

Regenerative Ag

A Farmer's Story



Jarred Schlitz is a member of the Normanville Regenerative Farming group. The family property is located west of Kerang.

"Our farm is located at Normanville in northern Victoria, the farm is predominately cropping and hay, but we also run sheep. The farm is usually sown to about thirty percent legumes, this helps with cropping rotations," Jarred said.

"We try to keep our soils covered to limit soil loss and are currently using a disc seeder and stripper front for harvest, this helps with minimizing soil disturbance. The sheep are utilised on irrigated pasture and on the cropping paddocks after harvest. The sheep help with diversifying the income, break down and trample the crop residue.

"We recently installed some weather stations and moisture probes with assistance through the North Central CMA's Regenerative Agriculture project, it's been great to have this technology to monitor frosts on different parts of the farm and observe rainfall data to make better management decisions. The moisture probes have assisted in the amount of soil moisture and its depth, this assists with fertiliser applications and spraying.

Jarred has trialled some cover crops this year, but admits he still has a lot to learn with some good and bad results.

"I did notice where they were successful it created a lot of biomass, they growth rate and timing of flowering within the species has creating opportunities for beneficial insects over a long period, which will assist in reducing our insecticide use. The cover crops have also provided the sheep with a good mix of pasture species in their diet, which will complement the grazing of traditional pastures and cereals," Jarred said.

"We have trialled a canola and vetch mix, and the results were excellent providing great sheep feed and the additional benefit of increasing soil nitrogen from the vetch, which will benefit the following year's crop.

"In the future we aim to get the pasture rotation back into the system on a couple of paddocks that have been continually cropped, we are hoping to improve soil structure and manage root disease issues, which can be challenging at times."

Chicken manure has also been trialled on a couple of areas of the property as an option for reducing synthetic fertiliser.

"There were some challenges with spreading, timing and getting an even coverage. From observations it has increased worm activity and created an opportunity for fungi to break down stubble, contributing to landscape function and nutrient cycling," Jarred said.

"The farmer group has provided opportunities to explore new ideas and implement them on a small scale and discuss the results with group members to determine if they are suitable and sustainable for our area."



Jarred Schlitz, farmer at Normanville

