

VOLUME 28 | ISSUE 2 | JUNE 2025



# LIEBE GROUP NEWS



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**THREE YEARS OF STRIP  
AND DISC SYSTEM TRIALS**

**THE BENEFITS OF BUILDING  
UP OFF-FARM INVESTMENTS**

**UNDERSTANDING CARBON  
ACCOUNTING IN AGRICULTURE**

*The Liebe Group mission is to facilitate grower prioritised research, development and extension to support our members to be profitable and sustainable.*

# LIEBE'S LEADERSHIP 2025

## R & D COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Casey Shaw

## WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Amanda Nixon

## OFFICE BEARERS

**Chair:** Brad McIlroy

**Vice-Chair:** Rebecca Wallis

**Secretary:** Chris O'Callaghan

**Treasurer:** Sophie Carlshausen

## BOARD MEMBERS

Boyd Carter

Dylan Hirsch

Emma Pearse

Blayn Carlshausen

Gavin Carter

Alex Keamy

## LIEBE GROUP PARTNERS

Liebe Group Partners are an integral facet of the success of the group. Since our inception the group has developed long and valuable relationships with organisations who have mutual interests to the Liebe Group. These strong partnerships have given the group diversity, a level of security and the capacity to build a sustainable and healthy future.

These partnering organisations are high profile agribusinesses with a keen interest in the healthy future of agriculture. They see the relationship with the group as a meaningful way to stay in close contact with the grass roots innovators of the industry and a way to invest resources into a group which is focusing on research and development for future agricultural sustainability.

### DIAMOND PARTNERS



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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Welcome to the latest Liebe Group newsletter. At the time of writing this in early May, we are still waiting for our proper season break, hopefully it has come by the time this reaches your mailbox!

Trial program seeding has mostly now been completed, with a fairly diverse mix of trials and demonstrations going in the ground at a number of locations across the district including the Main Trial Site at Nugadong. In some areas we have been able to capitalise on March & April thunderstorms for canola trials, however the majority of the trials have been sown dry. We have included a full list of trials on page 5 of this newsletter.

I am also happy to announce that we have our Main Trial Sites for the 2026 and 2027 seasons confirmed, with Sam Nixon at Kalannie and Daniel Birch at Coorow, taking on hosting roles for these years respectively. We extend a huge thank you to the Nixon and Birch families for their commitment to this, as having sites planned in advance helps the group and our R&D partners plan ahead and become familiar with the paddocks and any site specific issues.

Our annual Womens Field Day is also fast approaching, with a really strong line up of presenters and topics. The focus of this year's event has really been about continually improving our farm businesses, with topics covering strategic business planning, the impact of tariffs on our ag commodity markets, artificial intelligence, and farm safety as well as stories from some amazing wheatbelt women.

There are also a few other opportunities coming up as well that should be of interest for our farming businesses, including the ever-relevant topic of communication in our family businesses, which will be run by highly

regarded ag facilitator Jeanette Long, covering the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator and how this can be used to make better farm business decisions.

Further to this we have worked with Diamond Partners Rabobank to secure one of their popular Business Transition and Succession planning workshops in Dalwallinu to be hosted by the Rabo Client Council of WA.

For both these events there is a minimum number of participants required for them to go ahead so please don't hesitate to book if you are interested.

After Women's Field Day our next event will be the Post Seeding Field Walk, which we have tentatively booked in for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. This is a little earlier than previous years, but hoping this will allow our committees and members to view the early stages of the trials and pass feedback on them a little sooner. We are also working with CSBP to hold a fertiliser placement dye night at this event which will be something a bit different this year. We are watching the weather and season break closely to see if this date will work, so please stay tuned to the Liebe channels for more information.

That all from me, I hope you enjoy the content in this newsletter and I wish you all the best for season 2025.

**Chris O'Callaghan, Executive Officer**



## UPCOMING LIEBE EVENTS

Women's Field Day	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Dalwallinu Recreation Centre
Post Seeding Field Walk	Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	Main Trial Site, Nugadong
Farm Family Communication Workshop	Thursday/Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2025	Liebe Office, Dalwallinu
Rabobank Business Transition Workshop	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Dalwallinu Recreation Centre
Spring Field Day	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Main Trial Site, Nugadong
GRDC Harvester Set Up Workshop	Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	TBA Carnamah

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# 2025 LIEBE GROUP TRIALS LIST

Trial	Lead Organisation	Location	Funder
<b>Main Trial Site Trials</b>			
Canola Depth x Wetter x Press Wheel Pressure	CSIRO/Living Farm	Nugadong	GRDC
Canola Establishment with Wetter and UAN	SLR	Nugadong	GRDC
Canola NVT	SLR	Nugadong	GRDC
Wheat NVT	SLR	Nugadong	GRDC
Long Coleoptile Wheat	SLR	Nugadong	GRDC
Barley and Wheat Varieties x Post-Em N Rates	Liebe Group	Nugadong	Liebe Group
Nitrogen and Phosphorus Rates in Wheat + BioWish	Summit	Nugadong	Summit
Cereal & Legume Species Demonstration	GGA/Living Farm	Nugadong	GRDC
Glufosinate Timing Trial	Nutrien	Nugadong	Nutrien
<b>Satellite Trials</b>			
Early Sown Canola at Different Depths Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Pithara	Host Farmer
Lentil Variety Trial Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Pithara	Host Farmer
Canola Establishment with SE14 Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Watheroo	Host Farmer
Impact of Seed Temperature on Canola Establishment Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Jibberding	Host Farmer
Hard Wheat Variety Trial Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Buntine	Host Farmer
Noodle Wheat Variety Trial Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Buntine	Host Farmer
Clearfield Wheat Variety Trial Farmer Demo	Liebe Group	Watheroo	Host Farmer
Paraquat and Glyphosate Alternatives Rotational Trial (Year 1 of 4)	AHRI/Liebe Group	Coorow	GRDC
Post-Em Options for Clethodim Resistant Ryegrass	Liebe Group	Coorow	Liebe Group
Year 2 of Cereal x Legume TOS Trial	GGA/Liebe Group	Maya	GRDC
Year 3 of Nitrogen Recovery Strategies	GGA/Liebe Group	Latham	GRDC
RiskWi\$e: Crop Rotation x Nitrogen	GGA/Liebe Group	Pithara	GRDC
Canola time of sowing x sowing depth	Liebe Group	Pithara	GRDC
Lentils on Sandy Acidic Soils	GGA/Liebe Group	Latham	Host Farmer
Brome Grass Control Rotational Trial (Year 2 of 3)	DPIRD/Liebe Group/Uni of Adelaide	Jibberding	GRDC
Soil Amelioration Demonstration (Year 2)	Liebe Group/Soil CRC	Maya	Soil CRC
Strip & Disc Trial Year (Year 4)	Liebe Group	Latham	GRDC
Nitrogen Rate Farmer Demos x 2 (Season Dependent)	Liebe Group	Watheroo & Perenjori	Host Farmer
Bentonite Clay rates x Nitrogen rate (Year 2)	Liebe Group	Coorow	Host Farmer
Mouse Monitoring Sites	Farmanco/Liebe Group	Various	GRDC

# WOMEN'S FIELD DAY

*Building the Management Capacity of Women to Make a Difference to their Family, Farm Business and the Agricultural Industry.*



**L I E B E**  
G R O U P

Working together  
in Agriculture

This year's agenda will focus on the farm business, strategic planning, artificial intelligence, tariffs and of course a few inspiring stories from amazing women!  
Full agenda coming soon.



**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>**  
June 2025



**Time**  
09.00 AM - 4.00 PM



Dalwallinu Recreation Centre



**Members: \$50\*** First 2 tickets for Liebe farm business members are free  
**Non-members/Industry: \$90**



08 9661 1907



[www.liebegroup.org.au](http://www.liebegroup.org.au)



**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER  
HELEN FITZROY**



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# FARM FAMILY COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

## Covering:

- Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- What does MBTI mean for my business communication
- The purpose of family farms and the challenges they face
- How do we make 'good' decisions
- Simple vs complex decisions
- How does better communication skills improve farm decision making
- Other communication tools and processes



## With: JEANETTE LONG

Jeanette is a facilitator, trainer and a coach who is passionate about the success of inter-generational farming businesses. Not only does she work with farming families to develop strategic and transition plans, she also lives and breathes it. She is involved in a fourth generation business, farming with her husband, son, daughter in law and young grandson in South Australia.



24<sup>th</sup> July 2025 - 8.30am - 4pm

25<sup>th</sup> July 2025 - 8.30am - 12.30pm



\$150 (Liebe members)



Liebe Group Office,  
Dalwallinu



08 9661 1907



[admin@liebegrup.org.au](mailto:admin@liebegrup.org.au)

REGISTRATIONS OPEN  
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RiskWi\$e

– the National Risk Management Initiative



# THREE YEARS OF STRIP AND DISC SYSTEM TRIALS

by Chris O'Callaghan, Executive Officer, Liebe Group



A GRDC Investment looking into stubble management has been running for the last four years.

The project, led by the Liebe Group, has been a collaborative effort between the Facey Group, Corrigin Farm Improvement Group and Stirlings to Coast Farmers. Contributions to the project have also been made by Farmanco Management Consultants, Charles Sturt University and DPIRD.

Trials were set up in Maya, Latham, Corrigin, Wickopin and Kendenup as paddock-scale strip trials implemented by the host farmer, with intensive measurements taken by grower group staff.

A key component of the trial work was testing the 'strip and disc' farming system against conventional draper and tyne or disc seeding operations.

Strip and disc farming has been utilised in the eastern states as a way to conserve ground cover and soil moisture in both irrigated and dryland systems, effectively creating a high residue zero-tillage system.

The system utilises a 'stripper' front that uses fingers to 'strip' grain out of the head of cereal crops at harvest, as opposed to conventional header fronts that cut and thresh straw and head material to extract the grain.

