

The Grower's Word

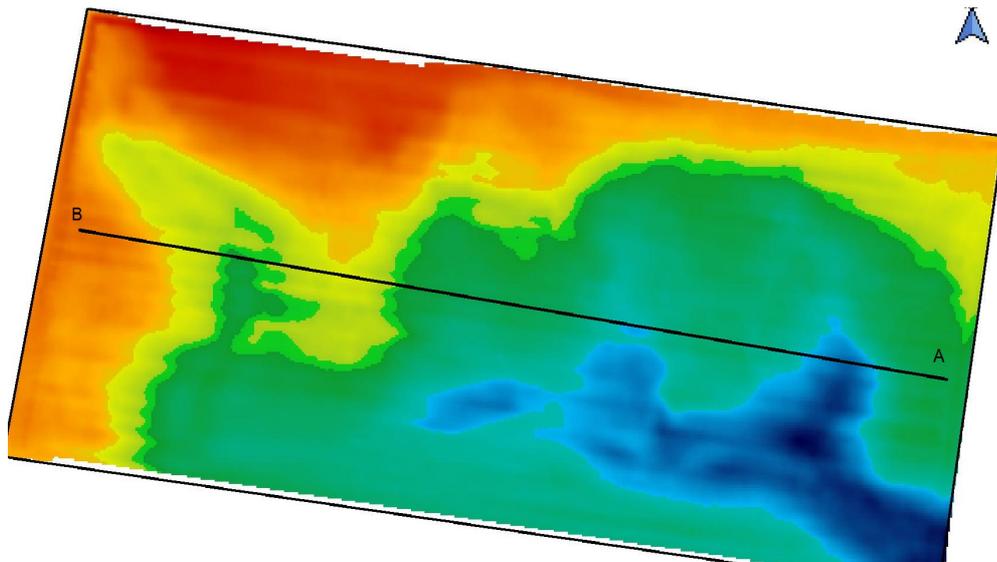
from Rod Grant

Hi all,

What an interesting year! We can't complain about it though, as we have all set some new records (don't think we have ever grown less than 2.5t/ha or used more than 4 Megs/ha growing semi irrigated cotton). Also developing a much closer relationship with our banking buddies, with the Commonwealth Bank announcing record half year profits of \$4.27 Billion or \$23.4 million a day it probably provides a good conversation starter. Though their ROA isn't anything to write home about, at a little over 3%.

