



CTF UP-2-DATE newsletter

Spring 2008 highlights

- WARNING – spraying at night can be risky
- Satellite imagery highlights from 2008
- The cost of harvest traffic
- Ben Boughton joins the crew
- CTF 08 – another successful conference

WARNING – Spraying at night can be risky

Whilst many farmers using no-till and Controlled Traffic prefer to spray at night, this can have dire consequences.

We have noticed an increase in the spray drift events occurring as a result of night spraying. This can be a combination of factors including poor nozzle selection, poor calibration, chemical type, and incorrect application conditions even at night (temp, humidity, delta T, inversions).

This is not only bad for the industry, neighbours, and environment; it is also hurting your pocket by not doing a proper spray job.

There are also going to be some significant label changes in the near future, especially relating to residual herbicides. Our mapping work with residuals shows some parts of the catchment are at high risk of contamination from agricultural pesticides.

We encourage people to contact Bill Gordon bill.gordon@bigpond.com or Ask GB askGB@bigpond.com and get along to a workshop or get some consulting advice.

Satellite imagery highlights

This winter, we saw increased demand for our high resolution satellite imagery products. Most of the captures occurred through central and southern NSW.

It was interesting to note the effects of previous history, particularly where farmers had adopted full CTF a couple of years ago. We saw definite improvement from last year's images; primarily more even crop growth. Old wheel tracks were almost not visible after 3 years of full CTF.

Other images looked at nutrition trials. Imagery at Griffith set out to investigate the value of liquid P and other trace elements.

The imagery appeared to show that P rate largely didn't matter, as long as there was some applied. This was largely due to the high level of 'background' variation in the paddocks investigated. We will be analysing the yield data against the biomass maps at the end of the season.

We are having particular problems with cloud in Victoria, so we are currently examining ground-based sensors for NDVI. More information soon.

The co\$ of harvest traffic

HEADERS and equipment used in harvesting operations must be included in any Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) system for the soil benefits to be fully realised.

The harvester is a machine in a grain production system that has the narrowest operating width and the widest tyres, thereby having the largest percentage of compacted area. It is also typically the heaviest machine operating in the paddock, with new machines reaching 20 tonnes, plus seven to nine tonnes of grain when full.

On-farm research across Australia had found that random harvest traffic reduced yields by 15 to 30 per cent and cost farmers between \$160 and \$350 per hectare in lost production.

There is a misconception among many farmers that converting machinery to a fully matched CTF system costs too much.

The costs of conversions are typically less than \$30,000, making the return on investment high. Modifying equipment to fully match a three-metre CTF system could be done for between \$5000 and \$30,000.

Assuming grain yield losses from harvest traffic are in the order of \$200 a hectare, then an area of only 150 hectares is required to pay back the \$30,000 investment in the following year.

Typically, in an average farm size of between 1000 and 3000 hectares, the economics of matching the harvester in

the system is a “no-brainer”. If a new header front is required, then an area of 600ha will pay back a \$120,000 investment in one season.



Ben joins the crew

Ben Boughton, who has been working for us on a casual basis for the past 12 months, will be joining our team next year after finishing his university degree. Ben comes from a farming family near Moree (where he will be based), and brings high level computing and technology skills to the team.

CTF08: another successful conference

Nearly 200 people converged on Dubbo, NSW for the Sixth CTF conference. There was a great range of speakers from horticulture, sugarcane, and grains industries from across Australia, as well as many international speakers – the most ever at any conference we have held.

Speakers from Scotland, UK, USA, Africa, and Europe gave fantastic insight into the changing face of international agriculture.

The conference was also a mix of known and new – what are the basics of CTF and where are the new jumps in improvement.

If you need to contact a member of the team directly please see details below. Our website is regularly updated

www.ctfsolutions.com.au

General enquiries

56 Iona Tce Taringa 4068

(07)38710359

Don Yule

don@ctfsolutions.com.au

Tim Neale

tim@ctfsolutions.com.au

Jeff Tullberg

jeff@ctfsolutions.com.au

Wayne Chapman

wayne@ctfsolutions.com.au

Peta Neale

peta@ctfsolutions.com.au

Ben Boughton

ben@ctfsolutions.com.au

Why is CTF layout is so important? Ask this bloke.

