

CTF practice in grain, cane and horticulture

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I farmed on a broad acre dry land cropping operation in Central Qld until 2006 when I moved to an irrigated intensive cropping farm on the North Qld coast. I am always interested in the cutting edge research and methods and a Nuffield Scholarship in 2011 allowed me to continue that pursuit of new ideas.

ABSTRACT: A practical look at the benefits of controlled traffic farming and an illustration of our journey through why we started, how we made the transition and the steps along the way of our evolutionary pathway. Over a period of a dozen years we were able to develop a system with machinery that allowed us to significantly improve the crops we produced while becoming more efficient with input costs, time and our natural resources.

In moisture limited Central Queensland broad acre farming, efficient use of rainfall is paramount so as we analysed our farming system, we looked at some of these issues:

- Rainfall / moisture retention and compaction
- Drainage on long gentle slopes and erosion
- Machine guidance and efficiency before autosteer, especially spraying
- In-crop cultural methods and opportunities
- Crop response and profitability
- Future potential, where to now?

The same ideas have more recently been applied in intensive horticultural cropping.

The paper will reflect on the differences in CTF application in broadacre and intensive cropping and provide a first attempt to estimate the costs and benefits of CTF in these different cropping environments

