MEDIA RELEASE

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*Caption: Times have changed: Greig Robinson (left) with his 1945 LA Case tractor, and his grandson, Tom Robinson (right) with his new Steiger Rowtrac, which he says fits perfectly into his controlled traffic operation.*

**Making a case for Controlled Traffic Farming**

**OR**

**New Rowtrac matches Anashka Farm’s needs to the inch**

Tom Robinson’s family has been farming wheat and canola at Anashka Farm for five generations. This 1,620 hectare property in Hoyleton SA is also a showcase for innovative farming practice, having moved to zero-till farming in 2002 and now using Controlled Traffic Farming (CTF) to improve soil health – and boost crop yields.

Tom and his father Ashley received their new Case IH Steiger Rowtrac tractor in April 2014 and finished seeding with it in mid May.

“The whole tractor has exceeded our expectations. The ride is fantastic, it’s smoother than my ute,” he says.

He is using the Rowtrac to take care of all seeding, plus he says he’ll add a three-point linkage spreader for spreading urea, and then run a grain cart in the summer. “I’ve basically taken the job of three tractors and rolled them into one.”

He first saw the Rowtrac when it was released at AgriConnect in Kansas, when he was visiting farms in the Midwest to see the long-term impact of zero-till farming practice. “I really liked the four track design. And now it has 120 inch wheel centres it matches our CTF practice exactly.”

To carry out CTF you need all vehicles and weight bearing wheels running on the same tracks, minimising traffic compaction. To do this, wheel centres and equipment widths must be standardised.

Tom says that for them CTF is the natural next step after committing to zero-till farming.

 “It’s all about yield, really,” says Tom. “Fuel prices are going up, commodity prices are going down. We can't rely on decent rainfall. So we’ve got to do whatever we can do protect yields, zero-till and CTF seems to be working for us.”

In fact, soil compaction can reduce yield by as much as 30%, according to a recent article about the Robinson’s operation in SPAA’s Precision Ag News. The amount depends on the soil type and rainfall. It can reduce water infiltration, root growth and even soil biological activity.

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“The choice of Rowtrac was more to do with how it fits our package – I am willing to wait to get the right equipment to fit our farm operation,” explains Tom. “We’re also running a Case IH Patriot sprayer, with 15 inch tyres, so we can use both the Rowtrac and Patriot in crop and it will limit compaction.”

Tom sees the new equipment as an investment in soil health, with the long-term benefits of CTF on soil improvement and water use efficiency.

He says the Rowtrac also gives him a high horsepower tractor that can run on a narrow track, decreasing the overall footprint but still giving a lot of grip. And his neighbours have been impressed by the lack of berms on the corners.

“I’ve had three or four guys have a run on it and they’re very impressed by the way it turns,” he says.

The Robinson family are self-declared “Case IH people.”

“We still have a 1945 Case tractor that was my grandfather’s,” says Tom, adding that he’s not ‘colour blind’, but that they always “seem to get great service (from dealers), and great results from the equipment.”

The Robinsons purchased their Rowtrac tractor through local Case IH dealer, Ramsey Brothers at Riverton.

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