

# CT Farming Patchewollock

Peter Walch

My farm is situated in the Mallee region of North West Victoria. The soil type consists of mainly sandy loam to sand and the annual rainfall is 325mm, with the GSR at 220mm. The rotation is mainly cereals for example, W-W-B-W and I commenced tramline farming in 2003. The system is designed on 3m wheel tracks.

More operations are now occurring because of different farming technology and techniques, for example 4-6 spraying events per year. Auto steering and CT farming are a perfect fit. After repeated operations on your paddocks the logical step of matching your equipment size is obvious.

## **MATCHING MACHINERY FOR CT FARMING SYSTEMS**

A module size should equal the header front eg 13m front, 12m seeder & 36.9m spray

### **12m-air seeder bar with 300mm spacing**

The tractor currently being used in seeding operations has dual wheels, however looking to place the tractor on 3m-wheel spacing in the future. A 12-ton air seeder cart is also on this spacing.

### **24.6m urea boom**

The urea boom is home made, which is towed behind the air seeder cart. This enables the use of variable rate control.

### **36.9m boom spray**

A new axle was installed on the boom spray to increase the span to 3m. An articulated tractor had 4 wheels removed and the remaining 4 wheels moved out to 3m.

### **13m harvester**

The 13m-harvester front from Midwest Fabrications [[www.midwest.net.au](http://www.midwest.net.au)] was mounted on the center of the machine, which led to problems with the auger length, chaser bin width and residue spreading. A Redekop residue management was installed [[www.redekopmfg.com](http://www.redekopmfg.com)] which spreads chaff and chopped straw the width of the module. The harvester's wheels are also on 3m-wheel spacing.

### **Chaser bin**

The chaser bin is on 3 m wheel spacing and the top of the bin has been widened to 4.5m it travels 95per cent of the time on tramlines except when emptying the harvester.

### **Fertiliser cart**

A fertiliser cart was added to the seeder this year to enable me to place trace elements, fungicides and nitrogen in a more suitable way. Pre-emergent chemicals are planned to be applied in the future in front of the seeder

## **PRECISION GUIDANCE/STEERING SYSTEMS**

For the previous 4 years I have been using a 10cm guidance system and recently changed to RTK this has changed my tramlines.

## **STUBBLE MANAGEMENT AND SEEDING**

Straw is better managed with the combination of CT and auto steering; the direction of travel should be the same for the seeder and the harvester.

Tall stubble can be managed using auto steering and inter-row seeding, which speeds up the harvesting operation and reduces the need to spread large volumes of straw (less power requirements).

Taller straw creates better protection for the soil and there are fewer issues for the next year's crop

It is very important to have the harvester on tramlines, as I believe it is the machine that does the most damage. In the drought of '02 the crops did not grow on the previous header tracks (unsure about duels on the harvesters)

**Choosing the direction of the tramlines** is confusing: some research indicates E-W and others N-S. In my case, I have looked at where trucks can efficiently access the paddocks to determine the direction. As a result I have made some mistakes

**Farm layout:** plans should have been made with the image of no fences in mind perhaps consider employing a consultant prior to commencing CT.

Tend to become more aware of your soil, for example digging, probing, and looking for the build of the mulch.

You start to realise the importance in the operation efficiency.

Less fuel use and possibly the reduction of hp needed.

Enables you to spray insecticides and fungicides later in the season whereas historically a plane would be used.

If your next purchases are made with a CT plan in place, the costs should be minimal and the gains potentially enormous