



Employee Profile: Leone Dyer

Leone Dyer will be a familiar name to those who have phoned the factory.

Leone has been with Agmaster since 1998 and is kept very busy with reception duties and overseeing the administration of the Company.

Leone, like most of us these days, worked to help get her children through their education and is hoping to have more free time (and money) now that they have entered their chosen careers.

Field Days Agmaster will be attending:

MALLEE FIELD DAY	Speed, Victoria	5-6 August
EYRE PENINSULAR	Cleve, S.A.	10-12 August
DOWERIN	Dowerin, W.A.	24-26 August
NEWDEGATE	Newdegate, W.A.	1-2 September
HENTY	Henty, N.S.W.	21-23 September

Local sales representatives in each state will attend other minor Field Days of interest.

Agmaster has experienced another successful year and we thank all our valued clients and dealers for your support.

We endeavour to offer quick delivery of product and backup service and trust we have serviced your needs efficiently. We are constantly trying to improve in these areas and your feedback is always appreciated.

Due to substantial increases in raw material costs over the past 6 months, Agmaster will be increasing the prices of most of its products by 5% - 10%. We will, however, hold last season's prices until 15/12/04 at which time the price increase will take effect. We are committed to keeping our prices competitive and increases to a minimum. Our point prices have remained unchanged for 3 years.



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If you do not wish to receive further publications please contact Agmaster.

WIN A POCKET RACER!

Buy at the field days, beat the price rise and you could be riding home on this!

- Minimum order \$2,000 (\$10,000 order = 5 chances)
- Order must be fully paid for to go in the draw
- One lucky winner drawn each day



We trust the season is shaping up well for you and look forward to seeing you at the field days.



Martin Burns

There have been enquiries into designing a seeding system to suit the Concord. As some are side bolt tyres and others normal front mounting, a special system has been developed and used with great success.



Concord Seeding Kit

AGMASTER has success in converting Concord ribbon seeders to split seeding system.



One of the Concord seeders from Burnsfield

The biggest problem with the old ribbon seeding system is high wear rates, excess fatigue, breakage and downtime especially in rough conditions. The normal range of Agmaster seeding boots, single or double shoot are available to suit all applications.

Martin Burns farms with his three brothers, John, Solly and Gerard, parents Rasty and Ann, and wife Elizabeth (BURNSFIELD) at Snowtown/Tarlee & Cummins S.A. The rainfall varies between 350mm and 475mm between the farms. They have converted two Concord seeding bars from the Anderson system to the Agmaster split system. Martin operates 40ft ConCORDs at 12in spacings seeding 4000ha to crops such as wheat, barley, beans, canola and peas. Sheep and cattle are still used in the rotation. Martin has been successfully no-tilling for 4yrs and found the change to no-till easy. The only variation has been in switching from the Concord ribbon seeder to Agmaster's split seeding system. Martin says while the split system does not quite spread the seed as wide as the previous ribbon system, he is very pleased with the Agmaster arrangement experiencing no downtime or breakage with good emergence and growth of crops.

Martin says there are many advantages in no-till farming, improved soil structure and fertility, less tractor hours, less maintenance and no changing of shears. The downside was that the first tractor was too small and had to be upgraded to a larger size.

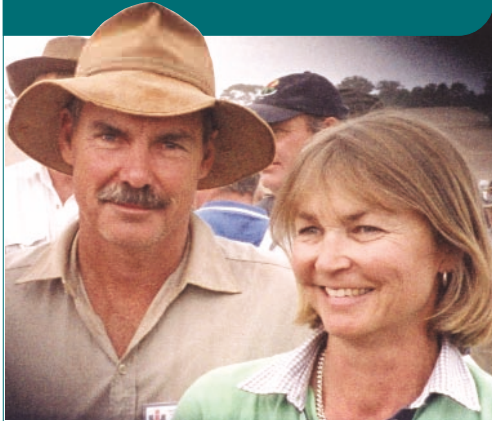
"The thought of better weed control is exciting and we feel we are getting on top of most weeds including ryegrass. A good knowledge of weed spectrum and chemicals is essential as the crop goes in quicker at optimum time. Our herbicide rates have been raised a little (approx 200mls) and double knock method used extensively, this is a very good strategy to use in early weed control especially on grass weeds. Herbicide resistance is of concern but good rotation should hold this off."

Martin says he would like to try wider rows with canola and beans, use variable rate seeding and start yield mapping this coming harvest to gain more paddock knowledge and maximize returns.

Martin's advice to farmers thinking about converting to no-till is "get into it", don't let the knockers say it can't be done in your area, because it can.

"The first year may be a little daunting but very quickly you will see many benefits and hopefully a better bottom line."

Nigel & Obbie Martin have represented Agmaster in NSW and Victoria, and together have been sales representatives for the past 10 years. They are relinquishing their positions to pursue their farming activities as the size and intensity of their program has grown.



Nigel and Obbie Martin



The Martins' seeding rig

Nigel and Obbie Martin's property "Big Red" is 7400 Ha situated 80km west of Condobolin, just north of the Indian Pacific railway line at Euabalong West.

"When we moved to "Big Red" in 1988, there was only 1200 Ha cleared. An extensive clearing program was undertaken over the next 10 years to get the arable area up to 4400 Ha. An additional 1600 Ha was added 5 years ago. The soil types are predominantly red brown light loams, the original timber was box, kurrajongs and pine, the rainfall 400mm. The remaining shelter belts around all paddocks are an integral part of the property.

