PRACTICE FOR PROFIT: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF ROTATIONS IN A LOW RAINFALL ZONE

Year: 2011 - 2018

Funding Provider:
Australian Government and Wheatbelt National Resource Management (NRM)

Lead Organisation:
Liebe Group

Collaborators
WMG, Facey Group, CFIG, MIG, Farmanco, CSIRO & DPIRD

Location:
Wenballa Farm,
East Dalwallinu, WA

PROJECT FUNDERS

Australian Government

REPORTS & LINKS

Practice for Profit Trial Final Report 2017

Aim:
To examine the difference in profitability between low and high input cropping practices over an extended period of time and to determine the effect these practices are having on soil carbon.

Project Information:
The Practice for Profit trial was located east of Dalwallinu on the Mills' property. Since 2011, the following scenarios were compared:

- Low input treatments based on a farmer producing grain at the lowest possible cost, regardless of seasonal conditions.
- High input treatments to simulate a paddock with high yield potential matched with increased inputs to maximise yields and profitability.

2011 was the setup phase of the trial, the seeding and fertiliser rates were not blanket dependent on the rotation with the wheat treatment receiving high and low inputs.

In 2013 the set rotation was not able to be planted due to a timing mismatch between rain and trial contractors resulting in the soil being too dry for the small trial seeding machinery to negotiate. The whole site was thus fallowed in 2013.

It is important to note that high and low inputs of this trial are considered on a seasonal basis, and on the back of a chemical fallow in 2013 all nutrient levels were high.

All treatments performed well in 2017, despite low GSR of only 128mm. The continuous wheat rotation remains the most consistent in terms of financial returns.

It was evident during crop establishment, that the site showed considerable variability. The nature of this variability suggests that some plots are negatively influenced by shallow rock in dry seasons.