The benefits of this machine is that the headers are able to operate at a faster speed and with greater fuel efficiency, with less material going through the header and with the majority of the stubble remaining standing in the paddock. In the trials in this project the stripper fronts were operating at around 8-9 km/ha compared to the draper fronts at 5-6 km/hr.

Eastern states research into the micro-climate created by standing stripper stubble indicates that wind speed in stripper stubbles is much lower and temperatures higher, leading to a warm, still and humid environment which can be beneficial for emerging crops, particularly legumes and canola.

However, the standing stubble can create seeding issues

particularly with tyne seeding systems, which effectively negates these benefits. This is where the disc seeders have their advantages, with discs able to more effectively handle tall stubble, particularly when combined with a precision tramline farming operations. Dry stubble also helps.

The disc seeding operation also helps to conserve moisture, contributing to a more ideal micro-climate for an emerging plant.

The Liebe Group have been investigating different aspects of the system over the last four years and a mix of results have been gained.

In 2024, low rainfall sites at Latham and Corrigin both showed a 400 kg/ha yield benefit to the strip and disc system, with the key mechanism behind this likely being increased soil moisture in both trials. This was supported by the site at Wickopin, where increases in soil moisture were recorded, but the yield benefit was less pronounced.

In the high rainfall zone at Kendenup, the story was similar, however with a heavy stubble mat created by the stripper front in high yielding cereals, the germination in the subsequent crop was reduced likely due to lack of sunlight and airflow at the soil surface. Despite this there was a yield response to the stripper front, particular in treatments where a speed tiller was deployed. Site summaries are provided below.



Photo 1. Stripper front in action

## TRIAL 1: MAYA – MCALPINE

**Grower Group:** The Liebe Group

**Rotation:** 2021: Wheat, 2022: Canola

**Treatments:** Draper/Tyne; Strip/Disc; Strip/Crunch/Tyne

### Key Findings

1. No significant yield difference in canola
2. Seeding issues with hair pinning & bulldozing
3. Watch harvest losses & spray efficacy.

This site was established during the harvest of 2021 in a cereal crop, with the site then sown to canola in 2022.

Seeding into the high stubble loads did cause issues during the seeding of 2022, which led to the McAlpines ultimately abandoning the strip and disc system at the end of the year.

Stubble crunching was deployed at this site as a treatment to try and break down the stubble to make it easier to sow into, with numerous blockages and ‘hair pinning’ causing issues in this season. The farmer commented on difficulties using a borrowed disc machine for this trial, and the amount of time required to get the set up correct to avoid seeding issues.

In terms of trial results, the canola in 2022 showed no yield difference between treatments. Other notable results included reduced spray efficacy in stripper stubbles when spraying in marginal conditions. Harvest losses using the stripper front in cereals had to be monitored closely with multiple adjustments made to fan speed, and sieves as well as finding an optimum ground speed was crucial to getting harvest losses under control.

## TRIAL 2: LATHAM – HIRSCH

**Grower Group:** The Liebe Group

**Rotation:** 2022: Wheat, 2023: Wheat; 2024: Wheat;

**Treatments:** Draper/Tyne; Strip/Disc; Draper/Disc

### Key Findings

1. 400kg yield benefit to strip & disc in 2024
2. 100kg yield penalty to strip & disc in 2023
3. Increase in subsoil moisture retention with S&D

This site was established during the harvest of 2022 and is an on-going trial. At this site, the farmer has used his own stripper front, disc and tyne seeders, with machines matched to tramlines and as a result has avoided any issues with stubble bulldozing and hairpinning.

The site was sown to wheat in 2023 and 2024. 2023 was one of the driest years on record for this farm, and



**Photo 2.** Farmers and Agronomists Latham

provided a test for the system. Throughout the season, the crop did visibly look greener and looked like it flowered for longer in the strip and disc system, however yielded around 100kg less than the draper cut stubble sown with discs. Possible explanation for this was that the shade from the tall stubble provided a more favourable environment for growth, however this meant the crop flowered later and consequently struggled with heat stress and terminal drought.

Temperature data loggers support this theory, with the stripper stubble temperatures being nearly 1 degree warmer for periods in the morning and evening; advantageous in winter, but not so much in late spring.

In 2024, the strip and disc treatment out-yielded the draper front treatments by around 400 kg/ha. This yield response appears to be driven by moisture, with higher moisture levels at depth being recorded in the stripper front plots.



**Photo 3.** Latham host farmers Dylan and Darcy (5) Hirsch with farm employee Denika Reynolds (L) and Liebe team members Chris O’Callaghan and Amber Martin.

## RESULTS

Treatment	2024 - Wheat			2023 - Wheat		
	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Screenings %	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Screenings %
T#1 - Draper + Tyne	3.90	10.23	1.75	0.37	12.80	3.05
T#2 - Stripper + Disc	4.29	9.98	2.52	0.30	13.77	3.32
T#3 - Draper + Disc	3.81	9.88	2.58	0.40	12.90	3.04

### TRIAL 3: CORRIGIN SITE – JACOBS

**Grower Group:** Corrigin Farm Improvement Group  
**Rotation:** 2022: Wheat, 2023: Canola; 2024: Wheat;  
**Treatments:** Draper/Tyne; Strip/Disc; Draper/Disc

#### Key Findings

1. 400kg yield benefit to S&D in 2024
2. No yield differences in 2023 canola
3. Soil moisture elevated in disc treatments in 2024

This site was established in 2021 however was impacted by the Corrigin Bushfires in early 2022 and had to be re-established in December 2022.

No differences were observed in the 2023 canola crop. In the 2024 wheat crop, tyne seeding had better establishment than disc seeding however the strip and disc system ultimately yielded 400kg more than the draper and disc system. What was driving this response wasn't clear within the data collected at this site, with both disc seeding treatments showing elevated moisture readings compared to the tyne treatment. It should be noted however that moisture readings weren't taken deeper than 30cm at this site, compared to the Latham site, which showed higher moisture in the strip and disc treatments between 30-50cm.



Photo 4. Stubble Height Trial Corrigin 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

#### RESULTS

Treatment	2024 - Wheat		
	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Screenings %
T#1 - Draper + Tyne	3.77	11.07	4.03
T#2 - Stripper + Disc	4.20	10.12	3.43
T#3 - Draper + Disc	3.86	10.30	3.99

### TRIAL 4: WICKEPIN SITE - BIRD

**Grower Group:** The Facey Group  
**Rotation:** 2021: Wheat, 2022: Barley; 2023: Canola; 2024 Wheat  
**Treatments:** Draper/Tyne (straw baled); Strip/Disc; Draper/Tyne

#### Key Findings

1. Strip & disc system retained more moisture
2. Significant ryegrass numbers in S&D plots in 2022
3. Trend to to higher yields in S&D plots in 2024

The Wickepin site was sown to a wheat, barley, canola, wheat rotation with mixed results between treatments. In 2022 the strip and disc treatments yielded poorly, likely due to differences in strategies with pre-emergent herbicides between the treatments. The approach here was to use pre-emergents IBS in the tyne treatments and PSPE in the disc treatments, however weed counts completed throughout the year indicated significantly higher ryegrass numbers in the disc treatment plots. 2023 canola saw no yield differences between treatments and 2024 showed a slight trend toward increased yield with the strip and disc system. Moisture readings throughout 2024 consistently showed higher moisture levels in the strip & disc treatment.

#### RESULTS

Treatment	2024 - Wheat			2022 - Barley		
	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Screenings %	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Screenings %
T#1 - Draper + Tyne (Chaff Windrow/Bale)	3.89	8.77	1.97	3.94	8.83	4.11
T#2 - Stripper + Disc	4.06	8.87	1.60	3.18	8.88	5.33
T#3 - Draper + Tyne (Chaff Spread)	3.88	8.37	1.23	4.11	8.90	3.88



Photo 5. (L) Stripper stubble Wickepin 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023



Photo 6. (R) Kendenup mulching 2023

### TRIAL REPORTS



2022 - Maya



2023 - Latham



2024 - Latham



2024 - Wickepin

### FURTHER READING



Weedsmart



GRDC



Charles Sturt Uni

## TRIAL 5: KENDENUP SITE - SLADE

**Grower Group:** Stirlings to Coast Farmers

**Rotation:** 2021: Barley, 2022: Canola

**Treatments:** Draper/Tyne; Strip/Disc;  
Draper (cut high)/Disc; Strip/Till/Disc

### Key Findings

1. Draper & tyne showed yield penalty compared to disc
2. Speed till treatment yielded highest
3. Poor canola germination in strip & disc treatments

The Kendenup high-rainfall site had one full year of data from 2022 from a canola crop sown after the stubble treatments were implemented. In this year there was a response to the disc seeding treatments over the tyne treatment. The speed tillage provided an additional benefit, possibly due to partial amelioration of the site's hydrophobic soils. This is supported by the data so far as there was increased soil moisture readings in the top 10cm compared to other treatments however specific water penetration tests weren't conducted. Poor establishment was observed in the tall stubble treatments, possibly due to a mulching and shading effect on the germinating plants although this did not ultimately effect yield. In 2023 this site was impacted by fire and the trial was abandoned.

## RESULTS

Treatment	2022 - Canola		
	Yield (t/ha)	Protein %	Oil %
T#1 - Draper + Tyne	2.70	17.86	47.76
T#2 - Stripper + Disc	3.14	18.06	47.67
T#3 - Stripper + Speed Till + Disc	3.42	18.03	47.36
T#4 - Draper (cut high) + Disc	2.99	17.30	47.90



**Photo 7.** Stripped stubble standing v speed tilled Kendenup

## SUMMARY

This project has made a start on evaluating the system but there is still more to learn and practical issues to solve before there is going to be an increase in adoption of the system.

There is a lot to consider when assessing the system, and after some enthusiasm for strip and disc farming in WA in the early 2020's, interest has waned and a level of disadoption has occurred amongst the small cohort of early adopters.

