GRAIN GROWER

Grain Growers

Issue 88 | June 2026



Plant, Reduce or Adapt?

Hormuz Hits Farm Gate

Paddock Becomes Political

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Grain Grower is the official magazine of GrainGrowers, a national organisation working to enhance the profitability and sustainability of Australian grain growers.

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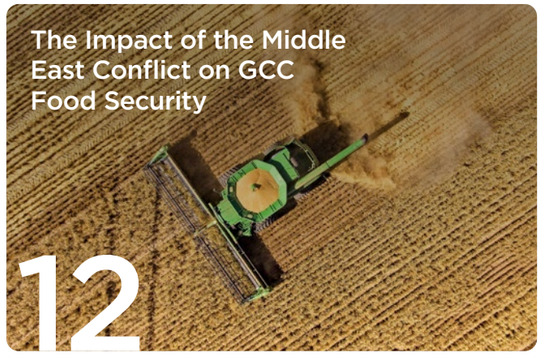
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Crop Inspection - Krystal Muller, QLD

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Chair's Comment

It has only been six months since the last edition of Grain Grower magazine, but as we all know a lot has happened in that time.

This has been one of the most challenging periods for growers collectively for many years and the impacts, however varied they may be, look like they will linger for some time.

Amidst the challenges, growers have shown a great deal of resilience and a willingness to engage with GrainGrowers to ensure industry has been part of the national conversation.

This edition of Grain Grower includes pieces which focus on: grower decision-making in the current environment; the state of global markets as the crisis enters its fifth month; and how this crisis has shone a spotlight on issues regional Australia and our organisation, in particular, have been raising for many years.

There is a sense the nation has come to the realisation that agriculture is a critical cog in the national economy and a major contributor to food security.

The team at GrainGrowers has certainly been reinforcing this in our representations to government, industry and the public to build on the momentum we currently have.

Rhys Turton
GrainGrowers Chair

News Bites

Grower Preparedness

At this year's Grain Sustainability Forum, GrainGrowers' General Manager of Grower Relations and Thought Leadership, Sarah Hyland, presented a piece of research which explored the mindsets driving grower preparedness.

The purpose was to understand growers' attitudes towards preparedness; the preparedness hurdles growers face; and what would enhance preparedness.

Scan the QR code to watch Sarah's presentation.

GSF Annual Report Launch

The launch of the Grain Sustainability Framework's inaugural Annual Report will significantly enhance the Australian grain industry's sustainability credentials in global markets, reducing the burden on growers.

The framework works on behalf of Australian grain growers to demonstrate, with credible data, how the industry performs and improves over time.

Scan the QR Code to read the report.



Chris Groves has made some adjustments to his program this season.

Planting, Reducing, Adapting or Sitting Out

Words by Andrea Koch
Contributor

The timing could have been worse.

When the disruption to diesel and urea supply hit Australia, most grain growers were already committed to plans for the season, but not so far in they couldn't adjust. After the initial panic, growers shifted to decision-making, weighing cost, availability, and how far those choices would carry into the season still to be planted under uncertain access to fuel and fertiliser prohibitive costs of both.

Chris Groves, farms in Cowra NSW. He is pressing on but has made adjustments.

"We have changed our program, not a lot, because country that's in a cropping rotation, you've got to keep it in a cropping rotation. Otherwise, it's just a dead loss for the whole season," Chris says.

Around a third of his usual wheat program has shifted into forage crops, trading yield potential for flexibility. With oats and barley needing less nitrogen, they can also be grazed if harvest economics fall apart. He's also changed his seeding setup, moving to shallower points to cut fuel use by about a third.

"The two risks we face are $5-a-litre diesel and $2,000-a-tonne urea," he says. "What we're doing is about mitigating those risks and making sure we're not as vulnerable as we would have been."

He's pragmatic about what that buys him. These are tactical moves for the season, not structural changes. "If this continues, we have to sit down and have a long hard look at how we do things." For now, the priority is simpler. "We've got to keep the business going. We've got to keep producing."

Further west near Forbes, NSW, Rob Wienthal grows dryland and irrigated crops. He's pulling back, but the dominant driver isn't inputs, it's the dry.

"We're being dictated to what we can and can't do by very dry conditions and very dry soil moisture profiles," Rob says.

Rob, who is a member of GrainGrowers' National Policy Group, is running roughly 60 per cent of his normal winter program with a shift toward chickpeas and wheat, lifting legumes and moving away from nitrogen-intensive crops.

