

CONNAMARA PARTNERSHIP

Monsanto Grower of the Year



Ian, Marilyn and Harry Carter run a 2,500ha cattle and cropping operation on the Liverpool Plains, NSW, south west of Quirindi. Their cotton is grown on blacksoil, solely rain grown using 1.5m rows. They have found this row system not only simplifies their machinery calibrations and minimises compaction, it also provides very good yields and fibre quality results whilst maximising the crop's access to moisture.

The 2015/2016 cotton season was highly challenging for dryland growers, with some good rain in January but then a very hot and dry finish, yet this bed system allowed them to meet their aim of 5 bales/ha across their 451ha of cotton.

"Connamara" is wall to wall with tweaks, innovations and inventions that Ian has developed to overcome problems and capitalise on his advantages. From a basket picker converted to a round module lifter and press wheels on the picker heads to stop mud build up, to his hand built water injection trailer, there isn't a challenge he cannot overcome with smart thinking and skilful hands.

Driven by the paramount need to preserve soil moisture, Ian identified that the point in the production cycle where he could have the greatest impact on plant success was at planting. This led him to perfect the idea of using water injection during seeding. Designing his own water injection trailer and through trial and error to identify the ideal water/seed ratio he has been able to improve his emergence rate by 25%, as well as vastly increasing his flexibility in planting time.

Ian is a passionate and energetic farmer who has a long term vision for his land. His daily management decisions prioritise the preservation of the quality of the soil, with a view to seeing his son Harry and fiancée Claire, farming healthy and prosperous land for many years to come. He is continually working to identify and fine tune techniques to reduce (or completely remove) tillage, reduce chemical inputs,

HOME PROPERTY

"Connamara" Pine Ridge, NSW

OWNERS

Ian, Marilyn and Harry Carter

TOTAL ENTERPRISE SIZE

2,500Ha

AREA TO COTTON 2015/2016

451Ha dryland

YIELD TARGET

5 B/Ha

WATER ALLOCATIONS

N/A Dryland

TYPE/S OF IRRIGATION

N/A Dryland

NO. STAFF

Owners plus 2 FTE and contractors and casuals

ENTERPRISES

Cattle, range of cropping on rotation





reduce compaction and prevent salination, including the planting of over 15,000 trees so far.

The Carter's have had a relatively short cotton career of five years, however in that time they have shown their skill by scooping a range of local farming awards including Dryland Grower of the Year, Innovator of the Year and most recently, 2016 Farmer of the Year for the Upper Namoi CGA /Agvance Farming Group.

Ian was instrumental in establishing Agvance Farming in 1999. The company was formed to take its members beyond conventional farming and establish them at the cutting edge of agriculture and now has 21 members covering over 40,000ha of cropping country across the Liverpool Plains. He has also helped establish and run "Farming for Kids". This is a not-for-profit group that uses their farming know-how and equipment to farm the land around the Quirindi airport to raise money for children's needs.

Central to Ian and Marilyn's philosophy is the support and development of young people into agriculture. "Connamara" is host to countless school groups and university students as well as supporting an annual scholarship for one student to attend Marcus Oldham College. This philosophy reflects his relatively young but long term workforce.

Whilst the Carters are highly successful dryland growers the recent purchase of a new block they will be turning their innovative thinking, highly developed skills and extensive farming knowledge to the new challenge of irrigated cotton.

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