From a research point of view, understanding the soil moisture dynamics further will provide additional insights into where the system would be best utilised, with this project suggesting medium to low rainfall zones may be a good fit, particularly in a drying climate. Although the extremely dry Latham site in 2023 may suggest otherwise.

From a practical point of view, seeding into the tall stubble requires precision and machines need to be well set up. Stripper fronts can also only be used in taller cereal crops, requiring farmers to still have a second front for canola and legume crops and any short or lodged cereals. Furthermore the high cost of the stripper and disc machines require a commitment to the system. The efficiencies are there however, and there is clear operational advantages to covering paddocks at higher speeds. Issues such as hairpinning, increased harvest losses, weed control and reduced spray efficiency can be problematic with this system, however these are also issues that are able to be solved.

Currently the strip and disc system shows promise and could provide the 'next step' in conservation farming, however the adoption story still has a while to play out and ongoing R,D & E focus will be important to make it work. The five trials established through this project have provided some insights, but more years of data are required, where the benefits are given time to stack up over the course of 2 or 3 rotations.

Some data in this project and the economics of the system is still being analysed and will be released when available.

Thank you to all the host farmers, grower group staff and research collaborators for the significant efforts in collecting data and extending information from this project.

## EARLY SOWN CANOLA TRIALS 2025

by Georgia Keeffe, Graduate R&D Officer, Liebe Group

Achieving reliable canola establishment and improved yields remains a key issue for growers in the Liebe Group region. One of the major challenges for farmers is making timely and informed decisions in autumn regarding when and how to sow canola – often under suboptimal or uncertain conditions. Over the past three years, research by the Liebe Group, has consistently demonstrated that canola germinating in early April tends to produce higher yields, even when establishment rates are lower. This highlights the potential benefits of earlier sowing, but questions remain about the viability and risk-reward balance of sowing even earlier – particularly in mid-March. A major point of concern for growers is whether establishment at this time can be improved enough to justify the early sowing window.

In March this year, the Liebe Group's R&D Committee initiated a field trial in response to a 50mm rainfall event at Pithara to explore this issue further. A small plot trial, accompanied by a farmer scale demonstration, will help improve understanding of the impact of March sowing through testing soil moisture, temperatures, seed bed compaction, and plant establishment and mortality, which will help assess the viability of pushing canola sowing windows earlier.



**Photo 1.** Brad McIlroy seeding the farmer-scale demonstration

Previous trials conducted by the Liebe Group have demonstrated that earlier time of sowing consistently outperforms May sowing treatments and that high plant densities achieved with later sowing does not necessarily translate to higher yields. This is supported



**Photo 2.** Farmer-scale demonstration 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2025

by recent work completed by CSIRO, which concluded that establishment timing is more crucial for yield than plant density, with early sowing often leading to better outcomes.

Previous research conducted by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has also led to similar conclusions, with a number of trials showing that canola does yield well at low densities as it can develop more branches and thus significantly more pods, given the right plant conditions. This work did suggest that hybrid varieties can still achieve 90% of potential yield at 15 plants/m<sup>2</sup> and 80% at 7 plants/m<sup>2</sup>. This was slightly less for open pollinated crops where 80% potential yield could be achieved at 15 plants/m<sup>2</sup> and 70% at 10 plants/m<sup>2</sup>.

The next question is then to determine how to ensure that adequate germination can be achieved when a very early sowing event occurs, with depth of sowing and press wheel pressure possibly providing some of the answers. Other strategies include separation of liquid N from the seed, using soil wetters to attract moisture to the furrow, changing to more vigorous varieties or using larger seed if possible.

CSIRO's work in the eastern states has shown in sandy soils a 66% reduction in establishment when sowing down to 7.5cm in optimum conditions. These reductions increase on heavier soil types. Despite this, some seeds still germinate from these depths and provide an opportunity to explore strategies that can capitalise on this.

The Pithara farmer-scale trial was sown at three different press wheel pressures, aiming to achieve 3 different depths of 10, 30 and 50mm. The small plot trial focused on two sowing depths: 1.5-2cm and 4.5-5cm.

The farmer-scale trial was sown with Pioneer's 44Y27 variety, with the small plot trial using Emu, Hunter and PY525G varieties. The farmer demonstration and small plot were both sown on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 5 days after the rainfall event. Time of sowing two, for the plot trial, was completed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April into dry conditions.

Conditions since sowing have been less than ideal with the day of sowing being 32-degrees, followed by 11 days of temperatures ranging from 29-40 degrees, and 2.5 and 3.4mm on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March and 5<sup>th</sup> of April, respectively. With inconsistent emergence, the conditions are proving to test the plants and show interesting initial plant counts in the plots. The small plot trial saw sowing into moisture resulting in low establishment, on average, 8 plants/m<sup>2</sup> across all treatments. Over the following four weeks, plant density declined by 50% to 4 plants/m<sup>2</sup>, indicating some mortality potentially due to heat stress. Numbers have since recovered after a mid-April rain with monitoring continuing on a weekly basis (Graph 1).



**Photo 3.** Living Farm implementing the plot trial

**Photo 4.** Liebe staff members Georgia Keeffe and Daenia Dundon taking soil moisture measurements

Emergence in the farmer-scale trial was initially limited; however, it appears to be progressing, with many plants now having established and showing good leaf development. The mid-April rainfall event has helped, with plant counts showing the shallow depth with the highest value of 4.4 plants/m<sup>2</sup>.

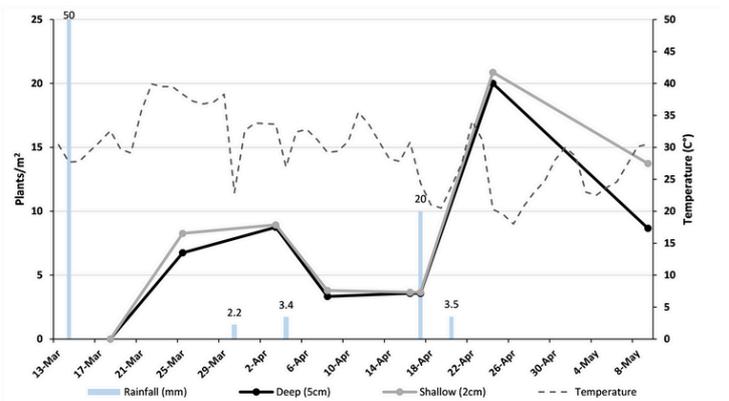
Other trials at the Liebe Group main trial site in 2025 will explore some of the other strategies such as liquid N placement and sowing depth as well as the use of wetters.

DPIRD have installed a Diamond Back Moth Trap in the middle of the small plot trial, to help monitor populations throughout the season. Early detection through regular monitoring will support timely

management decisions, particularly during the critical flowering and seed development stages in August and September. Data collected from the trap will also be shared via PestFacts WA to inform and alert surrounding growers.

To turn a trial around in two days is phenomenal and would not be possible without the drive from Liebe R&D Committee, our host farmer Brad McIlroy, investment from GRDC, Pioneer Seeds for supplying the seed and trial contractor Living Farm who were able to pivot quickly to get their seeding equipment ready and to Pithara on very short notice. Thank you to all involved.

Hopefully there is more rain to come soon to see the trials through!



**Graph 1:** Temperature, rainfall and plant counts at Liebe Groups 'Very Early Sown Canola' Trial in Pithara. The trial consists of two seeding depths—shallow (2cm) and deep (5cm), both sown into moisture. Despite some early plant count drops likely due to heat stress, numbers bounced back following a 20mm thunderstorm on 17 April (although some may have been mistaken for radish seedlings). Interestingly, no major differences in establishment between depth treatments thus far.

**Scan QR codes below for further reading.**

- When to reseed canola - DPIRD** (QR code)
- Canola yield penalty with delayed sowing - DPIRD** (QR code)
- Reducing risks to canola establishment - CSIRO/GRDC** (QR code)

# PLANNING, REFLECTING AND ADAPTING: INSIGHTS INTO GROWER BEHAVIOURS AROUND NITROGEN DECISIONS

By Aeneva Poulish, RiskWi\$e Project Officer, Liebe Group

Nitrogen management is a complex yet crucial decision for grain growers, requiring a balance between careful planning and adapting to changing seasonal conditions, fluctuating input prices, and crop responses.

In August 2024, four Liebe Group growers shared insights into their nitrogen planning processes, discussing their approach to application rates, timing, and risk management. In March 2025, the growers reflected on how those decisions played out in reality. Below is a summary of these discussions, with the aim to share practical experiences and key learnings to support informed decision-making across the Liebe region. The individuals who took part in this case study have been unidentified.

This activity was conducted as part of the GRDC RiskWi\$e project, a National Risk Management Initiative that seeks to understand and improve the risk-reward outcomes for Australian grain growers by supporting on-farm decision-making.

## Business #1 (Pithara)

### Part One: "The Plan"

In 2024, the grower's nitrogen management strategy was planned in collaboration with an agronomist, beginning with tissue testing in September and an assessment of expected yields based on plant counts and other factors. This informed the nitrogen rates for seeding and post-emergent applications. In February, harvest data was used to review and refine those decisions, including product choices like Flexi N, urea, and compound mixes. It was a collaborative, data-driven process shaped by seasonal expectations.

A delay in sourcing urea influenced their top-dressing approach. *"We probably did 33% urea, where we would usually do it all,"* the grower said, noting that Flexi N filled the gap. Although late, they hoped the fast uptake of Flexi N would boost yields. *"We still spent the same amount per hectare because the way we use variable rate mapping is not to spend less money, it's to spend the same money better."*

Weather also influenced their behaviour around nitrogen decisions. *"The period where we have the least success in predicting the weather, is the period where we need it the most."* Despite this, historical knowledge and gut feel were vital. *"In farming, if you're always*

*worried about your floor, it's going to make your life tough,"* the grower said. *"You've got to give it a chance, otherwise you can't expect anything."* Their approach combined experience, instinct, and data to navigate an unpredictable season.