"Availability of fertiliser is more of a concern for me than fuel. It doesn't make much sense to go too hard at those nitrogen or energy-hungry crops this winter.

"Our environment is making the calls for us, in some ways," he says. With less than 60mm of rain so far this year in a 650mm district, risk is already elevated before input costs are factored in.

It's the combination that's forcing harder decisions. Rob is also reconsidering irrigated cotton next summer, not just on cost, but exposure. "A crop with $2,000 a hectare already invested that runs short of diesel mid-season doesn't recover. That's a financial risk I'm not willing to take."

He's also looking beyond this year. Cutting nutrient inputs draws down soil reserves. Tightened rotations create future constraints. "You can't just keep putting your hand in the bucket and pulling it out without putting it back in", he says, "because then you've got nothing left to take out."

James Russell runs a cropping and livestock operation outside Rutherglen in northeast Victoria, alongside a seed cleaning and treatment business. He's planting in full, having had the season's urea already on farm, which he describes as "a bit of a luxury" right now. But the conversation he's having isn't really about this season anymore.

"When I first started coming onto the farm, we were selling wheat for $300 a tonne. I've been here ten years and we're still selling wheat for $300 a tonne. Our operating margins are decreasing," James says.

He carries debt from land transition as do so many growers, but the arithmetic is getting harder to make work. "In an average grain year at the moment, we're not making any money. That is a scary thing to come to terms with."

If input costs stay elevated for another two or three years, he says, the industry faces something more serious than a difficult season. "That's where you're dealing with the sale of assets. If we're selling assets, it means everyone else is, and the value of those assets is essentially reduced."

Three operations, making different calls under the same pressure, from getting through this year to questioning the years ahead. For some, the immediate decisions on inputs and planting are starting to give way to harder questions about cost structures, debt, and whether the current model holds if these conditions persist.

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Hormuz Hits the Farm Gate

Words by Dennis Voznesenski
Agricultural Economist at Commbank



The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz has highlighted a range of vulnerabilities across the Australian economy. Agriculture has quickly emerged as one of the most 'at-risk' sectors. Outside of good weather conditions (and a lot of hard work), agriculture relies on fertiliser and diesel. The war in Iran severely disrupted both.

The vast majority of fertiliser and fuel used by Australian agriculture is imported, leaving the sector vulnerable. On a nutrient basis, FAO data indicates that between 2019 and 2023 imports were equivalent to 87% of Australia's agricultural use of nitrogen-based fertiliser, 68% of phosphate-based fertiliser and 100% of potash-based fertiliser. Domestic urea production stopped entirely in January 2023, making Australia 100% import dependent. Australia typically imports approximately 80% of its diesel use.

It is well documented that approximately 19% of global oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz. An even larger share of global fertiliser supply is stuck behind the Strait. In 2024, the Gulf accounted for approximately 43% of all seaborne urea exports (NDSU) and 16% of global phosphate fertiliser exports. Not only have direct fertiliser flows from the Gulf been impacted, but so have the raw ingredients needed for fertiliser production in other regions.

While the above seems bleak, changes are coming. By mid-2027, Australia is set to domestically have the capacity to produce just over half of its nitrogen needs. By mid-2028, Australia is also set to be able to produce roughly half of its potash fertiliser needs. Australia already has the capacity to produce just over a third of its phosphate fertiliser needs. The creation of a domestic fertiliser production industry creates a 'runway' for future crises, safeguarding Australia's ability to keep agriculture functioning.

The agricultural industry is also closely watching for signals from the government about fostering the creation of a domestic biofuel industry (using crop and waste-based feedstock), which would partially improve Australian fuel security. It is, however, important to note that it takes years to build the infrastructure and plants for a biofuel industry.

Creating more fertiliser and fuel in Australia is a significant step toward improving resilience for Australian agriculture. During a crisis where there are temporary supply disruptions, Australia would be able to draw on local input production. The next critical vulnerability is Australia's near-total reliance on foreign shipping for export of agricultural goods. A maritime related crisis can disrupt Australia's ability to export by reducing the availability of suitable freight. If export ability is constrained, commodities can accumulate, placing downward pressure on local prices.

A resilient agricultural sector cannot be built in the middle of a crisis. The Strait of Hormuz disruption has exposed how deeply Australia's food production system depends on imported fuel, fertiliser and freight. While new domestic fertiliser projects and the prospect of a biofuels industry are encouraging, they represent only the first steps toward a broader national resilience strategy.



