

Regenerative Ag

A Farmer's Story



Dusty Pascoe is a member of the Raywood Regenerative Farming group. His property is located north of Raywood.

"Our mixed farm is almost 1600 hectares located on the outskirts of Raywood in central Victoria, with 60% crop and 40% sheep". Dusty admits his sheep numbers were probably a little bit higher than the district average, but he likes merino sheep. "Our usual crops are canola, oats, wheat and barley, but we do dabble in a couple of other things. Lucerne is the main pasture species, and we do a bit of export and domestic hay. The lucerne is our main summer grazing pasture, and we graze our crops over winter," he says.

Nitrogen fixation is one area of focus with lucerne assisting Dusty to fix nitrogen in the pasture phase. "We're also looking at other ways like double inoculation rates to stimulate nodulation." Dusty plans to keep doing trials on nitrogen fixation in the future with the aim of reducing his cropping inputs.

Another area Dusty is investing time and effort is multi-species cover crops. He was driving over near Elmore, and he noticed an unusual pasture, which intrigued him. After some investigation he discovered it was a multi-species pasture using a 'bird seed' mix. His plans were to increase summer feed on his property and this seed mix was perfect to trial, since it was mostly summer active species. "I'm happy with how the bird seed mix performed and will sow it again but will add a few additional species from his own seed supply" said Dusty.

When Dusty introduced his sheep to the multi-species paddock, they grazed certain species at different times, he is hoping a diverse mix of species will provide long term benefits to his livestock and the soil." I'd like to trial the multi-species into a Lucerne paddock. This would provide a bit more ground cover in summer and alleviate some of the potential issues with stock grazing fresh lush Lucerne."

Dusty said being part of a farmer group generates conservation. "I enjoy being able to catch up with other farmers after an event to discuss what information other farmers got out of the session."

The moisture probes/weather stations have provided the group with a tool to support important farming decisions. The weather station on Dusty's property is used for decision making on spraying and nitrogen fertiliser applications. The weather station provides wind speed and temperature data, which is essential prior to spraying.



Dusty checking the moisture probe/weather

Dusty is always looking at ways to improve production and his soil health. Being part of this farmer group provides opportunities for discussion and sharing ideas with other farmers in the district. Dusty is also happy to share his learning from successes to failures and will keep trialling different things for many years to come.

