

BREZA CONTRACTING AND FARMING

Monsanto Grower of the Year



Brett and Liza Crothers, their 5 children (Declan, Jaiken, Braithen, Emmysen and Ashton) and staff operate a 1,700ha cotton farm on the fertile plains of the Darling Downs, near Dalby in Qld with advice from consulting agronomists Kylie and John Fuelling. The family moved to the district in 1973 with Brett returning home to the farm in 1990. "Fairview" and "Benalla" were purchased in 1996-97 and Brett and Liza bought a neighbouring farm in 2002. Brett and Liza have recently bought 2/3 of the family farm and lease the remaining 1/3 from his parents.

The Crothers run an extremely tidy, well developed farm, resulting in pleasing outcomes for their cotton. They mostly utilise a one in, one out cotton rotation with barley, mostly on a Single Skip configuration, which helps them consistently achieve sound yields of around 10.5bales/ha across the farm.

The operation, whilst spread over a number of holdings is connected through an effective network of water infrastructure. There are five storages with a total capacity of 4,600ML. These can be filled from whichever source is available; Oaky Creek, the Condamine River, bore water or overland flow water. It can then be held or directed anywhere on the farm. This level of control allows Brett to meet the needs of the crop in a timely and efficient manner.

The operation uses a range of irrigation types, matching these to small variations in soil types. "Benalla" has total of 1,200ha of irrigation consisting of 1 pivot, 3 laterals and flood siphons. In his continual search for water efficiencies, Brett is now considering the use of drip irrigation.

Neighbouring with Mort and Co's Grassdale Feedlot has allowed the Crothers' to produce barley, grain and straw to sell to the feedlot and to access 6,000 tonnes of manure each year for conditioning the soil.

Brett also utilises a water run urea system for fertigating his country. His system utilises a tank to dissolve 1kg of nitrogen per 1mm of applied water,

HOME PROPERTY

"Benalla" Dalby, Qld

OWNERS

Brett and Liza Crothers

TOTAL ENTERPRISE SIZE

1,700Ha

AREA TO COTTON 2015/2016

600Ha irrigated

YIELD TARGET

10.5 B/Ha

WATER ALLOCATIONS

3,000ML water harvest

877ML bore

300ML secure licence from Oaky Creek

Plus overland flow

TYPE/S OF IRRIGATION

1 pivot 62ha

3 laterals 488ha

650ha flood siphon

NO. STAFF

Owners plus 2 FTE & casuals

ENTERPRISES

Cropping plus contract picking & farming





L to R Tim McVeigh, Declan Crothers, Kris Barry, James Bailey, Braithen Crothers, Kylie Fuelling (agronomist) and Brett Crothers



which then feeds into the irrigation system. This has proven to be a highly efficient and cost effective way of introducing nitrogen and combined with the manuring program, has significantly improved the structure and constitution of the soil.

Brett and Liza are working towards their myBMP accreditation, believing the program heavily benefits their family farming situation by providing the forms and policies that they need.

Brett started contract cotton picking 20 years ago and expanded the business 6 years ago into Breza Contracting which includes winter cropping contracting. Brett enjoys the exposure to other farming operations and frequently introduces new practices onto his farm that he has seen in other places.

Brett is heavily involved in the Oakey Creek Management Committee which is constantly seeking to manage the competing water needs of the

nearby mining industry with those of farming. To this end they have been investigating the possibility of transporting effluent from the highly populated south east Queensland region to help meet the water requirements of the Downs. Further diversification opportunities may open up in the near future for the Crothers from the new airport established on the western side of Toowoomba.

With strong interest from 13 year old Declan and the other children, the family are on the lookout for further farming opportunities to help provide a sustainable future for them.

**FOR FULL DETAILS PLEASE VISIT THE AUSTRALIAN COTTON AWARDS WEBSITE:
WWW.AUSTRALIANCOTTONAWARDS.COM**

