

Nine-row applicator gives high coverage, low compaction



Out of the season Bio Dunder contractor Adrian Arnold (pictured) tends to spend his time working out how he can increase the efficiencies of his fertilising business.

It was no different in the lead-up to the 2018 season although this time, he was considering a major change.

It involved increasing his fertilising area from the standard seven rows out to nine rows. It was a big change but one that would bring big benefits: more efficient fertiliser application and less compaction in the paddock.

One of the biggest challenges in undertaking this modification was creating a bigger area on the nozzle bar to cover the row spacing.

The bar length had to be increased and, due

to the way that the bars were positioned on the tractor, a folding arm had to be attached to each side to mount the extra nozzles.



This in itself created some of the initial challenges as the hinges on the extension could not just go anywhere due to the requirement of free movement to adjust for

the various row spacings.

After the modifications to the arms were sorted, the next challenge involved the installation of the hoses and nozzles to enable calibration testing. This proved to be somewhat fiddly and involved a number of adjustments before a suitable design was found that provided an accurate result with repeated calibrations.

The applicator was then used for field trials to see how the modifications and the extra width would perform in the field. This was all done successfully although the extra width did require some minor adjustments to allow for traversing through gullies.

One of the benefits of having the applicator

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Brighter outlook for 2019 season



By George Russell
AgServices Business Manager

We are looking forward to a more positive year after a challenging time in 2018.

It was a tough year for growers, who grappled with low sugar prices and dry growing conditions, as well as increasing regulatory compliance requirements.

Our business was directly impacted by the extended dry weather and the associated increase in Bio Dunder sales. As many of you are aware, our dam stocks ran short and we were unable to fully meet the high demand for our product.

In August, we took the difficult decision to allocate volumes to our contractors in order to provide maximum continuity of supply throughout 2018 and into 2019.

We acknowledge the frustration these recent supply limitations have caused. I extend my sincere thanks to our valued customers and contractors for your patience and understanding.

Looking ahead, I'm pleased to advise that our

dam volumes are looking good and we expect greater security of supply throughout 2019.

Good wet season rainfall in December and January, as well as continued production of Bio Dunder over that period, means our dams have more stock on hand than at this time last year.

We are also implementing a number of strategies to support certainty of supply, while ensuring our customers continue to receive the same value, service and support.

These strategies include more frequent reviews of dam levels, continuous assessment of sales volumes and more accurate advance forecasting. We have also upgraded our sludge extraction system.

The AgServices team will communicate regularly with contractors and customers about any changes that may impact on supply and demand.

We will also keep the lines of communication open through direct engagement, grower meetings and our agronomic services.

On behalf of the team, we wish growers a good crop and a successful harvest. We look forward to meeting your fertiliser needs throughout 2019.



The new temporary dam cover at Oonooie is about the size of five football fields

New dam cover at Oonooie

Putting a cover over a dunder dam is a complex logistical exercise at the best of times.

It requires detailed planning, a range of mobile plant to assist at critical times, scores of workers, a lot of money and a few days of good weather.

Unfortunately, we don't get to control the weather and the first installation attempt in mid-December was thwarted by wind and rain.

The second attempt in late January offered one good day with doubtful conditions the next, as well as an approaching cyclone and heavy rain in North Queensland.

Despite this, our BioEthanol team, with support from some Plane Creek Mill seasonal personnel, worked against time to install the new temporary cover on the largest dam at Oonooie. They completed the job safely and successfully, in winds that came in earlier than forecast and just before the monsoon that caused major flooding in Townsville and north-west Queensland.

The new \$315,000 cover will enable us to

maintain the quality of product in the dam. It also represents another milestone in our long-term plan to weather-proof the business. Three of our four main storage dams now have either permanent or temporary covers.



The workers were dwarfed by the massive dam cover being installed at Oonooie. They completed the job just before the weather closed in

Its surface area is so large that a single roll would have been too big to handle. So, the cover was manufactured in eight pieces that were welded together on site as they were being installed to form two half covers. A two-metre floating walkway was set up in the centre of the dam to facilitate putting the cover in place.

