

CASE STUDY

INCYT

Better Crop Management Decisions through Remote Monitoring.

Ormonde Farms



BERRIWILLOCK, VIC

5,000 hectares

Cereals & legumes for grain & hay
Sheep & Dryland Cropping

Size

Crops
Type



Jeremy Watson

Ormonde Farms, Berriwillock, VIC

"Whether we're talking rainfall data, INCYT has made life easier by cutting out a lot of unnecessary kilometers, but making these big cropping decisions around planting, spraying and fertilising with more exact data to base the decisions on, that's where the real difference is for us."

CHALLENGE

Jeremy Watson runs Ormonde Farms, a large diversified farming operation at Berriwillock, Victoria, where work is always plentiful and rainfall usually isn't. Jeremy used to have to rely on a weather station that is located over 80 kilometers from his farm to make spray application decisions, and didn't know the exact weather conditions, rainfall patterns or soil moisture levels on his farm with blocks spread out through the district, which made it hard to consistently make the best possible decisions

SOLUTION

After finding out that the Victorian Department of Agriculture's IoT grant was available in his local government area, Jeremy attended presentations by a number of different agtech providers and decided to go ahead with adopting INCYT's technology on his farming operation.

OUTCOME

With INCYT, Jeremy now has weather stations, moisture probes and spray advisory at 5 different locations throughout his farming operation, so he knows exactly how much rainfall he's had everywhere, what the exact soil moisture level is in the different areas, and whether he is able to spray or not anywhere on his farm based on a nearby weather station, all right from his phone. With INCYT's tank sensors Jeremy knows that his water tanks are always full, or that he'll get a notification when they aren't.

A DIVERSIFIED FARMING OPERATION

Diversification is often key when farming in challenging environments, and the Berriwillock area in Victoria is no exception. With low annual rainfall averages and high variability in when this rainfall does materialise, local farmers have to be ready to deal with a raft of different scenarios – and that is on top of the always varying input costs and commodity prices of course. For farmers like Jeremy Watson at Ormonde Farms, this means that keeping a diversified farming operation is important to spread the risks, he says: “Growing crops for grain is our main priority. We used to have a lot more sheep back in the day but, with how labour intensive they are, we had to bring the numbers back a bit so we wouldn’t lose focus on cropping. But we still run merinos and some trade lambs now, and we sell a bit of hay in the local area as well; keeping these two revenue streams going next to our main focus of producing grain gives us a bit of diversified income and spreads the risks for us.”

While some of the macro environmental factors such as input costs and commodity prices always fluctuate, it’s the rainfall and resulting soil moisture level that forms the biggest challenge according to Jeremy: “We can either get really wet years, really dry years or anything in between here; there is no ‘standard’ to speak of. And when we do get rain it can be at any time during the year, I don’t think we have a typical rainy season here that we can count on. What this means for us is that, more than farming our acreage, we’re really farming the available moisture. We have to make the most of the moisture that’s available to us in order to turn it into a sustainable income. What this looks like for us is that we have to be on top of our fallow sprays during summer, choose the right crop rotation for the soil type and soil moisture level we’re working with, and only use as much fertiliser as the crop needs that year. We also use ‘novel’ weed control strategies like aiming for cereal hay in fields that have a bad rye grass problem for example.”





INTRODUCING REMOTE MONITORING

Ormonde Farms spans a number of different properties, some at over 30 kilometers distance from the home farm, and so remote monitoring was always something that Jeremy had been thinking about in order to be able to cut the time spent driving to the more remote properties. Jeremy: "I used to have to rely on a weather station that's located roughly 80 kilometers from here to decide whether I could spray a block or not. But sometimes I would then arrive at this block over 30 kilometers away and find out that the local conditions were completely different, and so I had to go all the way home again and find a different use for the batch of chemical before it would fall out of suspension in my sprayer tank."

Rainfall is another important bit of information that I was always lacking accuracy for, for the different blocks we farm. From knowing exactly how much rain we've had somewhere and so which crops we should plant, to getting to a block ready to do some work only to find out we had a storm there the night before that we didn't get at home and I'd be unable to do what I had planned to do. I knew I needed to know this information sooner and without having to drive all over the place for it, and that's when I found out about INCYT."

Jeremy continues: "The INCYT team have been great to work with, from planning the right locations for the installation to getting me up and running, and afterwards as well with the service they're continuing to provide to make sure I have the right information at all times. With the INCYT weather stations installed at the different blocks we farm I now know exactly when we've had rain somewhere and what the current weather conditions are. Combining this with INCYT's Maverick spray advisory and we now have accurate spray information on every field we farm. This helps us make the right decision and also covers us from a legal perspective as Maverick spray advisory screenshots are now part of our spray records in Agworld. And with the water tank level sensors on the INCYT dashboard I can be sure that we have enough water available for our sprayer, or our sheep for that matter, and don't get any nasty last-minute surprises."



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Jeremy adds: "Soil moisture levels are another very important decision making factor for us however. With INCYT's soil moisture probes we know exactly what our soil moisture levels are at the different blocks, and they can vary quite a bit with how local some storms are, so we can use that information to help us guide our decision making processes when it comes to crop rotation and fertiliser applications. When you think about all these different factors, what INCYT means for us is that we're able to make better crop management decisions."

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WHAT INCYT OFFERS YOU

- Remotely monitor and control your assets
- A centralised dashboard with all your data
- Industry-leading trackers, sensors & network equipment
- Operational excellence through innovation

NEXT STARTS NOW

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