Credit: NSW Ports

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Reflections following a Rain Event - Kerry McFarlane (VIC)

The Moment the Paddock Became Political

Words by Andrea Koch
Contributor

Something shifted in the national conversation about food this year, and it didn't happen in a boardroom or a ministerial office. When diesel crossed $4 in regional towns and urea prices spiked fifty per cent, urban Australia and the political class started to understand something they had been told but never quite believed: that food production is directly tied to fuel and fertiliser, and that when those inputs are expensive or scarce, the consequences move well beyond the farm gate. The grains sector didn't create this moment of clarity. But for the first time in a long time, it is speaking to an audience that is actually listening.

The arguments the sector is now making aren't new. GrainGrowers has been advocating for domestic fuel reserves, sovereign fertiliser manufacturing, and agricultural feedstocks in the national energy strategy for years, with sound arguments and strong evidence. What was missing was an audience with the lived experience to understand why they matter.

The Overton window, the range of policy ideas a political class considers worth acting on, has shifted. That window doesn't move primarily through better advocacy or smarter submissions, but when the cost of inaction becomes visible to the people who set the boundaries. Global supply chain shocks, a sowing season under pressure, food prices reaching into every household: these are what moved it. When the window moved, the government acted. The budget commitment on fuel reserves, an intervention that would have been called too expensive and interventionist three years ago, is now a line item. That is what a policy window opening looks like.

The question now is not what has been won. It is what else moves through the window while it is open.

Food security expert Andrew Henderson, Principal of Agsecure agrees. "Years of effort are being met with opportunity. The fuel shock provides a vital moment of clarity, but it is ultimately just one example of a much broader vulnerability. Food security is not an accident of geography; it is a sovereign capability that requires structural defence. With the government now actively engaged, we have a rare opportunity to build genuine, long-term resilience. This situation has to serve as a foundation for further action, rather than a finish line. It's what we do from here that counts."

GrainGrowers CEO Shona Gawel is also clear-eyed about the fuel commitment: a beginning, not a destination. "The establishment of a government-owned fuel security reserve is a significant step forward. But with a window of opportunity currently open, it's critical that long-term policy certainty for industry and investors helps accelerate the growth of Australia's low carbon liquid fuel production. Strengthening our sovereign capability is ultimately about reducing that vulnerability." On fertiliser, she is equally direct: nearly half of the world's eight billion people are fed by crops grown with synthetic nitrogen. "The arithmetic isn't subtle. The need for Australia's fertiliser surety isn't either."

The bigger opportunity runs deeper than any single input. The realisation that food production depends on fuel and fertiliser can lead to a realisation that growers are not commodity producers but infrastructure operators. The paddock is not a peripheral feature of the national economy but a load-bearing one, and the public now has the lived experience to understand why.

A window that opens under crisis conditions closes when the crisis fades. What the sector does in the time it has will determine whether this shift in public understanding becomes permanent or retreats to the background. Gawel says it requires a willingness to be uncomfortable. "That means bringing in different perspectives and not being afraid to challenge the status quo. We saw that at the recent Grain Sustainability Forum, where not everyone in the room came to agree - they came to question. That kind of discomfort is what gets you heard in new spaces."

The grain sector rarely has the chance to make that case to an audience that was actually paying attention. It has that chance now.



Low Carbon Liquid Fuels - Where the Opportunities Lie

The prospect of a fully-fledged low carbon liquid fuels industry in Australia has never been higher on the agenda as the conflict in the Middle East again exposes the vulnerabilities of supply chains. GrainGrowers caught up with four industry leaders to ask: *"How does the domestic manufacturing of low carbon liquid fuels benefit your organisation/industry and Australia more broadly?"*

Ms Shona Gawel
GrainGrowers CEO



Developing a domestic low carbon liquid fuel industry will provide a significant opportunity for Australian growers to diversify grain markets.

Australia's grain and oilseed industries are well placed to underpin a thriving low-carbon liquid fuel sector, drawing on decades of experience, advanced production systems and globally recognised sustainability credentials.

Proven feedstocks such as canola, sorghum and wheat are already established in international renewable fuel markets, demonstrating their reliability and scalability. With the right policy settings, the low-carbon liquid fuel industry can become a long-term and stable market for Australian farming businesses, supporting regional jobs and contributing to stronger rural communities.

