CREATING ACCURATE RECORDS

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Daisy Toscan
Cavaso Farming, Darlington Point, NSW

**CHALLENGE**

The Toscan family grows a variety of crops and needed a simple way to create records of the spraying operations that take place in each individual crop and field. Prunes form part of their operation, so for food certification purposes, they need to be able to supply accurate records of exactly what inputs have been applied at any given time during the season.

**SOLUTION**

Agronomist Allan Jones with Agronomic Business Solutions (ABS) already used Agworld to create plans and recommendations for Cavaso Farming and showed the Toscan family the advantages of joining him on the same platform.

**RESULT**

By doing all their in-field record keeping in Agworld, the Toscan family is able to utilise the data already entered by their agronomist and is therefore saving a lot of time. They now have an accurate set of records available of all inputs applied during the season, which they can utilise for a number of different purposes.
Farming on the banks of the Murrumbidgee

Cavaso Farming Partnership, formed by Matt, Daisy and James Toscan, grow their crops on the banks of the Murrumbidgee river at Darlington Point in Riverina district of western New South Wales. On the 4200-hectare enterprise, the Toscan family have 170 hectares of prunes planted and use the rest for growing row crops. In an average year, they grow 1200 hectares of irrigated cotton, 100 hectares of irrigated maize, 1200 hectares of irrigated durum and a few other smaller crops – depending on the season and other factors.

The farm features siphon as well as bankless irrigation and employs minimum till and controlled traffic approaches wherever possible. The Toscan family was named the Monsanto cotton grower of the year in 2017 for their impressive yields, averaging 12 bales per hectare, and their Integrated Pest Management strategy which helps encourage beneficial insects and protects bees. The partnership has also attained MyBMP (Best Management Practices) certification and is cited by the awards committee as having meticulous record keeping practices. “For our in-field record keeping as part of our MyBMP, we rely on Agworld – which forms an important part of the certification”, Daisy says.

Matt explains: “We were looking at digitising and simplifying our record keeping process back in 2014 and had a chat with our agronomist, Allan Jones with Agronomic Business Solutions (ABS), about this. Allan was already using Agworld for his planning and recommendations and showed us how Agworld works and how it could help us with our in-field record keeping and logging spray applications and other inputs. It wasn’t long after that we decided to adopt Agworld for our farm as well.”
When accurate spray records are needed

The Toscan family is very familiar with the need for keeping accurate records as their farming operation started with the prune orchard which, being a food crop, is checked closely. Daisy elaborates: “Our 170 hectares of trees are all prunes, of different varieties but all freestone cultivars, and we sell our harvest to Angas Park in Loxton North, South Australia, where the fruit gets dried and then sold to a variety of buyers. As everything ends up for human consumption, traceability is very important and, as part of Angas Park’s ISO9002, HACCP and AQA certification, we have to be able to show exactly which inputs have been applied to our trees.”

“With Agworld I can easily create a PDF of exactly those blocks that we need to supply records of and send them to Angas Park or anyone else. Instead of having to go through hand-written books out of tractors and piecing everything together, I have everything right here where I need it.”

James adds to this: “Although cotton isn’t a food crop, there are still very tight regulations around record keeping and tracking inputs. Regulations to the side, it helps us a lot with our integrated pest management strategies and combatting noxious weeds when we have accurate records of what was sprayed when, so we know what we need to do moving forward without creating resistance or other issues. This is where it really helps that we are working on Agworld together with our agronomist Allan, so everyone has full visibility as to what is happening in the field and what we’re planning for the rest of the season.”

Allan: “We have been using Agworld since 2013 and do all our planning and recommendations through the platform. We already create a lot of data on Agworld when writing recommendations, so it seems to just make sense for growers to use the same solution as us because that saves them from having to re-enter data that we already created elsewhere. Having growers like the Toscan family using Agworld together with us also helps me because I can see exactly which fields have or haven’t been sprayed yet when I’m on farm to check the crops. So instead of having to call them constantly with questions, I already have most of the answers right here with me on Agworld.”

Centralising information

Cavaso Farming is run with a team of 10 full-time employees, all of whom create data by completing work in specific fields every day, which could easily create confusion if this data flow is not managed properly. James: “By giving our employees access to Agworld, they can immediately see what has been done in each field and what they have to look out for. If a specific chemical has been applied for example and a re-entry interval or withholding period is active, this is important information for everyone involved. And, the other way around, our employees are also able to enter information or convert recommendations to actuals within Agworld. So, instead of leaving Matt, Daisy, Allan or myself wondering whether a specific task has been completed, we can just check Agworld and get an immediate overview of what we’re up to.”

Daisy adds: “At a certain point, a farming operation just becomes too big to rely on old methods like pen and paper or Excel spreadsheets. They just cost...
too much time and leave too much room for error. By utilising Agworld, we are able to save time on our data entry and reporting, and we have peace of mind that we have accurate records available whenever these are required from us.”

Matt concludes with: “There are still parts of our operation where we would like to work with more or different technologies to make life easier and improve results, both from an administration and machinery perspective. When it comes to record keeping however, Agworld makes sure that we have all our bases covered and that we’re not behind on anything that we need to track. Farm data is becoming increasingly more important and we just cannot afford to fall behind.”

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