### Part Two: "The Outcome"

Harvest brought a mix of challenges and takeaways for this business. *"It started the way we wanted it to start, and it did what we wanted it to do for the most part."* While the lupins, canola and barley were reasonable, the wheat results were less satisfying. *"The quality was down, the tonnes were down, it was pretty disappointing."* Rain during harvest made it hard to judge the full impact, though they felt they "probably got out of jail a little bit." High screenings and low hectolitre weights were key issues, but some paddocks performed better than expected. Protein levels hit their 10.5% target, seen as a sign that nitrogen was well balanced.

Reflecting on the season, the grower said, *"We put on a fairly standard compound mix, depending on soil type, and we dropped the K on the heavy ground."* When granular urea couldn't be secured, they adjusted with Flexi N and locally sourced urea. *"We couldn't get the bookings for granular urea. That was our fault and it's not normal practice."* Looking back, they noted, "In hindsight, if we'd known what the end of season looked like, we might have dialled it back, maybe shave 20% off in some spots."

Effectiveness was assessed by looking at yield, protein, and mineral balance. *"If we hit 10.5% protein based on what we applied in tonnes, we are probably maintaining."* Soil tests every five years help guide this. *"The science says that we put on the right amount to maintain our levels to get the crop that we did."*

Their nitrogen management approach combines planning and adaptability. While grounded in data, they remain flexible, trusting intuition when challenges arise. Efficiency, soil health, and responsiveness continue to guide their decisions.

**RiskWi\$e**

— the National Risk Management Initiative



## Business #2 (Miling)

### Part One: "The Plan"

This farm takes a straightforward approach to nitrogen management. *"We are fairly basic with how we manage our nitrogen."* Decisions are grounded in historical yield data, soil sampling, and seasonal weather patterns. Plans are made early in the season based on expected yields, then adjusted in response to summer rainfall and any carryover from the previous year. *"We prescribe it from there and fine-tune the top-up rate as needed."*

In 2024, they reduced urea due to retained nitrogen from the 2023 season. *"Because of how much we would have retained from last year, we reduced our urea application."* In collaboration with their agronomist, they use forecasts, sampling, and seasonal budgets to guide decisions. *"We mostly gauge it from our summer rainfall and calculate it based on what was exported from our nitrogen budget last year."*

When asked about the biggest challenges of making in-season nitrogen decisions, the grower responded, *"The weather! It is something you can't change so you just have to be smart and be able to move when you need to move."* This uncertainty, combined with the wait for tissue test results, highlights the complexities of nitrogen management. The grower also sees potential in emerging tools, like in-paddock testing technologies, to further improve the decision-making process.

### Part Two: "The Outcome"

The 2024 harvest was *"a real mixed bag of results."* Canola performed better than expected, but wheat yields were impacted by a lack of late-season rain. *"We missed out on a fair bit of the late-end rain,"* which led to screenings between 7 and 26%. Managing this variability was a challenge, prompting the use of a seed cleaner to meet grade. This required weighing the cost of cleaning against grain price differences, all while managing harvest logistics and staff shortages.

Nitrogen application was considered a success. *"We kind of nailed our nitrogen application."* Rates were matched to strong crop growth without overdoing it. *"We didn't overfeed it at the same time,"* which helped with efficiency. Looking back, they noted that applying slightly less nitrogen might have improved grain quality, but the amounts used supported crop performance and didn't require major adjustments.

Effectiveness of their nitrogen management strategies is reviewed through paddock planning meetings with their agronomist and their farm team, which often involve

informal reflection on past decisions. While agronomic advice is valued, personal judgment plays a key role. For example, when advised to increase nitrogen on canola, the grower chose not to, explaining, *"We trusted our own analysis and gut feel."* Seasonal forecasts are critical, and there's interest in tools like variable rate and tissue testing, though cost and timing can be barriers.

Overall, the nitrogen strategy balances caution with flexibility, drawing on farm-specific knowledge, expert input, and data. Decisions reflect a thoughtful, risk-aware approach shaped by both experience and evolving technologies.



## Business #3 (Wubin)

### Part One: "The Plan"

The nitrogen strategy within this business is kept *"as simple as we can."* A flat rate is usually applied across both canola and cereal crops early in the season. *"Everything usually gets a flat rate every year, even in the poorer years, because we put our urea on so early, and then if it's a good year, we will top it up. The canola probably changes more than the cereals."* The fertiliser mix includes compound and urea, applied either before or after seeding, depending on the crop. *"We never put it on based on rain."*

Planning starts early, with urea often ordered ahead of the season. *"I have already started to order some of our urea for next year"* the grower notes. The strategy is shaped through regular conversations with family and trusted contacts. Soil testing informs decisions but rarely changes the approach. *"We're still pretty comfortable with that rate."*

Though the strategy is straightforward, it remains flexible enough to respond to the season. *"In our bigger years we do try and maximise that."* In 2022, nitrogen rates were increased to take advantage of favourable conditions. Early signs of a good season prompt more investment. *"You need to have a bit of an indicator in March/April to go if there's a good soil moisture profile there that we can really push the limits."*

### Part Two: "The Outcome"

The 2024 harvest delivered strong results, helped by better-than-average rainfall. Nitrogen applications played a crucial role in supporting these outcomes and reaffirmed the strategy of maintaining a nitrogen bank. *"If it doesn't get used in that year, it builds a bit of a nitrogen bank."* The long-term impact of previous rotations was evident, with 2022 lupin stubbles continuing to show a benefit.

Looking to 2025, the nitrogen strategy won't change dramatically. Rotations have been adjusted, with more canola and fewer lupins planned, largely due to a logistical advantage. *"There's a new header front coming that will get through the canola much quicker."* Despite these adjustments, lupin germination continues to be a concern, and trials are being run to better understand and address the issue.

Evaluating nitrogen effectiveness is mainly done by looking at yield outcomes, especially with newer high-yielding crop varieties. Yield results, soil test data, and other variables are regularly reviewed alongside the agronomic advisor. *"We always want to have too much fertiliser on than not enough."* Looking ahead, there may be slight increases to base application rates, but the aim is not to overapply. Efficiency remains a key priority.

This approach to nitrogen management is simple and consistent, yet adaptable to seasonal opportunity. The emphasis remains on early application, supported by yield data and ongoing conversations to make timely adjustments.

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## **Business #4 (Goodlands)**

### **Part One: "The Plan"**

Nitrogen management is shaped by collaboration with an agronomist within this farming enterprise, using harvest data to adjust plans from season to season. While expert advice plays a role, decisions are ultimately grounded in financial realities. *"Our advisor tends to tell us to load it up on nitrogen as much as we can to get the best potential, but then we have to work that back to within our budget."*

Last year, expected carryover nitrogen from the 2023 season didn't perform as hoped. *"We thought we had a lot of carryover N, but it hasn't seemed to have shown up in the crops like we were expecting, so we have had to adjust and put more on to get those crops going."*

The aim is to keep protein levels above 10% while achieving solid yields. *"We try to maintain a protein level, and by doing that you achieve the yield too."* Seasonal timing is important, with a preference to finish top dressing by the end of July. Fertiliser pricing also influences their decisions. *"If it was \$1000/t, we probably wouldn't put as much on. But it definitely makes your decisions easier when it's a reasonable price."*

**If you're interested in sharing your experience, please contact Aeneva Poulish at [projects@liebegroup.org.au](mailto:projects@liebegroup.org.au)**

### **Part Two: "The Outcome"**

Yields were generally good despite some germination issues, with screenings a challenge in the short season. Nitrogen was mostly well-managed in 2024, though some red country paddocks underperformed. *"A few areas didn't perform as expected, possibly due to unexpected seasonal conditions."* Protein levels were a focus, but some crops came in lower than expected. A dry start and limited nitrogen access added to the challenge.

Looking to 2025, early nitrogen application is considered essential. Weather remains a key uncertainty, along with rising input costs and ryegrass pressure. *"We plan to improve the separation of nitrogen and canola seed, which could help avoid past issues with canola germination."* The focus will be on refining applications and managing input costs for long-term gains.

Overall, nitrogen decisions are shaped by experience, seasonal adaptability, and risk awareness. The strategy continues to evolve through practical changes and agronomic advice, with a strong commitment to early application and continuous improvement.

### **SUMMARY**

Across the four farms, nitrogen decisions in 2024 were shaped by a mix of planning, adaptability, and risk management. While each grower had a unique approach, from data-driven precision to consistent flat rates, common themes emerged. Agronomic advice played a valuable role, but growers consistently balanced it with local knowledge, seasonal observations, and gut feel. Early planning and flexibility were key, especially in unpredictable rainfall and price fluctuations. Despite varied seasonal outcomes, most growers felt their nitrogen strategies aligned well with crop needs, with reflections focused on improving efficiency, managing grain quality, and responding to in-season challenges. Together, these experiences highlight the value of combining local experience with evolving tools and information to make more confident nitrogen decisions under uncertainty.

More grower interviews will be carried out later this year as part of the Liebe Group's ongoing involvement in the RiskWiše project. These conversations aim to build a clearer picture of how nitrogen decisions play out across different seasons and farming systems.

# MORE NITROGEN FOR THE SAME APPLIED RATE WITH FLEXI-N 34

by Peter Rees, Senior Agronomist, CSBP

In 2025, growers in Western Australia’s northern agricultural region will have access to CSBP’s new premium liquid fertiliser, Flexi-N 34. This high-performance product contains 34% nitrogen (w/w%) – an increase on CSBP’s original Flexi-N which contains 32% nitrogen (w/w%).

The arrival of Flexi-N 34 to the market will provide growers across the north with logistical advantages.

Flexi-N 34 will be manufactured and distributed from CSBP’s Geraldton Distribution Centre, providing growers across the north with a local and reliable supply of higher analysis liquid fertiliser during the 2025 growing season.