We first started on reduced tillage some 12 years ago through sheer necessity (the need to farm as much as possible due to the pain of long development, costs, small equipment and debt load). We were told direct drill would not work in this area and that you had to fallow.

In the 94 dry, we direct drilled oats and barley into the previous years wheat stubbles. These crops outperformed the other crops sown on conventional fallow.

This made us think, and we were determined to explore direct drill/No till farming methods in more detail.

We had purchased machinery in WA in previous years and receiving farm publications from WA started to notice articles and advertisements about the progress of No-till in that state. By this stage we had changed from our original sowing rig which was a 3 row Alfarm to a 5160 Shearer, it had better but limited

trash flow. We were also using narrow cast points with a prickle chain that was giving reasonable results but the particular point we were using was giving us far too much soil throw. After appraising the limited options of knife points available at the time, we ended up sowing with a luceme point that gave good results but with a dismal wear rate.

At about this time we read articles by Ray Harrington in Western Australian papers about his system of cultivation beneath a closer plate which set seed depth - this appealed to us. We visited WA, went to the Dowerin Field Days in 1995 and ultimately purchased a set of Agmaster Points and boots to suit a Shearer Trash worker we already owned.

Our involvement with Agmaster started early the following year. Our order was shipped over and followed by a phone call from Geoff Glenn (one of the proprietors of Agmaster) inquiring whether it was possible to hold a field day on our property. This happened, and was a huge success with approximately 150 people attending from up to 300Km away. We did not realize just how many other farmers were thinking about a more cost effective method of crop establishment.

Currently our cropping program is approximately 4000ha, 90% no-tilled. Some minimum till is used to cut out woody weeds or level various paddocks that need a tidy up after recent clearing. Going to No-till and reduced tillage has effectively doubled the area cropped for less total tractor hours.



NT11 Sowing System



Sowing with Covering System

Plant consists of two Hardi Commander boom sprays (the most crucial items), a 57' Gason Scartill, which has been converted to a five fold with floating hitch pulled by a Case Quad Track. 12mm Agmaster points with a 50mm closer plate, a rod welded in the center to give the soil longer to close, this has been extremely successful and all sowing has been carried out this season at 10km/hr with excellent depth control. Agmaster rotary harrows are used as a covering system. We also have Agmaster press wheels that can be interchanged with the harrows when seasonal conditions dictate.

Our cropping phase is now continuous. Rotation at this stage is not broad enough, consisting of wheat, barley, oats and field peas. Seed is sown at 40kg/ha and this may be reduced to 30kg in the future because of good placement. Mustard has been sown when the seasonal break occurs early enough. Lucerne also plays a major part in the rotation. Currently 1200ha is sown down to Lucerne and this will be increased to 2000ha. We have found drilling with the knife point straight into tired Lucerne stands an excellent way to rejuvenate them. Lucerne is proving to be important for:

- Good nitrogen build up
- Dry land salinity control
- Ideal opportunity to control rye grass and black oats
- Profitable grazing

The No-Till program starts with spraying soon after harvest. We have found that by spraying, as soon as possible after harvest, summer weeds are much cheaper to eliminate.

SKELETON WEED which was a major problem in the past is no longer an issue. Although not eliminated, chemical kills the whole plant, and the knifepoint is not cutting roots and creating a suckering effect.

Depending on the autumn rain, paddocks may not have to be sprayed until sowing. Various broad-spectrum, non-selective herbicides have been incorporated into the program very cost effectively. The biggest advantage of our no-till program has been a drop off in weed burden and dramatic reduction in costs.

Due to the variable nature of seasonal conditions in this area, sheep have been reintroduced after an absence of 5 years. They have helped in summer weed control, have contributed some cash flow and help control weed growth on the remainder of the property not under crop. They also reduce the risk by diversification. We don't believe that they are detrimental to our cropping phase as they run in the Lucerne paddocks during the pasture phase. The most crucial factor is keeping them off stubbles when wet. This is the first year we have used a feedlot situation to both finish lambs and hold lambing ewes. It makes better sense than degrading country in tough seasons and, also with the current high values for sheep, the feedlot is enabling us to value-add to grain held on the farm.

Return on capital in this district can be extremely high but as in all high return ventures there is an element of risk due to our variable seasonal conditions. As we live in a marginal area, our aim is to reduce that risk by being able to take advantage of any opportunity that the season presents:

- Choice of seed type and variety for the time of the break
- Weed control
- Keeping mulch on top
- Moisture retention
- No or medium tillage
- Liming much of our country to address the decline in pH

Guidance and auto steer in all equipment from sowing through to harvest is going to be a must if we are to control fuel, chemical, seed and fertilizer costs. Improving efficiency in all areas of farming is an ongoing goal.



Lucerne stand used in the rotation

The change to No-till in the past 10-12 years has presented us with many challenges. The best part of the change in farming direction has been the people we've met, some of the other farming ventures we've seen, and the constant challenge to our thinking."

Agmaster would like to thank Nigel and Obbie for their contribution to No-till farming and Agmaster. They will continue to service clients in their district with Agmaster products but won't be active around the state.

David Humphries will now be the representative for Agmaster in both NSW and Victoria. David is also a farmer, has been practicing No-till for the past 10-12 years and has a vast knowledge of no-till farming and Agmaster products.

David's phone number is: 0408 828 971