For the nation, developing a domestic low carbon liquid fuel industry presents an opportunity to improve Australia's fuel security. Recent global disruptions have demonstrated how exposed Australia remains to international fuel shocks through a long-held reliance on imported liquid fuels to keep the economy moving.

We cannot afford to be in the same position we are in now the next time global supply chain crisis hits.

We must be learning the lessons and making decisions now to futureproof our supply chains through targeted, strategic domestic manufacturing capability to reduce vulnerability and manage risk where supply disruptions would have the greatest impact.

Mr Dick Honan
Chairman Manildra Group



Domestic manufacturing of low carbon liquid fuels strengthens Australia's sovereign fuel capability, supports regional industry and provides a strategic buffer against global supply shocks.

At Manildra Group, we have long believed in value-adding to Australian wheat here at home. At our Shoalhaven Starches site, we value-add to Australian wheat by converting wheat starch into ethanol as part of an integrated, sustainable production process.

It is value-adding in its truest sense — turning Australian wheat into high-value food, industrial and fuel products, while supporting growers, regional manufacturing and the broader supply chains that underpin Australian agriculture.

Low carbon liquid fuels also provide an immediate pathway to reduce emissions across the existing vehicle fleet, including in transport, freight and agriculture. For decades, more than 60 countries have used biofuel mandates to strengthen fuel security.

Australia lags behind, with no national biofuel mandate in place and a fragmented policy landscape that has left the sector without the certainty needed to scale.

With the right domestic demand signal, Australian-made ethanol and biodiesel can strengthen Australia's fuel security, reduce emissions, support growers and regional communities, and ensure this sovereign manufacturing capability is fully utilised here at home.

Dr John Coyne
Director – National Security Programs Australian Strategic Policy Institute



Domestic manufacturing of low carbon liquid fuels can strengthen Australia's national resilience by reducing strategic dependence on vulnerable global supply chains during periods of disruption, coercion or conflict. Liquid fuels remain the master constraint across defence, agriculture, freight, mining and emergency services, particularly across regional and northern Australia where electrification alternatives remain limited or impractical at scale.

From a defence perspective, sovereign fuel production supports operational endurance, sustainment and logistics continuity during crises. Equally important, low carbon liquid fuels present an opportunity to align energy security, economic security and emissions reduction objectives rather than treating them as competing priorities.

Australia's future fuel resilience, however, will not come from a single technology or pathway. It will require a layered system of approaches that includes diversified imports, strategic reserves, distributed storage, resilient logistics networks, electrification where practical, and scalable domestic production of low carbon liquid fuels.

Australia's agricultural sector has an important role to play in that transition. Domestic feedstocks, regional processing capability and integrated supply chains can help create new industrial opportunities while strengthening the resilience of critical national systems. Strategic resilience increasingly depends not only on what Australia can produce, but what it can continue producing under pressure.