## Achieve logistical gains with Flexi-N 34

CSBP’s significant local manufacturing capacity allows for innovation and the development of specific products tailored for WA regions. Our latest innovation offers growers in the northern Wheatbelt the ability to deliver more N when required while maintaining their application rates, or to apply nitrogen as Flexi-N at lower rates, achieving significant logistical gains.

Flexi-N 34 has 2% higher N than Flexi-N on a weight-by-weight basis and a slightly higher specific gravity, providing an additional 3.3kg N per 100L (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Typical analysis of Flexi-N and new Flexi-N 34 on a weight and volume basis.

Product	N% (w/w)	N% (w/v)
Flexi-N	32	42.2
Flexi-N 34	34	45.6

## Precise, flexible and efficient

The warmer temperatures in the north of the state allow this higher concentration liquid fertiliser to be reliably transported, stored and applied. This has been confirmed through thorough testing, giving CSBP the confidence to offer Flexi-N 34 to farmers for dispatch from the Geraldton Distribution Centre in the 2025 season.

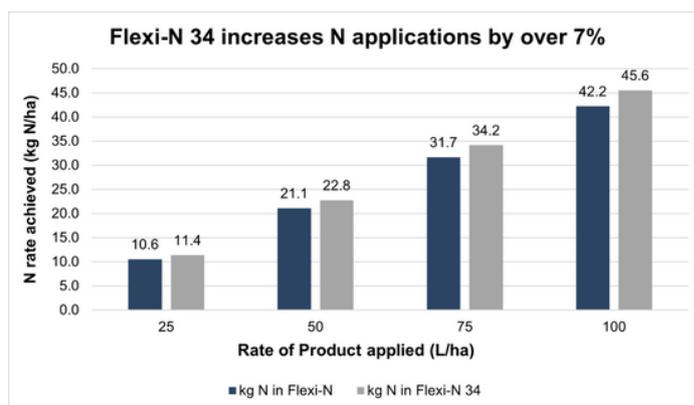
Flexi-N 34 can be banded at seeding, sprayed or streamed through a boomspray. Flexi-N 34 will continue

to provide growers all the advantages of Flexi-N, including:

- Easy, uniform application.
- Compatibility with agchem products.\*
- Less potential volatilisation losses.
- Greater coverage compared to granular nitrogen sources.

## Logistical advantages

Flexi-N 34 was developed in response to grower feedback on the challenges of timing and logistics with nitrogen applications. With more nitrogen per litre, Flexi-N 34 can reduce transport and storage demands. For instance, applying 75 L/ha of Flexi-N 34 will deliver 34.2kg N/ha to the crop, an increase on the 31.7kg provided by the original Flexi-N.



**Graph 1.** Flexi-N 34 N rates achieved (kg N/ha) in comparison to Flexi-N.

## Proven performance

Since introducing Flexi-N to WA more than 25 years ago, CSBP has continually trialed and assessed the effectiveness of different nitrogen sources and application methods on cropping programs. Flexi-N 34 builds on the proven performance of regular Flexi-N. CSBP trials have shown that banding Flexi-N at seeding to supply starter N to the crop can improve early vigour and increase yields when compared to urea applications after seeding. Across more than 60 replicated field trials conducted over two decades, banding Flexi-N at seeding produced an average 27% increase in wheat yields.

## Secure your Flexi-N 34 today

Contact your local CSBP account manager to arrange.

# POST EMERGENT BROADLEAF WEED CONTROL



By Clare Antonio, Agronomist, Elders Dalwallinu

Dalwallinu

I think it's fair to say most of our region is still receiving a dose of Jaguar (Bromoxmil + Diflufenican) +/- LVE 570 overall, very effectively. However, as we are all aware the best way to break herbicides is to continue to expose weeds to the same chemistry. While there are still combinations of these in most recommendations, there are several relatively new chemicals that have entered the market to spike these brews for more targeted weed control with a different mode of action.

**Table 1.** Post-emergent herbicide options with standalone broadleaf activity

Product Name	Active	Mode of Action	Rate	Cost (\$/ha)	Comments
Jaguar	250g/L Bromoxynil, 25g/L Diflufenican	Group 12, 6 Group F, C	750 mL - 1.0 L/ha	\$7.10 - \$9.50/ha	Z12 - Z29
Triforto	250g/L MCPA, 250g/L Bromoxynil, 25g/L Diflufenican	Group 12,4,6 Group F, I, C	750 mL - 1.0 L/ha		Z13-Z28
Quadrant	10 g/L Picolinafen 20 g/L Diflufenican 240 g/L Bromoxynil, 250 g/L MCPA	Group 12, 6, 4 Group F, C, I	600ml - 1.2L/ha	\$10.35 - \$20.70/ha	Z13 - Z28
Flight	35g/L Picolinafen + 210 g/L Bromoxynil present as the n-octanoyl ester + 350g/L MCPA present as the ethyl-hexyl ester	Group 4, 6,12 Group I, C, F	540 - 720ml/ha	\$14.00 - \$19.45/ha	Z13 - Z28
Velocity	210 g/L bromoxynil as its mixed heptanoic acid and Octanoic acid esters 37.5 g/l pyrasulfotole	Group 6, 27 Group C, H	500 mL - 1.0 L	\$16.90 - \$33.80/ha	Z12 - Z18

\*make sure to add required adjuvant

\*\*refer to product label for full list of compatible products and rates.

**Table 2.** Post-emergent herbicides requiring tank-mix partners

Product Name	Active	Mode of Action	Rate	Cost (\$/ha)	Comments
Galaxy	75g/L Pyrasulfotole	Group 27 Group H	250 - 670 mL/ha	\$8.40 - \$22.50/ha	Z12 - Z31 Must have mix partner
Priority	Florasulam 200 g/L	Group 2 Group B	25ml	\$3/ha	Z13-Z39 Must have mix partner
Infinity Ultra	250 g/L Pyrasulfotole 125 g/L Diflufenican	Group 27,12 Group H, F	110 - 140ml/ha	\$11.75 - \$15.00/ha	Z12-Z30 Must have mix partner
Frequency	60 g/L Topramezone 60 g/L Cloquintocet-Mexyl	Group 27 Group H	200ml/ha	\$13.80/ha	Z13-Z32 Must have mix partner
Bromoxynil	200g/L Bromoxynil	Group 6, Group C,	1.4 - 2L/ha	\$12.30 - \$17.60/ha	Z13-Z30 Ideally mixed with another MOA and can be at lower rates

Also a reminder if using pre-emergent chemistry such as Callisto (group 27/H), your next application should not contain that mode of action. The more we are mixing and rotating our chemistry, the more we will continue to get out of them!

## Glyphosate tolerant canola applications

As many growers are now including clethodim in their first glyphosate application, here is a timely reminder for adjuvants. Trial work shows that seed oils such as Hasten® (1%) give better penetration and efficacy of selective grass herbicides on annual ryegrass. This also means they may be harsher on the canola if you are pushing clethodim timing a bit late. Clethodim can only be used up until 6 leaf stage. High surfactant mineral oils such as Uptake® or Enhance® (0.5%) are a good alternative if you want a softer option but may slightly reduce ryegrass control.

Addition of 1% Sulphate of Ammonia will help with the drier conditions and ensure the clethodim control is not compromised by any water hardness issues.

**For more information please contact Elders Dalwallinu on 08 9661 2000 or Clare on 0447 500 525.**

## SEEDING SUCCESS REQUIRES PRECISION

By Brendan Barratt, AFGRI Equipment Dalwallinu Branch Manager

Across Western Australia’s broadacre farming regions, growers are constantly looking for smarter, more efficient ways to manage inputs during seeding. Input costs, environmental conditions and machinery wear all add pressure to make every pass count. Fortunately, the rise of precision seeding technologies, particularly in air carts, is helping deliver stronger control over what goes into the ground and where. While these tools vary across systems, the end goal is the same: less waste, better crop establishment and more informed decisions.

### Precision as a standard

One of the most transformative features in modern air seeding equipment is individual primary distribution control. This technology allows for row-by-row management of seed and fertiliser application, preventing overlap and enabling more accurate use of product in curved or irregularly shaped paddocks. Traditionally, growers have battled with double-application at headlands and corners, leading to wasted inputs and potential crop damage. With individual control, each set of outlets can turn on or off independently based on the machine’s position, ensuring that product is only delivered where needed.

This precise control also translates to a more uniform crop emergence. It helps improve grain quality by ensuring the right fertiliser rate is applied—too much can lead to grain pinching and high screenings, while too little can limit yield potential. For many growers, the shift toward this level of precision has also contributed to measurable cost savings especially in seasons where every dollar counts.

### Consistency without the guesswork

Traditional manual calibration methods can be time-consuming and prone to error, especially when seeding large areas under changing conditions. That’s where active in-field calibration comes into play. With the latest systems, such as tank scales with ACTIVECAL™, calibration is now automated and dynamic. These features continuously monitor application rates,



**Photo 1:** AFGRI Equipment Branch Manager, Brendan Barratt in the paddock with a tractor, air cart and air drill set up

adjusting on the go to ensure the intended product rate matches what is being delivered to the soil.

*“I believe the benefit for growers is twofold: improved accuracy and less downtime. Instead of stopping frequently to recalibrate for changes in ground speed, product density or machine load, the system handles it in real time. Not only does this support more consistent application rates across the paddock but it also gives growers greater confidence that what is on the screen matches what is going into the soil,”* said Brendan Barratt from AFGRI Equipment.



**Photo 2:** John Deere Air Commodity Carts Tow-Between C500L Controls Display System



### Optimising product flow and fan speed

Another area where new seeding systems are reducing manual workload is in the automation of blower systems. Maintaining the right fan speed is crucial to ensuring even product flow from the tank to the toolbar particularly in varied terrain or when operating at high speeds. Blower automation manages this automatically, adjusting to changing conditions like rate changes as they happen.

*“I suggest looking for an air cart that offers SectionCommand™ and Blower Automation so you have confidence knowing product is being accurately distributed. Manual adjustments not only slow operations but can also lead to inconsistent delivery or even blockages,”* advised Brendan Barratt from AFGRI Equipment.

