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CONTROLLED TRAFFIC FARMING
CTF solutions

on track to improved profit and lifestyle

CTF UP-2-DATE newsletter

July - August CTF Solutions team highlights

1. **Darling Downs Tractor Performance Workshops**
2. **Advanced CTF Workshops for Central Queensland grain growers**
3. **CQ Imagery capture**
4. **Article – A case for CTF Standards**

Tractor Performance Workshops

In early August, CTF Solution's Dr Jeff Tullberg conducted three Tractor Performance Workshops for farmers on the Brigalow-Jimbour floodplains of southern Qld's Darling Downs. The three workshops were held on farms near Jandowae, Warra and Dalby. The workshops were very successful with high attendance numbers and positive responses from participants, but wet weather prevented field demonstrations from taking place. The workshops focused on maximising tractor performance and minimising fuel use through optimising engine, transmission and tractive efficiencies, and reducing draft and unnecessary ballast. Practically, with all performance factors optimised, gains in fuel efficiency can be expected to be around 10%, however, changing the farming system to alleviate the need for expensive and unnecessary tillage or other operations (i.e. with adoption of zero-till/CTF) will provide the most significant fuel savings and reduce tractor hours.

CQ Advanced CTF Workshops

Mid-August saw CTF Solutions conducting a series of advanced CTF workshops in Central Queensland. The workshops were run in conjunction with Emerald DPI staff as part of the QDPI's CQ Sustainable Farming Systems project, and were supported by Fitzroy Basin Association, Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperative and Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association. The workshops were presented in Capella and Gindie in the Central Highlands, and in Moura in the Dawson-Callide and overall, they attracted 33 farmers, and a number of consultants, DPI staff and Landcare reps. The Capella and Gindie workshops included farm visits to established CT grain farms. Farmer attendees ranged from non-CT farmers to newer adopters and partial-CT farmers, to more experienced full-CT farmers, all looking to further improve their farming systems.

CQ imagery capture

CTF Solutions has acquired an IKONOS imagery capture north of Duaringa in central Queensland as part of ongoing GRDC funded research. The imagery has been captured in early and late wheat crops that are in early grain fill and jointing respectively. Hand-harvest samples have also been taken from the crop to be analysed with the imagery to look for correlations between the imagery, crop biomass, yield and protein. The imagery also shows the rectification of extensive water logging problems and other management problems as compared to previous years' imagery.

A Case for CTF Standards

By Wayne Chapman

Peter Walsh, former QDPI Ag Engineer based in Toowoomba, first suggested standards for CTF machinery in Australia at CTF98. At that time most CT systems were only partial with 1.5-1.8m centres if people were spraying with utes or light trucks, 2m if using tractors and 3m for the occasional brave soul who had taken our advice to the full and included the harvester in the system.

In 2002, Jeff Tullberg, Peter Walsh and I conducted a series of focus groups across Australia on machinery for CTF. It became apparent that standards were needed for the grains industry to progress to the next level. We proposed 3m as a standard for wheel centres and 9m and 12m as the base operating widths. Centred fronts for harvesters were available and it was felt that most acreages could be covered by those widths or multiples thereof.

Unfortunately, the machinery industry and Australian grain growers have been hindered by a lack of vision by those with the capacity to direct and support the process needed for the formal adoption of an Australian standard. In the absence of dynamic leadership, manufacturers have been reluctant to adopt standard tooling for CTF machines because every grower coming to the door wants something

different. This has lead to inefficiencies in production, which have been ultimately born by producers. This is not to say the Australian machinery manufacturers have been slack when it comes to providing CTF ready machines, far from it. The Australian manufacturers excelled in providing CT ready equipment in all shapes and sizes and that is my point. Without a standard operating width there are a multitude of options. Non-standard machines may be discounted in the marketplace when it comes time to trade and front manufacturers will pass increased production costs to all end users. It is interesting to note some growers hesitated about going to 3 m on the basis that it would be difficult to resell 3 m tractors. Now it appears certain FWA models that are relatively easy to modify to 3m are fetching a premium on the second hand market.

A standard would allow harvester manufacturers to provide auger options to facilitate unloading on the go for either 9 or 12 metres CTF systems. Now one manufacturer offers 8 m unloading augers that allow unloading on the go without any modification in a 9m system, while many earlier model machines require modification. 12m systems may require supports on the harvester and varying length pickups on the chaser bin for the time being.

Hot Potatoes

What equipment should be included in a 3m wheeltrack standard? Obviously CTF demands that all load bearing wheels are matched. Therefore tractors, sprayers, aircarts, spreaders, harvesters and chaser bins would all have to comply. There is a dichotomy of views when considering trailed implements. The purists argue for their inclusion while the pragmatists support exclusion. Where the air seeder is mounted on the pull it is reasonably straightforward, the centre section wheels must follow the tractor as they are carrying significant weight. For machines with individual depth control for each opener it is not an issue. However, when depth of sowing is set by the height of the frame above the ground, problems can occur with the centre section's seed placement. This is caused by some implement wheels running in depressed wheeltracks, while wheels on the wings are running on the soil surface. Some management decisions, which lead to some wheeltracks in the paddock being deeper than others, exacerbate the situation. Talk to us if you are worried by the possibility of poor depth control due to wheeltrack variations. There are several systems solutions available to overcome this problem.

Should the standards be metric, imperial or both? Australia is a metric country whether we like it or not, unfortunately USA, our major supplier of farm equipment is not. Problems occur when a grower buys a North American planter, say 40ft, and then buys a 24m Aussie boomspray and a 40ft Aussie centred front. The results can be: his sprayer leaves a 200mm green strip every pass across the paddock, his planter overlaps by 1 tyne or his front jams at each end of the knife because it has 12m of knife not 40 ft. This can be easily overcome, talk to your friendly ***CTF Solutions*** consultant before purchasing machinery. **Have your say, drop us a line at *CTF Solutions* .**

CTF06 Conference Reminder

Just another quick reminder that this year's Controlled Traffic Farming Conference (CTF06) is being held on 27-29 September in Ballarat, Victoria. If you can spare a few days next week, it's not too late to register. The CTF conference is a fantastic opportunity for farmers and agricultural professionals from across Australia and across the grains, cotton, sugar and horticultural industries to share their knowledge and experiences.

Register now at www.actfa.net or contact Sally Brown at sally.brown@uq.net.au or phone 07 3201 2808.

Look out for group tours, e.g. catchment groups such as FBA and CA in Queensland, and Conservation Farmers (CFI) in northern NSW.

Sept - Oct, CTF Solutions Activities

- ***Intro to CTF Workshop on the Darling Downs***
- ***Present at FBA's Neighbourhood Catchments conference in Rockhampton***
- ***Bus tour to Darling Downs CTF farms for Coonamble grain growers***
- ***IKONOS Imagery capture and dry matter measurements for Winchelsea area in Victoria as part of GRDC funded research project.***
- ***All CTF Solutions staff will be at CTF06, we look forward to talking with you there.***
- ***Australian Controlled Traffic Farming Association will be launched at CTF06.***
- ***We are responding to GRDC and SRDC calls for projects, if you have ideas give us a call.***

***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!

To contact the ***CTF Solutions*** team, or to arrange a visit , logon to **www.ctfsolutions.com.au**

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