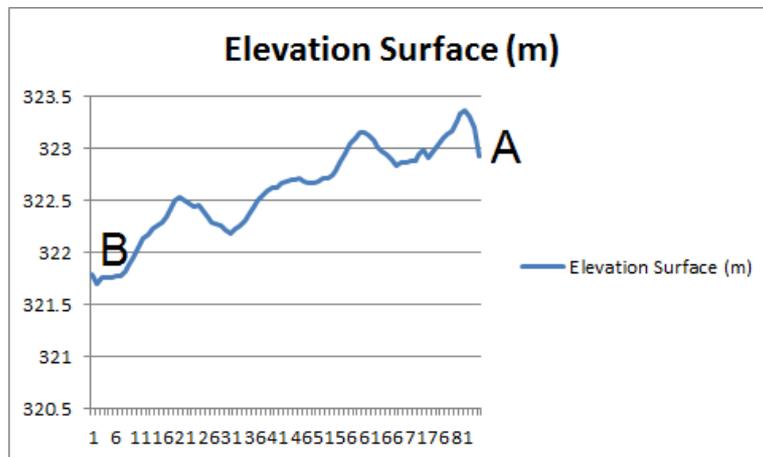
On Farm

- Bought 550 ac off neighbour midway through 2013, trying to get it into shape. Not quite going to budget as yet. There is always next year! Lucky the banks are making money.
- Been pretty busy watering cotton. Just finished 3rd in crop watering. 1st 80mm, 2nd 150mm 3rd 140mm. A total of 370 mm or 3.7 megs with 1 more to go if no rain.
- Watching Sorghum turn into pineapples.....Like most of us, excepting those that live in an Oasis at the southern end of the Plains (not mentioning any names...and yes I am jealous).
- Doing 44ha's of dryland drainage work with a laser bucket retrofitted with a Greenstar RTK receiver. Running 3rd Party software from PCT (Precision Cropping Technology). This software is running on a standard Windows 8 tablet and integrates with the tractor hydraulics to control the cutting edge of the bucket. This is a much more efficient method of leveling dry land paddocks than the conventional laser system. PCT has a web site with more information and contact details. I have included some pics below that explain it a bit better.
- Cropping, pretty ordinary winter. Mostly Durum wheat, going from 2t/ha on the new block to 3.5t/ha. Short fallow Durum on Chickpea went about 3t/ha with less inputs than the long fallow. (I thought this was a good result given the amount of in crop rainfall).

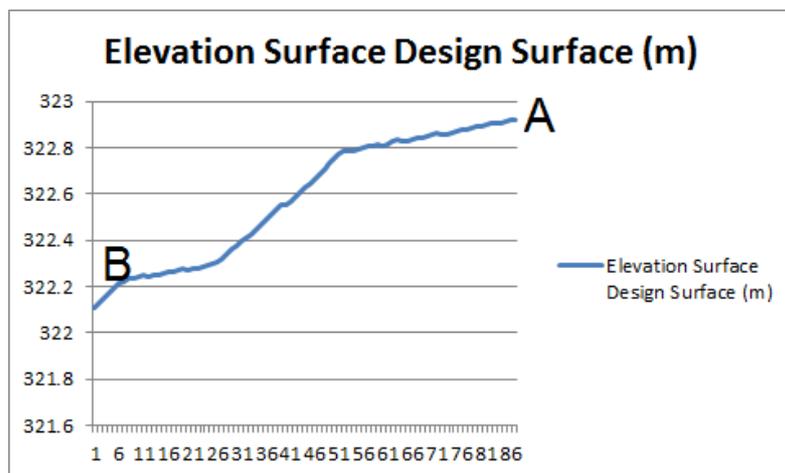


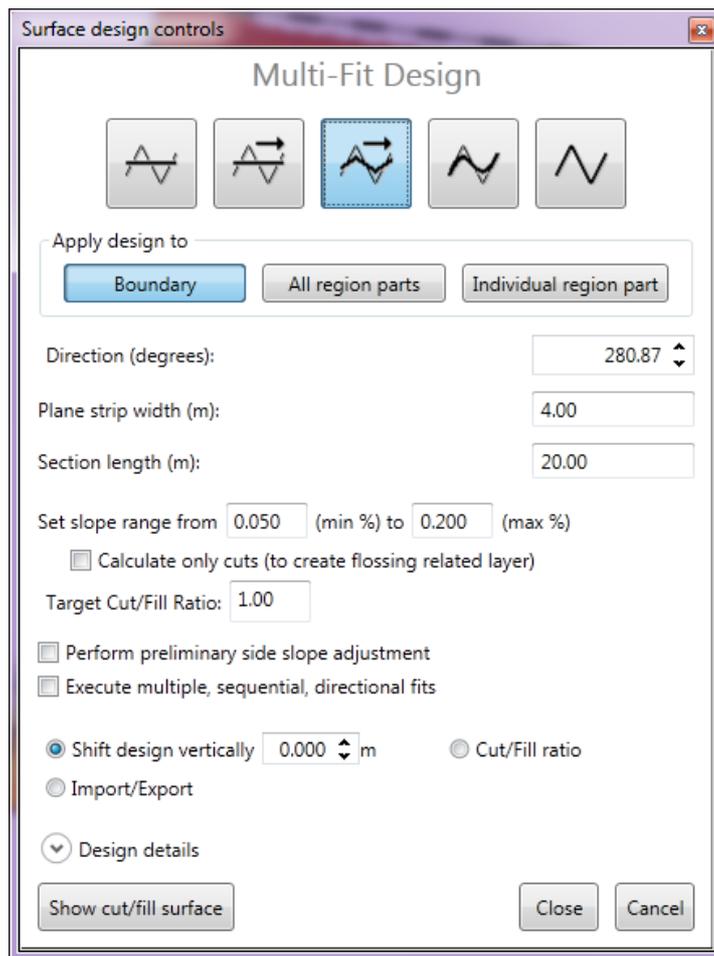
This elevation map is directly from a Greenstar planting pass in July 2013. With our runs going from A-B. The total fall of 1.6 mtrs over 950 mtrs is more than adequate for excellent drainage, however the small rises of up to 20cm as seen in the cross section A-B (below) cause real headaches. These imperfections in the slope cause water to sit in the tramlines, poor establishment and yield losses in wet years.