Mr Robert Spurway
GrainCorp CEO

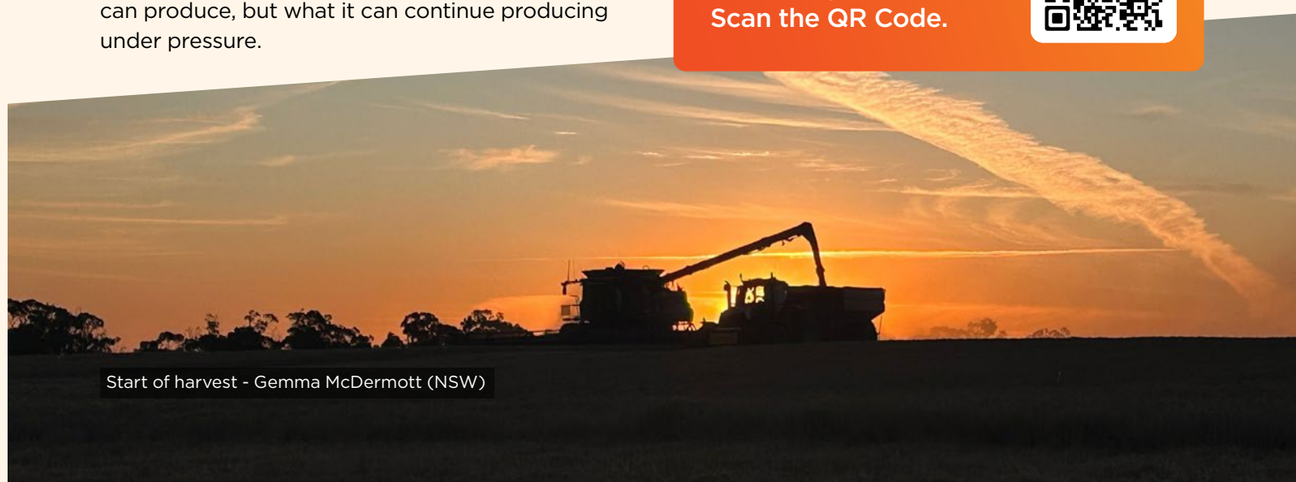


Domestic manufacturing of low carbon liquid fuels presents a significant opportunity for Australia's grains industry, regional communities and the broader economy. It has the potential to create new value chains that connect Australian grain production and processing capability to emerging global energy markets, while supporting the decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors such as aviation and heavy transport.

GrainCorp is working with Ampol and IFM Investors on Australia's largest proposed renewable fuels project, which would include a 750,000 to 1 million tonne canola crush facility supplying feedstocks for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and renewable diesel production. Together with other feedstocks, including used cooking oil and tallow, the project has the potential to produce up to 750 million litres of SAF and renewable diesel annually.

For Australia's grains sector, projects like this could help expand domestic processing capability and support new pathways for canola and other feedstocks to participate in the energy transition. More broadly, it represents an opportunity to strengthen sovereign fuel security, create regional jobs, attract investment and build more resilient, lower emissions supply chains for the future.

Want to learn more about low carbon liquid fuels? **Scan the QR Code.**



Start of harvest - Gemma McDermott (NSW)

The Middle East Conflict and GCC Food Security



Words by Annabel Mactier
Contributor

The Middle East conflict has placed significant pressure on food supply chains across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). While the Strait of Hormuz is widely recognised as a critical chokepoint for global fuel and fertiliser trade, it is equally vital for the movement of food into the region.

With limited arable land, scarce water resources and extreme climatic conditions, GCC countries are among the most food import-dependent in the world, with domestic production meeting only around 15 per cent of total demand. More than 70 per cent of food imports including Australian grain and pulses, have historically transited through the Strait of Hormuz. This structural reliance means that any disruption to maritime trade can rapidly impact food availability, increase prices and undermine supply chain stability.

In response to the closure of the strait, there has been a significant redirection of freight flows across the region. Although many major grain terminals are located within the Gulf, there has been increased utilisation of ports outside the Strait of Hormuz. These include Red Sea ports such as Jeddah and King Abdullah Port in Saudi Arabia, as well as Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, and Port of Salalah and Sohar in Oman, which sits on the Gulf of Oman and operates independently of the strait.

This shift has been accompanied by a substantial increase in overland freight movements. In March alone, approximately 88,000 truck movements were recorded between Saudi Arabia and other GCC states. Grain that would typically be shipped directly into Gulf ports has been redirected to Red Sea or Gulf of Oman terminals and transported across the Arabian Peninsula by road. Since late February, around 25,000 trucks have entered Kuwait via land routes from Saudi Arabia, highlighting the role of cross-border trucking as a critical supply lifeline.

While these alternative routes provided short-term relief, they are less efficient and more costly and logistically complex than direct maritime supply chains, underscoring that no combination of alternative ports or land transport routes can fully replace the scale and efficiency of maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz.

At the same time, prior investments in expanding grain storage infrastructure are helping to buffer the immediate impact of the crisis. Saudi Arabia, for example, increased its grain storage capacity by more than 40 per cent between 2016 and 2023, and now has approximately 6 months of grain reserves. The recently commissioned Yanbu Grain Handling Terminal on the Red Sea further strengthens this capability, adding 156,000 tonnes of storage alongside high-capacity logistics infrastructure.

Similarly, Oman has also strengthened its resilience through targeted investments in storage infrastructure, including new silos at Sohar Port with an additional 160,000 tonnes of capacity, alongside planned expansions at Salalah and Muttrah ports. These developments are designed to enhance national reserves and reduce exposure to external supply shocks.

To support food security during the disruption, GCC countries have sustained grain and pulse imports from global suppliers, despite increased import costs associated with supply chain disruptions to maintain strategic reserve levels. Australia remains a consistent source of supply, underpinned by long-standing trade relationships and counter-seasonal availability.