Each of the two covers spans 156m X 106m. In total, they are about the size of five football fields.

The first half was put in place on 24 January with about 35 people. When the wind suddenly jumped about midday on the following day, reinforcements were brought in. Forty-six people were pulled on site to install the second section, just before the weather completely closed in.

In addition to the new dam cover, we've spent about \$250,000 on maintenance at the Oonooie site in February. Some of the main jobs were pump overhauls and maintenance on the batching conveyors.

ET04 – the dam that got the new cover – holds 90,000 cubic metres of raw dunder.

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arms mounted behind the tractor is that the nozzles are visible while having to switch on and off when crossing drains and headlands.

But then Adrian started thinking about even more improvements. How efficient would it be if the blocks were GPS mapped? Imagine if the application computer could control the switches when they were required to be shut on and off?

Which brings us to his efficiency planning ahead of the 2019 season.

Adrian has set up a buggy capable of creating boundary layers of the farm blocks that he applies fertiliser to, in order to increase the efficiencies of his application time.

Of course, this comes with its own set of challenges...

We wish Adrian all the best in getting this equipment set up and to hearing what innovations he comes up with next year.



Nine-row applicator (top and below left) and mapping buggy (right)

Our new Stockfeed Customer Relationship Manager



Wilmar AgServices is pleased to welcome Chris Williams to the role of Stockfeed Customer Relationship Manager.

Chris has spent many years in the western districts of Victoria, working across different sectors of the agricultural industry.

He has managed farming enterprises focused on Merino and crossbred sheep production, fat lamb and wool production, lamb feedlotting, cattle breeding and background cropping of

oilseed and cereal grains. He also started up a rural merchandise business in Skipton, Victoria.

Chris previously worked with CopRice (a division of SunRice) based at the Cobden Mill in Victoria where he was the Territory Sales Manager supplying bulk pelletised feeds to the sheep, beef and dairy sectors.

Chris is based at our Sarina office and can be contacted on 0429 445 960.

R&D update



Fertiliser applied
1 DAY
after harvest

Fertiliser applied
60 DAYS
after harvest

Photo of the Q240 2R trial crop in November 2018 with Bio Dunder® Liquid Fertiliser applied one day after harvest (yellow tag) and 60 days after harvest (blue tag)



Follow the harvester trial at Koumala



R&D Agronomist: Liana Lillford

Koumala farmer and Bio Dunder® Liquid Fertiliser contract applicator for the region, Peter Hackett, hopes that a trial established on his 100ha cane farm will help improve understanding of the timing of nutrition to cane after harvest.

A formal trial being run by Wilmar AgServices will follow observations by Peter and other farmers about crop performance and the timing of fertilising post-harvest.

A replicated strip trial on Q240 variety 2R crop has been set up with two treatments of the same nutrition profile. They were applied:

- One day after cane harvest, and
- 60 days after cane harvest.

Bio Dunder® Liquid Fertiliser was applied

along the middle of the cane stool by precision jet into the soil surface as most contract applicators operate. Crop performance will be compared in the 2019 season harvest.

Peter has been applying Bio Dunder® to his own farm and other Koumala farms for more than 30 years. His observations gave him a strong indication of the effect that fertiliser timing has on crop growth, so he was keen to have a formal trial conducted in the local area – both to satisfy his own curiosity and that of other growers.

At present, the Soil Health and Nutrient Management Section in the Sugar Cane Best Management Practice - 1.9.2 - Timing of Fertiliser Application - suggests to “apply fertiliser six to eight weeks after harvesting or when cane is approximately 600mm high on

early to mid-season cane where practical” as Industry Standard Practice.

New research suggests that the root system for ratoon crops after harvest is still very much alive during this time.

The trial concept is about testing this timing on a ratoon crop during July with adequate soil moisture levels. Often growers are limited in the timing of fertiliser application during this busy time of year because they need to focus on other aspects of farm management, such as herbicide and pesticide application.

Peter Albertson from Plane Creek Productivity Services Limited has supported the AgServices trial by including the installation of two Sentek PLUS wireless soil moisture probes within the trial site to enable moisture levels to be monitored during the crop growing period. Sentek PLUS

utilises GPRS and 3G communication technology to send soil moisture data directly from the probe to the internet.

