



on track to improved profit and lifestyle

CTF UP-2-DATE *newsletter*

Sept - Oct *CTF Solutions team highlights*

1. Darling Downs Introductory CTF Workshop
2. FBA Neighbourhood Catchments Muster conference
3. CTF06 – A huge success
4. VIC Imagery captures
5. Article –Topographic mapping cuts laser levelling cost

Darling Downs Introductory CTF Workshop

Early September saw *CTF Solutions* conduct an introductory CTF workshop for north-eastern Darling Downs farmers. The workshop was held at the Dalby Agricultural College and included a field visit to a partial CTF (unmatched harvester) paddock. The workshop received 9 attendees, whose farming systems ranged from fully conventional tillage/random traffic, to zero-till/partial CTF, on both flood-plain country, and sloping country with contour banks. The workshop was an important step forward as the Darling Downs seems to be an area of relatively low adoption of CTF/zero-till.

FBA Neighbourhood Catchments Muster conference

Also in early September, *CTF Solutions* attended and presented at the Fitzroy Basin Association's (FBA) Neighbourhood Catchments Muster. The conference was a 2-day event in which many of the works of the on-ground projects within the catchment were presented. *CTF Solutions* presented on the progress of the Don River Catchment topographic mapping project, and on some of the benefits and applications of the technologies being used in this project (i.e. 2cm accurate RTK GPS using a shared community base station & high-resolution satellite imagery).

CTF06

The end of September brought about the long awaited CTF 06 Conference at the University of Ballarat, Victoria. The conference was hailed a huge success with over 200 attendees, coming from backgrounds ranging from scientific/research, to consultancy and extension, to the farmers, all coming from the grains, sugar, cotton and horticultural industries, from all over Australia. The 3-day conference included 2 days of presentations, trade displays and

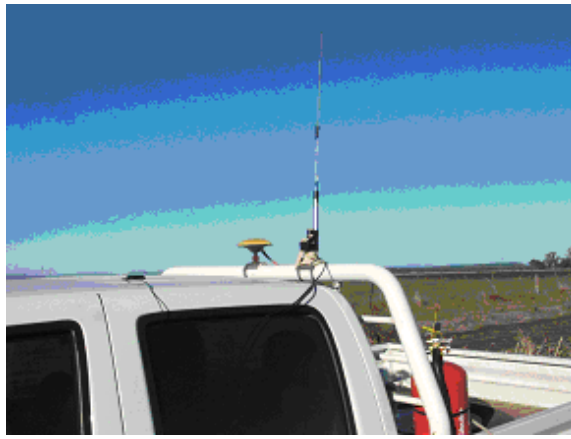
networking, and social dinners, with the final day being a bus-trip with field visits and presentations at farms and trial sites. The conference also saw the launch of ACTFA (The Australian Controlled Traffic Farmers Association), an organisation that seeks to link farms, agribusinesses and professionals across all Australian crop production industries and all regions to share ideas and practical solutions to CTF systems. The ACTFA website is still under construction, but can be found at: www.actfa.net.

High Resolution Satellite Imagery Captures

New IKONOS 1m pixel imagery has been captured over the Inverleigh/Winchelsea area of Victoria's western district. The imagery is part of the ongoing GRDC funded research (as with the recent CQ imagery capture). Biomass hand harvests and tiller counts have also been taken to be analysed with the NDVI (Normalised Difference Vegetation Index) calculation of the imagery. We found that the NDVI from the imagery correlated well with tiller number and crop biomass. A separate IKONOS image was captured for clients near Shelford, also in Vic's western district.

Topographic mapping cuts laser levelling cost

CTF Solutions offers a topographic mapping service using our 2cm accurate RTK GPS system. Topographic mapping is completed by driving a 4WD across cultivation to collect height points at regular intervals. Our specialised computer software interpolates contour lines from the data. We can then produce slope and aspect maps. When over-laid with satellite imagery, it provides a very good tool for farm planning and CTF layout design. Topographic mapping and imagery also greatly assist with design of farm water storage, irrigation infrastructure, soil conservation works (i.e. diversion banks), and drainage works, and fulfils



Photos: Left – GPS base station setup; **Top Right** – GPS antennae and UHF radio antennae, the radio is the communication link between the stationary base station and the mobile rover unit; **Bottom Right** – the rover unit computer & control interface.

an important requirement of Land & Water Management Plans. Photos of the GPS setup in the 4WD are shown above.

Recent topographical mapping by **CTF Solutions** has significantly reduced the cost of laser levelling by identifying the high risk waterlogging areas on dryland farming country. On the Downs, several clients have used topo maps to strategically direct laser levelling efforts. In some instances, the cost has been reduced by more than 2/3 because we can identify waterlogging prone areas before the laser bucket arrives, instead of the traditional approach of driving across the paddock watching the cutting and filling.

It also takes the guesswork out of selecting the most appropriate grade. With topo mapping and associated slope, we can quickly and accurately look at the grades of the paddock

The good news is, those farmers with 2cm GPS systems in their tractors can collect topographical information as well. This can be done whilst performing normal farming operations.

CTF Solutions has gathered client data from most of the major GPS manufacturers (including John Deere,

Beeline, Trimble/CASE, and AgGuide) to produce contour maps – a cost effective way of doing so. If you want to know how to collect and download your topographic data from your data card, give Tim, Wayne or Blue a call – we have developed easy to follow instructions on how to do this. We can then produce the maps for you, and overlay any existing data/information/imagery we have.

November - December, CTF Solutions Activities

- **Present at SRDC Specialist R&D Planning Workshops**
- **Guidance systems bus tours, Central Highlands & Theodore, CQ**
- **Condamine Alliance AGM**
- **Tropical City sugar meeting, Innisfail**
- **Present at CFI Precision Ag Day, Emerald Ag College**

CTF Solutions is a grower-orientated organisation. We need your support and input to provide the service excellence that we strive for.

Please contact us with your comments and ideas. This is your Newsletter, please tell us what you'd like to see more (or less) of!

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