Paddock Perspectives



Cathy Cooke

Koorda, Western Australia

Hi, I'm Cathy Cooke, I farm with my family north of Koorda and we're planting somewhere around the 9000 hectares this season. I farm with my husband Peter and our son Sandy, who is back on the farm after working away for a couple of years. Our daughter Hayley is living down south working for Nutrien.

I don't come from farming, I grew up in Perth. Peter grew up in Boyanup and his folks sold their dairy farm when he was young. He came out to this area to work for a farmer and when he met me, he had identified that there were no trucking companies out here.

He bought a truck and that's when we started a trucking business. We were able to lease some land and then buy some land and that's where we started back in the mid-nineties.

We have expanded a lot; we started with a couple of thousand acres on our first block that we leased.

It's been amazing for us to come into an industry that we both were really passionate about. We wanted to have a crack at farming; it's living the dream if it's what you want to do.

Our average rainfall is around 200 to 250ml and the majority of our soil type is a red, sandy loam. Around our lake country is loam and then anything high up is a sandy Wodjil type soil.

Right now it's pretty dry, we've had good early rain which is very nice. But it is pretty dry now and looking forward is a little worrying because there's nothing on the horizon. But we're still full steam ahead with seeding.

Our fallow component always gives us a really good result in the year after a break, so that's right for next year.

We run sheep but we still call it a fallow on those paddocks. We are running cattle too, so we take the advantage of keeping those paddocks reasonably clean.

We doubled our lupin programme this year, and I have a feeling that a few people might have put a few lupins in around the shire. We put a fair bit more canola in as well with the rain that we got from cyclones Mitchell and Narelle.

We have been trying new wheat varieties. I'm really interested in wheat with long coleoptile. I've moved away from Calibre as a variety and we're looking at other options.

The most gains to our area are with GM Canola. The amount of GM Canola that goes in versus TT varieties is now huge. The hybrid vigour we get with GM Canola out in the lower rainfall area, and how tough it is as a plant is exceptional.

We're looking at new technology and would like to do more, but for now we're taking a wait-and-see approach.

We plan to revisit it when we upgrade our sprayer. Our two current sprayers are still doing the job, but it's something we'll consider in the future.

We look at the future, and I always talk to other farmers, I can't help myself. I joined the GRDC on the Western Panel last September. I love hearing what people are doing, also when you drive past a farm and think, what's this person done here? I am always keen to find out why people were doing things on their farm.

Scan the QR Code to read the full article.



Deb Charlton

Marrar, NSW

Hi, I'm Deb Charlton and I am a grower from Marrar, NSW, about half an hour from Wagga Wagga. Alongside farming, I'm also a NSW Farmers Executive Council member, a member of the NSW Farmers Grain Committee and a committee member of the NSW Farmers Agricultural Science Committee. Also a grain grower member of the National Mouse Monitoring Committee and have been involved with industry advocacy for about 30 years now.

I run a mixed farm with my husband Ian and son Zach on 1000 hectares. 650 hectares is cropping and the remainder we use for our sheep operation. The farm was Ian's family farm and after going through a succession process with his family, we've owned the property for 19 years now.

In addition to our cereal cropping rotation, we also run merinos with a first cross Charollais lamb operation. Because of this, we always ensure that we've got a lucerne and clover based pasture within the cropping rotation.

It's actually been a big few months for our family on and off farm. Our son Zach recently won the AgShows NSW State Grains Young Judges competition in April and will be going to the National Finals hosted by Queensland AgShows at the Ekka this year.

We are very proud of this achievement by Zach and it really shows his interest back on the farm, particularly in cropping.

And I love the cropping aspect of farming too. I love the fact that we can put the seed in the ground, we can watch it grow, we nurture it and within a season, see the reward knowing we are helping feed the nation.

This year has been an interesting one so far. We had a bit of confidence after rain in February and prepared country that we deemed ready to go for when it rained again.

We had a little bit of a break in April and got a couple of inches so we put in some oats and our grazing wheat, but we pulled that back and decided we wouldn't do anything more because of the timeframe.

A bit more rain gave us the confidence to put in canola but it was borderline moisture, so we pulled up half way through our canola sowing and waited for it to dry out so we could either dry sow or wait for the next rain.

Thankfully we got about an inch of rain recently so now we've finished our canola and we're about to go into barley.