With blower automation, growers gain the peace of mind that their seed and fertiliser are moving as intended—safeguarding crop establishment and improving operational efficiency.



**Photo 3:** Bourgault 9950 Series I Aircart seeding in WA

### Accurate application on every turn with curve compensation

For many growers, one of the most persistent challenges during seeding is the uneven distribution of product during turning. When travelling around curves, trees or headlands, the outside rows of the bar naturally travel further and faster than those on the inside. Without compensation, this results in significant under-application on the outer ranks and over-application on the inner ones.

Curve compensation addresses this directly by adjusting the rate delivered to each section based on its position during a turn. This ensures uniform seeding and fertiliser application across the full working width of the implement, regardless of direction or shape of the paddock. It is particularly useful in undulating landscapes or for growers using wide machines where the difference in row length during a turn can be substantial.

*“Choosing features with Curve Compensation—such as AutoTrac™ and SectionCommand™—ultimately reduces crop variability, ensures inputs are not wasted and promotes even germination across the entire seeding width,”* explained Brendan Barratt from AFGRI Equipment.

### Soil mapping and prescription application

With more growers embracing data-driven practices, the integration of soil-type mapping and prescription maps into seeding has become more common. Using previous yield data, EM38 survey, Gamma Radiometric or soil sampling, these maps can guide seeding equipment to adjust rates across zones—responding to variability that can be invisible to the naked eye.

Modern seeding equipment can now take these prescriptions and apply variable rates across individual sections of the bar. This allows growers to tailor their inputs according to soil potential, ensuring high-performing zones receive appropriate fertiliser while lower-performing areas are not over-treated.

The advantage of this approach lies in both efficiency and sustainability. Applying the right rate in the right zone not only optimises yield potential but also supports responsible input use. Fertiliser and seed are becoming increasingly expensive, and with tighter environmental regulations on the horizon, applying only what’s needed makes both agronomic and economic sense.

*While there’s no one-size-fits-all approach, these technologies open new opportunities for growers of all sizes to farm with greater precision, efficiency, and confidence.*



**Photo 4:** Top view of the John Deere 1910 Air Commodity Cart with 3-tank capacity

### **Less waste, more value: The bottom-line benefits**

The combination of individual control, curve compensation, active calibration, blower automation and variable rate capabilities is helping growers cut costs, reduce wastage and operate more efficiently during seeding. Together, these features support:

- **Reduced input costs** through less overlap and more precise application
- **Improved germination** from even product distribution
- **Less downtime** thanks to automated calibration and blower automation
- **Data-informed decisions** with prescription maps and real-time rate adjustments
- **Better environmental stewardship** through targeted input use

In seasons with tight margins, these benefits can provide a meaningful boost to a farm's bottom line. And beyond the economic case, the consistency these systems offer helps set the crop up for success from the very beginning of the season.

### **Future-proofing the farm business**

For growers who are yet to make the leap into precision seeding, the good news is that many of these features are now standard in new systems—or available as retrofits. The learning curve may feel steep at first, but the long-term payoff in time, cost, and efficiency is substantial.

Importantly, it's not just the big operations that benefit. Smaller, family-run farms can also see major returns by embracing these features. For instance, starting with prescription mapping and variable rate control can deliver noticeable gains on mixed soil types without overhauling an entire seeding system.

When planning future investments in machinery and equipment upgrades, it's worth considering not just horsepower and tank capacity—but the level of precision that can be achieved in a pass, so you get complete control over your seeding program.

*The evolution of seeding equipment is delivering powerful tools into the hands of growers—tools that are smarter, faster and more responsive to the real-time needs of the paddock. By leveraging features like curve compensation and automated calibration, growers are better equipped to manage input costs and maximise yield potential.*





# THE BENEFITS OF BUILDING UP OFF-FARM INVESTMENTS

By Bruce Cooper – Adviser, Financial Services and Reagan Manns – Director, Business Advisory, RSM Australia

## Diversifying income streams and securing future wealth

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Australia's economy, with countless families dedicating their lives to the land. However, relying solely on farming as a source of income can be risky due to the inherent uncertainties of weather, market prices, and other external factors. This is where off-farm investments come in as a strategic approach to ensuring financial stability and creating wealth beyond the boundaries of the farm. Diversifying income streams with off-farm investments can be highly effective in securing retirement and aiding succession planning for future generations.

## Diversifying income streams

Relying solely on farm income can expose families to significant financial risks. By building up off-farm investments, families can create alternative sources of income that are not directly affected by the volatility of the agricultural sector. This diversification can provide a safety net during tough times, such as droughts, floods, or market downturns, ensuring a steady flow of income even when farm revenues are low.

Off-farm investments can include a variety of financial assets such as stocks, bonds, real estate, and managed funds. These investments offer higher returns than cash over the long term and can help to subsidise farming income during the volatile years, providing a more stable financial foundation. For example, investing in the Australian stock market can yield significant dividends and capital growth over a period of time, while property investments can generate rental income and long-term capital appreciation.

## Creating off-farm wealth

Building up off-farm wealth is crucial for financial security and independence. This wealth can serve multiple purposes, including funding children's education, purchasing additional farm machinery, or

simply providing a comfortable retirement. Additionally, off-farm investments can enhance overall financial resilience by spreading risk across different asset classes and economic sectors.

A diversified investment portfolio can also offer tax benefits. Certain investment structures, like superannuation funds, allow for tax concessions that can enhance wealth accumulation. By strategically investing in these financial assets, farm families can optimise their tax liabilities, thus preserving more wealth for future use.



## Succession planning and retirement

One of the primary benefits of off-farm investments is their role in succession planning and retirement. Succession planning can be complex, especially when farm assets need to be divided among multiple heirs, and some heirs do not want to farm. Off-farm investments provide a liquid asset base that can be easily distributed without disrupting the operation of the farm. This can ensure that the farm remains intact and operational while providing equitable financial support to all family members.

For retirement, off-farm investments offer the flexibility and security that farming alone may not guarantee. With a well-planned investment strategy, retiring farmers can enjoy a steady income stream, ensuring their financial independence and peace of mind. Superannuation is a particularly effective vehicle for retirement savings, offering both growth potential and tax advantages.



## Getting started with off-farm investments

Embarking on the journey of off-farm investments might seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. The first step is to assess your financial and lifestyle goals and to consider what the future looks like. Consulting with a financial adviser can provide valuable insights and personalised strategies tailored to your specific needs. They can help you identify suitable investment opportunities and create a diversified portfolio in the most tax-efficient structure.

In Australia, there are numerous financial assets available for investment. These include:

- **Stocks and shares:** Investing in shares can provide greater long-term returns compared to cash and can outpace inflation over time. This can help you build off-farm assets and grow your asset base more quickly than inflation would allow. By investing in both Australian and international shares, you gain exposure to a variety of companies, sectors, and geographical areas, ensuring that your investments are well diversified.
- **Real estate:** Property investments in both residential and commercial sectors can provide rental income and capital growth.
- **Managed funds:** These funds pool money from multiple investors to invest in a diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, and other assets.
- **Superannuation:** Contributing to superannuation is a tax-effective way to save for retirement, with various investment options within super funds

Building up off-farm investments is a prudent strategy for diversifying income streams, creating wealth, and ensuring financial security for succession planning and retirement. By leveraging the diverse range of financial



Photo credit: Laura Bradford

assets available in Australia and seeking professional guidance, farming families can achieve a more stable and prosperous financial future. Whether you're planning for retirement, preparing for succession, or simply looking to reduce risk, diversifying your income beyond the farm is a powerful move.

Speak with one of our trusted financial advisers today to begin building a stronger, more resilient financial foundation for you and the next generation.



Bruce Cooper – Adviser,  
Financial Services



Reagan Manns – Director,  
Business Advisory



# TARIFFS INFLUENCE GLOBAL PULSES MARKETS

By Vitor Pistoia, Grains & Oilseed Analyst, RaboResearch



Tariffs and retaliation are poised to be the major macroeconomic and geopolitical factors in 2025 and will impact global pulse markets.

RaboResearch grains and oilseeds analyst Vitor Pistoia said the year is starting with important announcements from the US, China and India. *“New price trends have been established and is causing global changes on how pulse profitability compares to other crops,”* he said. *“Some exporting countries, such as Russia may benefit from it, while others, like Canada, are expected to take a farm gate price hit. In the meantime, Australia’s pulses area is expected to rise for another year as pulses gross margins are supportive and the global demand seems too strong.”*

## North America

In early March, Mr Pistoia said the Chinese government imposed 100 per cent tariffs on various Canadian agricultural products, including peas. Mr Pistoia said in 2024, Canada exported 0.5 million tonnes of peas to China, its second-largest market for this product.

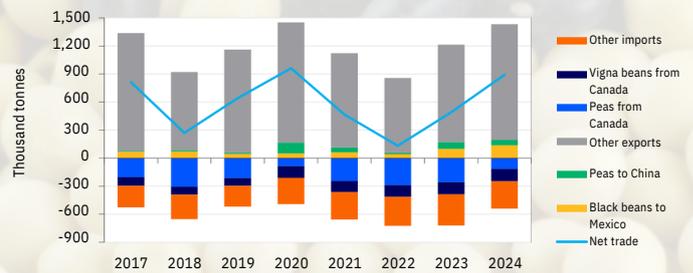
*“This is a stark contrast to 2023, when exports totalled 1.56 million tonnes,”* he said. *“Canadian peas have primarily been used in China as food ingredients, for snacks for example, and in the pet food industry,”* he said. *“Due to this Chinese government decision, Canadian pea exports may gain market share in other markets and displace other pulse exporters. Yellow peas usually sets the markets’ bottom line, and now it tends to have an even bigger price discount versus other products.”*

Mr Pistoia said for China’s supply, it is likely that Russia and Kazakhstan will step in and benefit from it.

