

Controlled Traffic at Chappel's

Lindsay Chappel, Perenjori, WA

Controlled traffic started at Chappel's in the spring of 2001. I was lucky enough to be invited on a tour through NSW and Queensland in August 2001 with a group of farmers from WA looking at controlled traffic. This was a watershed in my farming life probably in the same way as 16 years before when I discovered no till.

As I mentioned I had been no tilling for 16 years and felt there should be a bit more. The tramline tour was a real eye opener as I wasn't expecting too much from it. I came back from this tour convinced that controlled traffic was the way to go and immediately set about implementing it on my place.

Firstly, off went all the stock. That was pretty easy and not too bad on the pocket either. I removed most of the internal fencing and most of the contour lines (drains and banks). This made a huge difference in the ease of working and the amount of wastage. In one case I made one paddock of 617 acres from five separate paddocks. Previously there were 28 headlands, which together with the overlap required an extra 25% in workings/costs. One paddock was 1500 acres; after modifications we cropped 1670 acres. The average size of my paddocks now would be approx 500 acres 200 hectares. With some care in operations we can get our wastage well under 1% using the controlled traffic. I made do with all the gear I had previously and only had to modify a few things. The modifications to the machinery are outlined in the power point presentation and although not extensive added up to approx \$2,000.

I purchased a Beeline navigator auto steer for the tractor (approx \$52,000) and financed it over four years at \$16,000 per year. I was pretty excited about this radical new innovation and told my father (81 years old) that I had bought this wonderful tool whereby one did not have to steer around the paddock. Dad replied "funny that, you never had to steer horses either."

I used the same seeding bar (60 feet) but removed the tynes following behind the tractor wheels. The Spraying rig was 125 feet so that was trimmed down a little and the wheel centres were the same as the inside duals of the tractor.

The spreader, towed behind the tractor, was nearly the same wheel centres as the tractor and sprayer so that was left the as is. There is only about 100 ml difference.

I can only stress that as with all things in life, if you really want to do something nothing is that much of a hurdle.