With innovation and technology getting more advanced, we're looking to be more savvy to make the most out of what we've got at the time.

We see it with Zach. Ag-tech and AI is a big interest for him and he's expanding his understanding of these fields by going to ag tech days and workshops that showcase how this technology is being used on the farm.

Looking forward we have always hoped that he would come back to the farm, but we've always told him he's welcome to do what he wants to do.

It was pretty obvious from a young age that he was he was definitely wanting to come back to the farm.

We have always included Zach in the farm operation and asked him to put forward his thoughts and have where possible tried his suggestions. We believe if we want to hand the farm over there is no point him not being able to have input in the meantime because that is how he will learn.

Scan the QR Code to read the full article.



Brenton Kroehn

Waikerie, SA

Hi, I'm Brenton. I farm with my wife Penny, about 10 kilometres south of Waikerie in South Australia's Riverland, on low-rainfall country that traditionally averages around 250 millimetres in a good year — although we haven't seen that for a while.

Our total farm holding is about 4,600 hectares, with roughly 2,600 hectares that we manage ourselves. The soils are mainly sandy loam with limestone through them, along with lighter sandhills and some rocky areas.

The past few seasons have been challenging from a rainfall perspective. Growing-season rainfall was just 97 millimeters in 2025 and less than 91 millimeters the year before. This growing season, we're sitting at around 120 millimeters so far.

Like many proactive growers in the area, we've been running minimum-till or no-till systems for years — stubble retention, double knock where needed, minimal soil disturbance and a strong focus on ground cover. That said, last season showed that even the best systems can be pushed beyond their limits.

This year, there's been a lot of careful decision-making around levelling paddocks, managing weed burden and balancing erosion risk with getting ground back into shape.

My cropping operation these days is very targeted and livestock-focused. I'm planting oats and vetch for sheep feed and hay, and about 700 acres of barley that we'll harvest and store to use through our confinement system if needed. As well as sowing, we are lambing at the moment rebuilding ewe numbers after the drought.

Soil health remains a key focus. On light soils like ours, protecting structure and minimising erosion risk is critical.

When we started talking about how the system had evolved over recent seasons, and what had changed on farm, it made me reflect on how much the workload itself had shifted over time.

A couple of years ago, I realised that while seasons played a part, the workload was becoming overwhelming. At the time, we were running a large cropping program, a substantial livestock enterprise and a stud operation.

Eventually, I had to be honest with myself. The workload wasn't sustainable for the long term. I reached out to my business adviser and asked a simple question: Can you help me make a plan to change?

We made the decision to lease out around 2,000 hectares to another local grower and restructure the business around livestock. Today, it's just me running the farm.

I still work part-time for the grower leasing the land, helping with seeding and harvest. It gives me an income stream, keeps me in the game, and suits both of us.

I didn't realise how busy I'd been until things came back into balance. I'm still working hard, but I'm no longer overwhelmed. My headspace is clearer, I've got more energy, and I'm enjoying farming again.

If there's one thing I'd say to other growers feeling under constant pressure, it's this: talk to someone you trust and get another perspective on your business.

Everyone's journey is different, but we are all on the same path. What matters is finding a system that's sustainable for your land, your business and your headspace. We produce quality food in tough environments. We care deeply about our land. And we're good at adapting when we need to and that's what makes me proud to be an Australian grain grower.

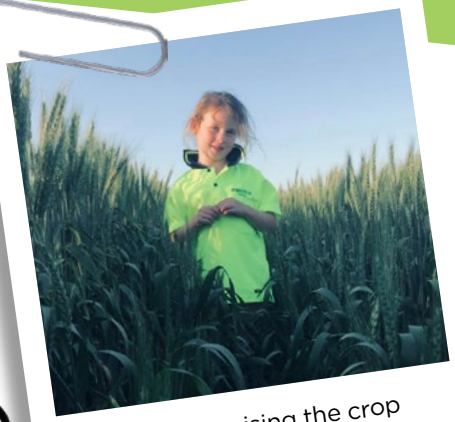
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GRAIN kid GROWERS

Colour in the tractor to look like the one on your farm!

Complete the page and have a grown up send a photo of you holding it to enquiry@graingrowers.com.au to receive a GrainGrowers kids prize pack!

Meet Edwina from Inverleigh, VIC



Edwina supervising the crop tour with her Dad.



FREE DRAW

Draw what your farm looks like at the moment! Include what's going on and who is getting stuck into the farm work.