*“While the US is not a major player in the pulse market compared to soybeans and corn,”* Mr Pistoia said, *“retaliatory tariffs could exert additional downward pressure on the global market.”*

The Rabobank analyst said the US relies on Canada to secure *“a fair share of its volume”*, which could reinforce a bearish outlook for peas and limit potential gains in the Indian market. *“Potential counter tariffs into US products are expected to have minimal impact on Australian pulse prices, as US pulse sales are fragmented across different types and markets.”*

Figure 2. USA pulses trade balance



Source: UN Comtrade, RaboResearch 2025

Other significant tariff decisions have emerged from India, Mr Pistoia said which are crucial for Australian pulse exports. *“India has introduced global 10 per cent tariffs on lentils and chickpeas, driven by an optimistic production outlook for these crops.”*

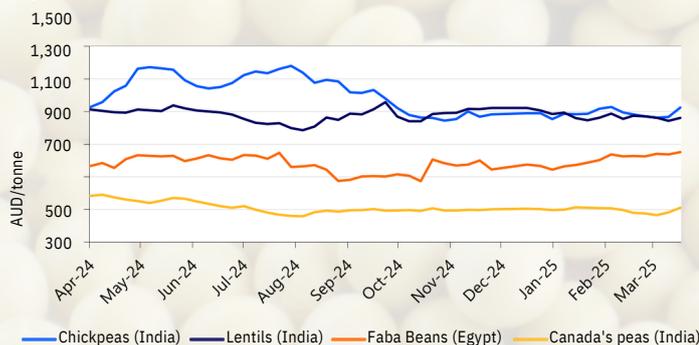
*“The Rabi (winter) harvest is currently underway in India, and this government decision is believed to aim at providing better support for the domestic crop. Duty-free imports of yellow peas are set to end by May 31, 2025, while pigeon peas and black beans will remain exempt until March 31, 2026,”* he said.

## India imports and stocks

Mr Pistoia said India is expected to see a significant increase in pulse imports for 2024/25 financial year.

*“Extrapolating the latest data, total pulse imports could reach 6.7 million tonnes, a substantial rise of 52 per cent year over year,”* he said. *“This surge is mainly due to production problems following the last years’ dry spells. Chickpea imports are projected to reach 1.31 million tonnes, lentils 1.29 million tonnes and peas 2.04 million tonnes. The remaining volume is composed of pigeon peas at 1.24 million tonnes and vigna mungo at 0.82 million tonnes.”*

Figure 1. Cost and freight prices of principal Australian pulses exports



Source: Global pulse confederation, RaboResearch 2025

Mr Pistoia said imports had picked up momentum compared to recent years. *“By 2020, total pulse imports were of 2.15 million tonnes. A growing population and increasing per capita GDP are the drivers behind this increase in demand”.*

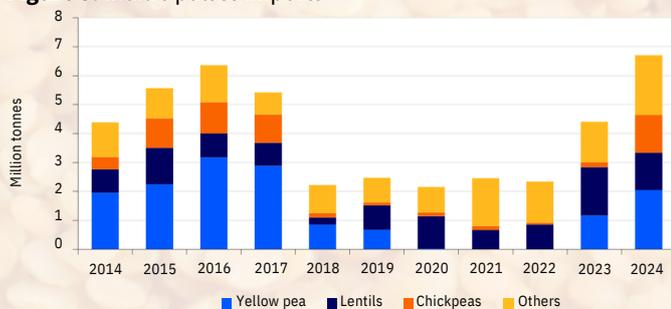
*“Yellow pea are expected to be the main imported pulse due to the duty free exemption and competitive global pricing compared to other pulses”,* he said.

*“Chinese tariffs on Canadian peas are supportive for India’s procurement and may limit other pulses imports, thus prices.”*

The silver lining for Australia’s exports is that peas duty free are expected to be short lived, Mr Pistoia said. *“With the new season entering the system, close monitoring of international prices and domestic production will gauge India’s demand for H2 of 2025. The government implements importing tariffs to balance out farm gate prices and food inflation.”*

Additionally, he said India’s stocks are reduced from a historical perspective. *“Reports state that pulse buffer stocks are at 1.3 million tonnes, way below the required 3.5 million tonnes.”*

**Figure 3.** India’s pulses imports



Source: Global pulse confederation, RaboResearch 2025

### Competitors reactions and end game for Australia’s outlook

The combination of limited upside for wheat prices, uncertainties about Canadian exports of canola oil and meal to China and the US, and the year-over-year surge in fertiliser prices are prompting a global review of crop gross margins, Mr Pistoia said.

*“This is happening just as the seeding period begins in the northern hemisphere and Australia, making last-minute changes in cropping programs likely,”* he said.

*“Farmers in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Canada may shift towards seeding more peas and lentils at the expense of cereals and canola. Such a change could pose a*

*challenge for Australian pulse exports of the 2025/26 crop.”*

On a positive note, Mr Pistoia said Russia has imposed a five per cent export tariff on peas, lentils, and chickpeas for countries outside the Eurasian Economic Union, (Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan).

For Australia, lentils and chickpeas are expected to lead pulse production, Mr Pistoia said. *“Queensland and northern New South Wales have good soil moisture levels, and the potential gross margin for lentils is much higher than for wheat or canola this year,”* he said. *“South Australia is expected to maintain its leading role in lentil production, while Queensland and New South Wales will focus on chickpeas.”*

Mr Pistoia said there is also growing interest in faba bean production in Victoria and southern New South Wales. *“In Western Australia, lentil and chickpea production is gaining traction in non-traditional areas such as Esperance and the Kwinana port zones – driven by better profitability and agronomic benefits.”*

Mr Pistoia said the global market signals strong and sustained demand for these crops.

To find out more about other Rabobank research, contact Rabobank’s local team in Moora and Dalwallinu on (08) 9690 8500 or subscribe to RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness Australia & New Zealand on your podcast app.

**Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world’s leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 125 years’ experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative**



**and operates in 38 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1000 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group is one of Australasia’s leading agricultural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region’s food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 87 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.**

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# GATHER ROUND REMINDED ME THAT FEELINGS MATTER

By Dr Kate Burke, ThinkAgri

I've just returned from a week away with mates. We went to the AFL Gather Round in Adelaide. I watched four games of AFL live over three days.

It got me thinking more about feelings and how they influence our experiences.

I felt the lack of emotion for games I wasn't invested in and the intense emotion of watching St Kilda v Greater Western Sydney.

It was a reminder about how emotions impact our thinking and doing, and why they can't be ignored when it comes to succession planning.

In my last newsletter, I asked and you responded. The feedback on my call for an approach to succession that prioritises the emotional reality was extraordinary.

The emotional toll of succession and the need for a pathway that factors this in was stark.

Commercially compassionate succession is one way to describe this pathway.

When all parties are supported to manage themselves and others with more compassion and less criticism, a succession strategy that makes financial and human sense can happen with less friction and better outcomes

Will there be shouting, will there be tears? Maybe.

Will there be commercial tensions between business reality and personal desires? Probably.

Will there be confusion around the technical details of financial and legal matters? Most likely.

And all of that is ok and part of the process of getting to an implementable succession strategy that sits within a business strategy and a family strategy.

What does commercial compassion look like in practice? It's a way of thinking that covers off on people, technical and money matters.

It's an approach that recognises the tangle of family, farming and feelings .

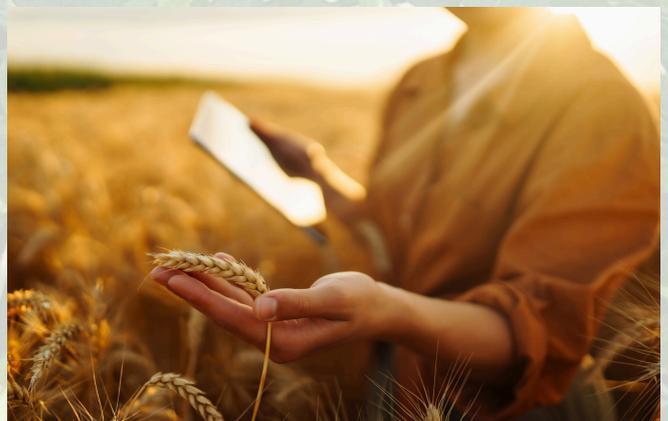
It leads to better thinking and better outcomes.

It's not rocket science. It's about asking critical questions.

Here's a sample of the questions I ask at the beginning of family business strategy sessions and in Farm Business Resilience or Succession Planning Workshops:

## **A. Eight questions about how you and others see the world and your respective parts in the farm as a workplace and business?**

1. What excites you about farming with the family?
2. What strengths do you bring to the farm workplace?
3. What personal challenges that impact on your work do you need to address?
4. What solutions can you implement to manage your part in the farming family dynamic?
5. What excites others in the team?
6. What worries others in the team?
7. What do they tell you about you and your role and impact?
8. What do they tell you about when you are at your best?



## **B. Eight questions about how you interact and function as a workplace team and family?**

1. What strengths do each individual and couple bring to the team?
2. How clear are individual roles and responsibilities?
3. Is it clear who has spending authority for operational and capital purchases?
4. Is it clear who has selling authority for produce?
5. How effective is the team at getting the work done on time and cost effectively and harmoniously?
6. How similar or different are the values systems of different families?
7. How can these differences be managed so they do impact on family or work?
8. What boundaries do you need to manage in family and work relationships?



## **C. Eight questions about business decision making**

1. To what extent are your business decisions driven by tax management?
2. To what extent are your business decisions driven by wealth creation?
3. To what extent are your business decisions driven by business growth?
4. To what extent are your business decisions driven by profit optimisation?
5. To what extent are your business decisions driven by what your peers are doing?
6. To what extent are your business decisions driven by risk management?
7. To what extent are your business decisions driven by conflict avoidance?
8. To what extent are your business decisions driven by historical habits?