Existing Cross section slope



New cross section slope





With the ability to set minimum and maximum slope and the ability to divide your paddocks into 5 different sections, the amount of dirt moved can be reduced to an absolute minimum.

Here's hoping that 2014 is a better year than the last 2 and that the BoM keep there good record intact with their prediction of slight El Nino conditions heading into April.

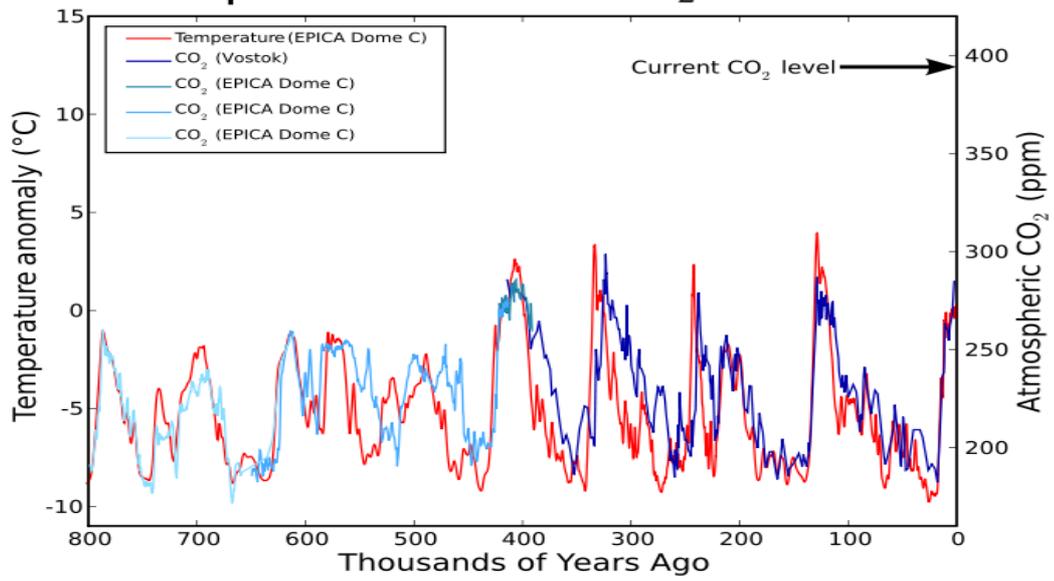
Off Farm

Had a quick get away over to Emerald Beach with the family.
 Kids all well, with Ben 13 in Yr 8 at William Cowper, Sam 11 in Yr 6 at Quirindi and Jamie Yr 1 at Quirindi. Kel very busy running them around to Music, Tennis coaching and the rest.

Climate Change

Yes, I am passionate about this subject.
 Many of you think it is hogwash.
 What's the point of doing anything about it when other major polluters are not? Probably not much.
 Yes it has been hotter and colder in the past (4.5 C), as seen (red line) in graph below.
 Yes it does occur in cycles.
 CO² has increased by 40 % since 1750. Radiative forcing of 1.85 watts/Mtr²

Temperature and CO₂ Records



This Graph does show a strong correlation between temperature and CO₂.

If I were a gambler, I'd put the odds of the temperature continuing to rise at well over 2 to 1 over the next 20 yrs. Any of you younger blokes (under 50) prepared to take a punt on that?

A carbon tax or something of the like will occur. The longer nothing is done the more costly it will be.

Cheers Rod.