tractor conventionally tilling country
- getting over the ground much more quickly with a spray rig.

The improvement in soil structure from less disturbance and breakdown of stubble residue has also been a large benefit.

Unforeseen problems

Stubble flow through the airseeder has been a problem on occasion. An auto steer unit has fixed this problem by allowing the use of tram lines and inter-row sowing.

Due to residue being left on the soil surface, disease management has forced a heavy reliance on sowing rotation crops. Cereal crops are almost becoming the break crop.

The potential risk of herbicide resistance has been identified and a proactive approach has been adopted with an emphasis on rotating chemical groups.

Plans for the future

The farming operation will continue to be fine tuned with a focus on learning about soil biology. There will be an effort to minimise input costs without sacrificing yield potential. Bevan and Ashley are also considering adopting Weedseeker technology.



The Rogro planter used by the Pearts.



Stubble protecting both the soil and the emerging crop.