

Media Release



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BREAKING GROUND FOR GPS GUIDANCE APPLICATIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Farm Manager Brendan Frischke from the Minnipa Agricultural Research Centre is breaking new ground for GPS guidance applications in South Australia using a BEELINE Technologies guidance system.

The Farm Manager is focused on developing best practice procedures for the use of GPS guidance in Controlled Traffic operations in sandy loam soils, which are the predominant soils in the region.

According to Mr Frischke, Controlled Traffic operations implemented using guidance technology have many benefits for growers Australia wide, however, they need to be put into practice according to the soil type you are operating in to achieve optimum results.

“Controlled traffic farming aims to reduce the impact of heavy machinery on cropping areas by limiting traffic to specific wheel tracks,” Mr Frischke said.

“We have put in place permanent wheel tracks on which we run both our nine metre no-till seeder and the eighteen metre boom spray.

“The wheel tracks will compact affecting these specific areas, but the remainder of the field will remain unaffected, a technique which in the majority of circumstances has been proven to improve overall yield.”

Unlike soils with a higher clay content, it is uncertain whether compaction of the wheel tracks in sandy soils will be sufficient to eliminate weeds. Currently it is advisable to crop the permanent wheel tracks in sand to prevent weed nurseries.

“Compaction of wheel tracks occurs differently in a sandy soil as opposed to a clay soil, therefore information we have on Controlled Traffic operations from Queensland and New South Wales growers is not accurate for South Australian farmers as we often work in very different soils,” Mr Frischke said.

“You’re not going to get your wheel tracks to compact the way a clay wheel track does in a sandy soil, and as such we have a real weed problem when we leave our wheel tracks bare.

“We’re looking at whether or not cropping these tracks provides a suitable competitive advantage to keep weeds at bay rather than spraying and adding to the herbicide resistance problems that are becoming all too common.”

BREAKING GROUND FOR GPS GUIDANCE APPLICATIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA - continued

The Centre is also researching the benefits of inter-row sowing, which involves planting alongside the previous year's stubble, utilising the BEELINE Arro's two centimetre accuracy.

"Our inter-row sowing research projects are focused on using guidance technology to improve farming techniques above and beyond the simple reduction of inputs," Mr Frischke said.

"We are looking at applying guidance technology to farm smarter in South Australian soils, and inter-row sowing is one of these techniques.

"There is evidence that inter-row sowing reduces the impact of certain root diseases in cereal crops, therefore potentially increasing overall yield."

Mr Frischke is very happy with the performance of the BEELINE Arro in the field and has found that many issues associated with using guidance technology can be eliminated with careful attention to detail at the beginning of the process.

"We can't fault the technology, but have learnt that setting up correctly in the first place saves considerable time and effort in the long run," he said.

"For example, setting up a permanent base station has to be done right in the first instance if you are to have repeatable accuracy, a fact we learnt first hand after setting up a less than successful 'quick fix' base station when we first started using the system.

"Ensuring your implements are symmetrical is also another important detail to take notice of when using guidance because as accurate as the system is, it can't correct for poorly aligned equipment."

The Minnipa Agricultural Research Centre is continuing their research into the use of guidance technology in South Australian soils with the assistance of Agline Distributors through the provision of a BEELINE Arro guidance system for their field research.

The BEELINE Arro is available Australia wide through a network of local dealers, visit www.beeline.ag for locations.

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