

AGTYRE BULLETIN

ISSUE 4 APRIL 2018

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Controlled traffic systems lighten the load on soil compaction

Soil compaction largely caused by farming machinery has long been a challenge for farmers in Australia, impacting the quality of their crops due to soil conditions that lack the optimal nutrients, water and aeration environment for healthy and sustainable plant development and yields.

While soil compaction can be attributed collectively to a number of factors including soil type and climate, this is no doubt impacted by adding machinery wheel traffic and weight into the mix. As a result, many farming practices relating to machinery use have been trialled to alleviate and minimise the effects of soil compaction, including careful management of tyre pressures and reducing any unnecessary tilling of the soil, mouldboard ploughing and using varying tillage depths.

Controlled traffic systems (sometimes also called tramline farming) is a well-used method of dealing with soil compaction in Australia and other areas globally, by restricting the use of machinery to defined areas or tracks in a field or paddock, so that only that particular area is impacted by any resulting soil compaction. There are many benefits of controlled traffic systems, which ensure that crops are kept separate from the machinery by making use of permanent wheel tracks.

In Western Australia, where soil compaction is an ongoing and particularly prevalent issue, Western

Australia's Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development says that Australian research over 20 years has shown controlled traffic farming can improve grain quality and increase grain yields by 2-16% if there are no other limiting subsoil constraints¹.

Although not the major reason for introducing controlled traffic systems, increased fuel efficiency can often be a welcome spinoff that farmers have found to be an additional benefit in many instances when adopting controlled traffic systems to combat soil compaction.

Western Australia's Department of Agriculture and Food has publicised a grower case study on mixing controlled traffic farming and mouldboard ploughing where a controlled traffic system has been introduced to minimise compaction following years of deep ripping to reduce soil compaction, and mouldboard ploughing to get on top of weeds, water repellence and incorporate lime. This interesting and informative case study explains the challenges encountered by the farmers and how using these innovative techniques positively impact their farming in alleviating soil compaction.

¹ Western Australia's Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website: 24 November 2017

You can view this youtube video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuEAza_TEjo

Farm Torque



Testimonial



Vredestein powering on across the Tasman



On the slopes of Mt Taranaki, Westown Agriculture tractors are helping drive New Zealand's valuable primary industries – and Vredestein tyres are helping turn their wheels for longer.

Sam Thomas is one of four siblings who along with their parents run the New Plymouth business which has been ploughing furrows in Taranaki since 1988.

The company operates 12 tractors and a swathe of other agricultural equipment which needs to be in tip top condition to operate in all conditions and on all types of terrain. "We go right around the mountain doing fertiliser runs," Sam says.

Westown Agriculture can help with all aspects of farming operations, including hay baling, silage, bulk silage, maize, cultivating, fertiliser spreading, livestock management and more. "We offer a complete agricultural service for all on-farm needs, ensuring you get the best yields each and every season."

The company put Vredestein tyres on two of their New Holland T7-185 tractors about a year ago and recently noticed that the wear specs in terms of hours differed markedly from those of another tractor using a different brand of tyre.

The tractor with the Vredesteins on did 2221 hours over about 18 months and had similar wear specs to the tractor fitted with the other brand, except the latter had done only 1183 hours over about a year.

Sam says that the Vredestein tractor tyres wear really well – especially considering their vehicles clock up a lot of kilometres in both the paddock and on the road.

"We cover quite a big area. The tyres have to be able to stand up."

"They have a very good semi-circle tread which performs well in a muddy paddock, and is still smooth on the road," he says.

"We now have three tractors fitted with Vredesteins and will be converting more of the fleet. We plan to use more in the field."

He added that the tyres were "up there" price-wise but "you pay for quality". Getting the most out of every tyre was crucial and the Vredestein's durability set them above other brands.

"Tyres are a huge part of our business. Tyre wear is a huge factor, and they have to last as long as possible."

Breaking New Ground

Introducing our new Vredestein Traxion+ Video

Part of our commitment to building brand awareness for the Vredestein product in Australia is the development of video content. Here is a new video we have just completed on the Traxion+ Product: View it at <https://tyremax-5.wistia.com/medias/up0zvrl09q>



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