

Leighview

Stewart Hamilton

Leighview is a family farm in central southern Victoria. Stewart is currently the sixth generation farmer to come home to the farm. The property over the last 35 years has changed its focus from self-replacing merino enterprise with little cropping to mainly broad acre cropping with a few weed eaters on the stony country.

Realising the yield potential of the 510mm of average rainfall each year better farming systems were sort after.

BIT OF HISTORY

- ⊙ 1987

Started trialling direct drilling with airseeder but unhappy with tine breakout.

- ⊙ 1990

511 combine with direct drilling under carriage for better seed placement.

- ⊙ 1995

First of the raised bed trials went in 1.95m. 511 28 run combine. 27.5m sprayer on 3-4m centres.

- ⊙ 1997

480Ha of raised beds in place

- ⊙ 2002

Prototype 6m air seeder developed. Hydro tines and press wheels. 27.5m sprayer on 3-4m centres.

- ⊙ 2004

IPM integrated pest management.

- ⊙ 2007

Prototype 10m airseeder developed on 2m centres. 275Hp articulated tractor on 2m centres. GPS Ag auto farm 2cm accuracy. 30m Spreader on 2m centres. 28m sprayer on 3-4m centres. Header still on factory settings (too hard).

At present 2500 Ha are cropped with a Canola, Wheat, Barley. Rotation

Also grown are Linseed and Field peas.

The raised beds were intended to minimise yield loss rather than increase yield. Having beds has given us the confidence to keep inputs up at the level needed to match the available moisture without worrying about plants shutting down due to water logging.

In the past 12 years the beds have run water only once and have had no nutrient run off. The beds result in a perfect seed bed not being compacted.

Fuel usage on flat 80 -100% horsepower from a New Holland TJ275 around 5-6 litres per Ha

Fuel usage in raised beds 50- 60% horse power around 3 litres per Ha.

FUTURE PROBLEMS

Header is the biggest problem facing us at the moment with a 36f offset front and wheel centres at 3.6m. It will not fit into the controlled traffic system. Also the sprayer will be next on the list looking for a 30m boom on a 2 meter centre.