



The Australian White Sheep: A Sustainable Companion in Cropping Farming - Turning Trash into Cash.

Sustainability is not just a buzzword but a necessity for survival. For Cory Irvin, a cropping farmer based in Barrellan in the Riverina, sustainability isn't just a goal; it's a way of life. Embracing innovative methods that blend traditional farming practices with modern sustainability principles, Cory has found a unique ally in his quest for a greener, more efficient farm, the Australian White Sheep.

In his pursuit of sustainability, Cory shared insights into his farming practices and how Australian White Sheep have become instrumental, "When people think of cropping farming, they often overlook the role that livestock can play," he explains. "But for me, integrating Aussie White sheep into my operation has been a game-changer."

Reduction of spray costs has been one of the key benefits of incorporating Australian White Sheep. By allowing the sheep to graze on crop trash and weeds between cropping seasons, it has significantly decreased the need for chemical herbicides. "Instead of relying solely on chemicals to control weeds, I let the sheep do the work naturally," he states. "Not only does this save me money on inputs, but it also reduces the environmental impact of excessive chemical use."

Moreover, Irvin emphasises the importance of chemical rotation facilitated by the presence of sheep. "Constantly using the same chemicals can lead to resistance in weeds, making them harder to control over time," he explains. "But by rotating between chemical and natural weed control methods with the help of the sheep, we can effectively manage weed populations while minimising the risk of resistance."

So, how does Irvin manage to integrate Australian White Sheep into his cropping operation effectively? "It's all about careful planning and timing," he reveals. "I strategically graze the sheep on the crop residue and weeds during fallow periods between cropping seasons. The Whites really do eat just about anything, especially our woodier weeds like skeleton weed and fleabane, they even give the patersons curse a peppering. Coming off the back of some very heavy winters, which are bringing our early summer weeds up earlier, the Whites are saving a knock on them really, saving \$20 a hectare if not more."

But perhaps the most significant advantage of integrating sheep into his cropping operation is the diversification it brings to his farm. "Diversification is crucial for resilience in farming," he emphasises. "By having multiple streams of income from

both crops and livestock, I can better withstand market fluctuations and unforeseen challenges."

When asked about the future of sustainable farming, Cory is optimistic. "I believe that sustainable farming practices, like the ones I've implemented, are the way forward," he asserts. "Not only do they benefit the environment and our communities, but they also ensure the long-term viability of agriculture."

Cory Irvin's innovative approach to cropping, serves as a beacon of hope for a more sustainable future in agriculture..

By harnessing the power of Australian White Sheep, he has demonstrated that profitability and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand. Through careful planning, strategic management, and a commitment to sustainability, Irvin has paved the way for a more profitable, greener, more resilient agricultural sector.

As other farmers look to emulate his success, one thing is clear, the Australian White Sheep are here to stay, shaping the future of how his cropping operation operates.



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