

## Integrated crop and animal management

Wayne Edwards farms his family's property "Balbarrup Park" near Manjimup, with his parents Kay and Doug, son Jason and his sister Lee Sewell.

Production includes vegetables, and sheep and cattle, with an on-farm packing shed and a market stream for the vegetables through Perth wholesalers and extending across Australia.

Wayne attended the BestFarms Environmental Management System (EMS) Workshop at Pemberton in 2005 and is gradually working through the actions raised in his Farm Plan. Key to the monitoring of his progress is a photographic record started with the assistance of Kathe Purvis, his Facilitator.

All aspects of the operation are managed organically, and full Organic certification status is in place for both the vegetable and animal production.

Over the years of developing the Organic System, Wayne

Wayne practices minimum tillage by applying "daily, and sometimes hourly, considerations on timing". He says "there has to be enough weed germinated, and a significant sized weed outbreak" for him to till the soil, and then it is only the crust turned to catch the shallow rooted plants.

To begin bed preparation Wayne will till to a depth of 15 inches with subsequent cultivation working upwards.



*Sheep grazing beds after harvest, grass waterway though lowest point*

Beds are formed to specific measurements suitable to his equipment. Crop types have been determined over the years as to the most suitable to soil types and local conditions as well as to demand in the marketplace.

Development on the property is carried out "as funds become available" with current projects including packing shed extensions, development of a flock of Wiltshire sheep and management of blackberry outbreaks.

Kay intends to pursue the blackberry rust virus trial program as a management option for the blackberry. Wayne is hoping his Wiltshire sheep will keep the problem weed in check in the short term.

The integrated management practices of this operation provide several income streams as well as complimentary usage of animals and crops. BestFarms has documented the successes and areas for improvement as well as assisting in developing an on-farm photographic record. These records can be used as part of funding applications.

"The only way busy people like us will seek funding for environmental improvements are with the help of organisations such as BestFarms" says Wayne.

BestFarms would like to congratulate the Edwards family on their great example of a working integrated farming system which is inclusive of environmental management.



*Wayne in front of his newly planted Lucerne*

has worked hard to develop management methods specific to his operational needs. BestFarms has recorded these innovations as part of the EMS Farm Plan.

The sheep graze the Brassica beds after harvest, providing weed management and fertility inputs. An added benefit of this practice is the variety of stock diet which is not available from pasture alone.

Wayne also maintains grass waterways in his production areas to prevent erosion. The concept of grass waterways involves identifying the runoff lines and maintaining the groundcover along that line. Wayne simply lifts his cultivator tines over that line at tillage. The runoff line/waterway maintains groundcover through-out the early stages of production and also provides a filter for any runoff. After harvest is completed sheep have access to the area, using electric fencing as movement control. All weed varieties that thrive in the grass waterway during the cropping phase are grazed back before they can seed.

Waterways will also be used to manage erosion caused by pivot wheels moving up steeper slopes.

*For more information on Environmental Management System (EMS) contact BestFarms' on (08) 9765 1555 or [kirstenm@westnet.com.au](mailto:kirstenm@westnet.com.au)*

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