The harvest season for 2018 was relatively dry, and the Koumala area also experienced some heavy frost events.

Peter’s trial ratoon crop was harvested in July 2018 with two overhead irrigation events (10 days after harvest and 80 days after harvest).

So far, plant height measurement results have indicated no significant difference between the two treatments. Plant tissue sampling collection will happen in March to compare crop nutrition levels to date.

Another trial will be established in the 2019 season to further understand crop nutrition application timing on ratoons under other irrigation systems. AgServices would like to hear from interested farmers using lateral irrigation in the Mackay region and flood irrigation in the Burdekin region.



Peter Hackett (pictured) inspects one of two Sentek PLUS wireless soil moisture units on the trial block on his family farm at Koumala

Bio Dunder® Rewards continues in 2019



We're rewarding customers who make full payment for their product within Wilmar's 30-day terms.

The Bio Dunder Rewards points you receive are based on the volume of product purchased within Wilmar's terms during the previous season.

What a great way to start the new season!

For the terms and conditions of our Bio Dunder Rewards Program, go to wilmaragservices.com.au



Tony Large, Lou Raiteri and Agribusiness Agronomist (Northern) Menno Bokma at Proserpine



Agribusiness Agronomist (Southern) Damian Baxter and Michael Galea at Sarina

Hearing it first-hand

About 60 growers attended Wilmar information sessions in early March to get first-hand information about the world sugar market, pooling and pricing and preparations for the 2019 crush. Other topics included the sugar supply chain and the season outlook for Bio Dunder. The events were held at Proserpine on 11 March and Sarina on 12 March. Wilmar's key speakers included Risk Manager David Trevor and Logistics & Quality Manager John Carmody.



Grower Marketing Consultant Simon Haire and Andrew Holmes at Proserpine



Grower Marketing Consultant Angus McKerrow with Andrew Auld and Mark Orr at Proserpine



Steve Hinschen, Stephen Lade and Douglas Lee at Proserpine

Updated customer information

We recently contacted our valued customers to ensure we have everybody's correct details on file ahead of the 2019 season.

The Customer Service Team has so far had a great response to the mail-out, which includes a letter and form requesting customers' up-to-date information.

If you haven't received this form and wish to respond, please contact the Customer Service Team on 1800 881 957. Alternatively, email agservices@wilmar.com.au.



2019 grower information sessions

Our 2019 grower meetings are about to take place in your area.

These informal meetings are a great opportunity to get first-hand information on a variety of topics that impact your farm productivity. It's also worth mentioning that they will feature fantastic catering.

The first of our meetings will be held in the

Burdekin on 2 April and the last is at Walkerston on 10 April. For detailed information on dates, times and venues, please go to our website.

Some of the topics we will be covering this year are:

- Bio Dunder product rates in 2019
- The value in using Bio Dunder products and services

- R&D trial updates, including Vizura and follow the harvester
- Soil sampling 2019

We'll also be introducing our new Stockfeed Customer Relationship Manager Chris Williams.

We look forward to seeing you there.



- BURDEKIN**
TUESDAY 2 APRIL
- BOWEN**
WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL
- PROSERPINE**
THURSDAY 4 APRIL
- CALEN**
TUESDAY 9 APRIL
- PIONEER**
TUESDAY 9 APRIL
- SARINA**
WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL
- WALKERSTON**
THURSDAY 11 APRIL

More information:
www.wilmaragservices.com.au



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Vella Haulage
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Quattromani**
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M 0419 782 673

Keating Haulage
Truck & Tractor
M 0413 769 769

Mark Daley
Truck
M 0411 354 301

Mel & Barbara Janke
Truck
M 0408 147 740

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Tractor
M 0438 523 774

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M 0448 374 831

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Find us in Sarina

Wilmar AgServices is located just off the Bruce Highway, on the southern side of Sarina. Visit us to enquire about your account, make a payment, or meet with one of our Agribusiness Agronomists or R&D team. There is parking directly out the front and the office is wheelchair friendly.

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