

Satellite Imagery and Property Planning – From Eye in the Sky to Feet on the Ground

The success of farming and grazing relies heavily on managing many variables including natural resources, crops, climate, \$\$, human resources, and farm machinery. Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) Solutions is an enterprise that aims to improve effectiveness and sustainability of farming by managing all these variables.

CTF Solutions have mapped over 750,000 ha of properties across Queensland, NSW and Victoria using satellite imagery of all types, including Landsat 5 and 7, SPOT, Aster, Quickbird and IKONOS.

Farmers and graziers require a map that is relatively recent as properties can change dramatically over time. Maps need to be accurate spatially, resemble photographs, and not be pixellated or show false-colour. Farmers also need imagery which works easily in farm management software.

Company director Tim Neale says, “We have tried the rest, so now we go for the best – IKONOS is the most cost effective, good quality, reliable image product for rural property planning available at the moment.” CTF find true colour imagery useful as a backdrop for farm planning, says Tim.

Property maps produced by CTF are used in locating natural features such as soil types, vegetation, hills, gullies and erosion patterns. They also use mapping for locating infrastructure such as roads, fences, pipelines, buildings and yards, and naming this infrastructure i.e. paddock names.

It is simple to calculate areas of paddocks and record activities through time once the property image is used as a backdrop within the GIS software. Farmers and agronomists can better manage soils, water use and vegetation as well as crop health. The GIS mapping software allows the adding of features and other data layers (such as property features) to the satellite imagery, which produces a dynamic diagram of what’s happening on the property.

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