## **D. Eight questions about the business and money**

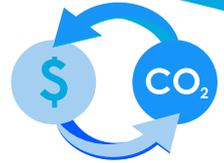
1. Is it clear who owns the business?
2. Is it clear who owns the assets (particularly land)?
3. Is it clear who "owns" the debt?
4. How profitable is the business relative to opportunities presented? (\$/mm/Ha or \$/ML/Ha)
5. How effectively is the asset being utilised? (% ROC operating)
6. Is the business entity net worth increasing?
7. Are individuals net worth increasing?
8. Are financial freedom/independence pathways clear for individuals and couples?

## **E. Two questions about what will you do next as a result of asking these questions?**

1. Which questions raise issues that need addressing?
2. What resources do you need to address these issues?



# UNDERSTANDING CARBON ACCOUNTING IN AGRICULTURE



By Daenia Dundon, R&D Co-ordinator, Liebe Group

## What is carbon accounting?

Carbon accounting is emerging as a component of modern farm business management, but what does it involve?

At its core, carbon accounting is the process of calculating all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by a farming operation, minus any carbon captured through changes in carbon stocks (like soil carbon or tree-planting (carbon-farming projects). Emissions are categorised into three distinct scopes, providing a structured framework for identifying their sources across a farming business’s operations and its supply chain.

- **Scope 1:** Direct emissions from on-farm activities – e.g. methane from livestock, nitrous oxide from fertiliser, or carbon dioxide from diesel use.
- **Scope 2:** Indirect emissions from purchased energy – typically electricity used on-farm.
- **Scope 3:** Indirect emissions that happen off-farm, before and after production – including emissions from input suppliers and post-harvest transport.

When all these sources are combined, you get a business’s total greenhouse gas footprint.

## Why should farmers start tracking GHG emissions?

Last year, a Treasury Laws Amendment Bill was passed (9 September 2024), making climate-related financial disclosures mandatory for large businesses and financial institutions. While this doesn’t directly apply to all farms just yet, it has important flow-on effects.

Some agricultural businesses will fall under Group 3 entities—companies that need to report on emissions from their supply chain, including the farms they source from. For example, if you buy fertiliser from CSBP, your farm will count as part of their Scope 3 emissions, meaning they’ll require your GHG data.

Reporting entities	Group 1 First annual reporting periods starting on or after 1 Jan 2025	Group 2 First annual reporting periods starting on or after Jul 2026	Group 3 First annual reporting periods starting on or after 1 Jul 2027
Large entities and their controlled entities meeting at least two of three criteria	Consolidated revenue: \$500 million or more  EOFY consolidated gross assets: \$1 billion or more  EOFY employees: 500 or more	Consolidated revenue: \$200 million or more  EOFY consolidated gross assets: \$500 million or more  EOFY employees: 250 or more	Consolidated revenue: \$50 million or more  EOFY consolidated gross assets: \$25 million or more  EOFY employees: 100 or more

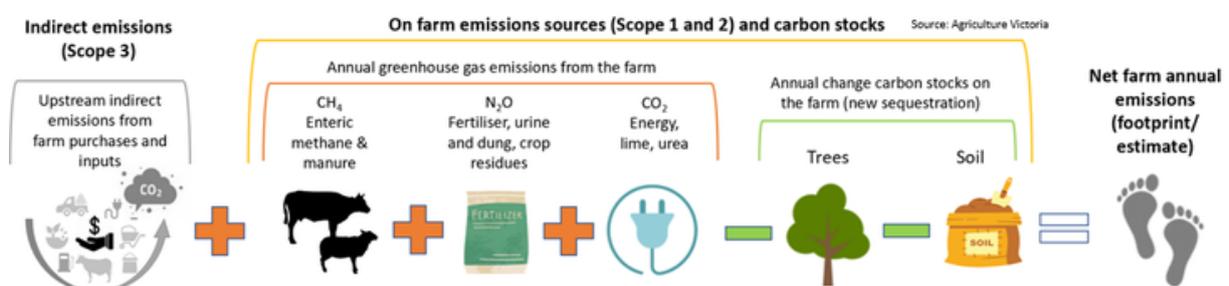
Source: ASIC.gov.au

Potentially in the future, mandatory GHG reporting could be required for all farming businesses. The recommended best practice is to have five years of emissions data to establish a robust average baseline. Additionally, having emissions data on hand could offer easier access to current and future market opportunities, finance, or sustainability incentives.

## How can you calculate your emissions?

The federal government is expected to release national standards for GHG calculators by the end of the year. In the meantime, the University of Melbourne’s Greenhouse Accounting Framework (GAF) is a widely used tool, available as an excel spreadsheet or an online platform. The type of data required includes, but is not limited to:

- Paddock rotations, average yields, area sown
- Fertiliser, pesticide, and lime applications
- Whole-farm diesel and electricity use





The majority of this data is already being recorded in popular agricultural platforms such as Ops Centre or AgWorld. Currently, there are ongoing efforts to integrate carbon calculators directly into various software systems to avoid the need for double data entry.

**Where to next?**

While there’s no mandate just yet, the current message is to **start collecting data now**. Not all required data will be automatically captured in agricultural programs —

things like electricity use or light vehicle fuel may need to be tracked separately.

The carbon space is evolving quickly, and Liebe is committed to helping members understand and adapt to what's required. We’re planning future workshops for later this year on carbon accounting and carbon farming through the CFOP project. Let us know what you’d like covered so we can make them as practical and relevant as possible.



Liebe Group, Dalwallinu

# National Industry-Led Carbon Farming Outreach Program

## Project Overview

The National Industry-Led Carbon Farming Outreach Program (CFOP) unites 39 farming groups, representing 20,000+ farms, to deliver over 160 workshops and 50 events across Australia.

Empowering 3,500+ farms with carbon reduction tools and training 130 ‘train-the-trainer’ participants to support ongoing knowledge sharing.

Partnering with local advisors to deliver tailored sessions, build sector capacity, and ensure access to independent advice on low emission farming.

### Objectives

- ✔ Helping farmers reduce emissions with informed decisions.
- ✔ Training trusted advisers to provide credible, independent advice.
- ✔ Ensuring clear, consistent, and culturally appropriate information on carbon farming and low-emission practices.

### Outcomes

- ✔ Supporting farmers to make informed decisions to lower emissions.
- Boosting knowledge of emissions management in farming.
- Equipping advisers with skills and resources for ongoing support.



[gga.org.au/carbon](http://gga.org.au/carbon)

[carbon@gga.org.au](mailto:carbon@gga.org.au)

Delivered with funding support from the Commonwealth of Australia through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water under the Carbon Farming Outreach Program in collaboration with the Grower Group Alliance.



# Stay safe on the farm!

**DO** ✓

Always have children ride in the cab of the ute, with seatbelts fully buckled.

**DON'T** ✗

Children should never ride in the tray of a ute.

**DO** ✓

Ensure children have proper PPE when riding an appropriately sized motorbike (helmet etc).

**DON'T** ✗

Children under 16 years of age should never be allowed to ride on or operate a quad bike.

**DO** ✓

Children should always be actively supervised by a responsible adult when in the farm environment.

**DON'T** ✗

Don't assign farm chores that are not age, size or skill appropriate.

**DO** ✓

Safe play areas should be created to provide a safe barrier between the work environment and the home/recreational environment.

**DON'T** ✗

Don't allow children to adventure around the farm environment without being actively supervised by a responsible parent or adult.

**DO** ✓

Children should be properly trained to ride horses while wearing appropriate PPE like helmets and boots.

**DON'T** ✗

Don't have children in yards with breeding or stressed livestock.

**DO** ✓

Enroll children in swimming lessons to learn to swim.

**DON'T** ✗

Don't allow children to play near or in water unsupervised.

For more tips and resources on being safe on the farm, visit [farmsafe.org.au](https://farmsafe.org.au) and [georgethefarmer.com.au](https://georgethefarmer.com.au)



**Farmsafe**  
AUSTRALIA



This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment through funding from the Australian Government's National Farm Safety Education Fund. The information on this brochure is general in nature and is intended to raise awareness of risks and hazards to children on farm. You must consider if and the extent to which it should apply and is appropriate to you and your circumstances. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the contents of this brochure are correct, George the Farmer and Farmsafe Australia do not accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the contents and shall not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly for using, or relying on, the contents of this educational resource.

# Rabo Client Council Business Transition & Succession Planning



**Hosted by the Rabo Client Council of Western Australia**

**Dalwallinu · Thursday 7 August 2025**

8:30am (for 9:00am sharp start) to 2pm  
Dalwallinu Recreation Centre (Main Hall)  
51 Johnston Street, Dalwallinu, WA 6609

Register your interest in this session below.

**These information sessions help set the foundation for family farm succession and equip farming families with the tools to optimise their chances for business continuity. Participants will explore important topics such as why family and business communication is difficult and how to improve it, what makes a meeting work, and how to take account of differing family goals.**

Attendees have the opportunity to interact in a face-to-face environment with facilitator Jim Benson (Director, Transition Partners), other farmers and the local Rabobank team. This complimentary information session is available for all farmers and is supported by the Rabo Community Fund to help develop long-term industry capacity and provide agricultural education.

## The session is broken down into four sections:

### 1. What is succession planning and why is it so important?

Establishing an agreed definition, outcomes and objectives.

### 2. The planning process

When to start and what steps are involved.

### 3. Understanding the key elements

Untangling the complexity into key focus areas, Management, Business, Property & Wealth.

### 4. The ingredients for a successful outcome

Setting priorities, resolving conflict, structuring planning and effective communication.

Click or scan to register  
your interest



Click or scan for more about  
Rabo Client Councils



**For more information contact 1300 303 033 for your local Branch.**

*Business Transition & Succession Planning is a Rabo Client Council initiative*

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*Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Liebe Group staff, Board or members.*

*Disclaimer: Mention of trade names does not imply endorsement or preference of any company's product by the Liebe Group, and any omission of trade names is unintentional. Farmer experience may not work for all.*



## ON THE COVER:

Canola germination

Photo credit: Rebecca Wallis