

## Better Use of Time, Money & Land

*James Powrie and Dan Bloomer, LandWISE*

“We’re not buying GPS, it’s a -- waste of money,” declared Gordon Sue. But sons Nigel and Travis did put high accuracy GPS and auto-steering into one of their tractors. It is paying off with better use of time, money and land.

“Everything is planted parallel and correctly spaced, and that means more rows, and more crop in the ground,” says Travis.

The straight rows from GPS look great from the road, but cost savings as well as more effective use of land make the investment a good one. “With automatic guidance we get things done in less time and with less labour and fuel,” says Nigel.

With GPS guidance, the tractor follows the same wheel tracks accurately every time. So the wheels run on a better track and less of the paddock ends up compacted.

The same lines are used for nearly all operations, and the soil is benefiting from less traffic. Plants grow better in the less compacted soils.

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*Travis says getting plants established in perfectly straight rows makes all other operations follow smoothly*



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Less fuel is required to cultivate a field as the wheel tracks are solid, and the need to break up compaction is reduced or removed. The fuel savings and soil improvements from the permanent wheel tracks of controlled traffic farming (CTF) are being banked, even though this wasn't a key reason for investment in guidance.

GPS also guides the tractor for cultivation for weed control. With real time kinematic (RTK) correction the GPS is accurate to within 2 centimetres, so the six-metre cultivator can be used with confidence. The planted rows are dead straight and the GPS guides the tractor and implement accurately along the parallel rows, weeding effectively without damage to the crop.

Attempting to drive straight lines was once a tiring job, because of the concentration needed. Now Gordon uses the GPS every fine day. The tractor drives itself bullet straight with no hands, every time. "It makes life easier; we should have had GPS years ago," he says.



*Travis, Gordon and Nigel Sue debated the purchase of GPS but they all like it now*