



Lessons from the Field

Fragapane Farms - Andrew Fragapane



National Vegetable Extension Network

VICTORIA - NORTHERN,
WESTERN & SOUTH EASTERN

Werribee South grower Andrew Fragapane took home the highly contested VegNET Sponsored R&D Adoption Award, as part of the 2017 AUSVEG VIC Awards for Excellence. Andrew and the team at Fragapane Farms have been actively engaged in a Soil Wealth / Integrated Crop Protection demonstration site, trialling reduced tillage, cover crops and compost application.

Adoption of trial learnings

Based on learnings through the trials, Andrew is actively improving his soil health management through adopting cover cropping and minimum tillage across his farms.

Andrew commented “our long-term plan is to have a cover crop with every commercial crop across the whole property, we just need to get there.”

“The hardest part for us, planning it” says Andrew.

Continuing to find the right system and program that works for him, Andrew is exploring ways in which he can manage the scheduling of cover crops with his commercial crops. This includes looking to short window cover crops (i.e. six weeks) and pulling back the intensity in which he manages blocks through bringing additional land into production.

Trial results

Details of the trial site at Fragapane Farms is available [here](#), with the results of a farm walk in September 2016, showing a less than 5% production difference between reduced-till (two cultivations) and conventional till (seven cultivations) highlighted [here](#).

Andrew shares his experience in participating in the national Soil Wealth and Integrated Crop Protection project and the lessons he has applied on farm in this [short video](#).

Key lessons

- Fragapane Farms were awarded the VegNET Sponsored R&D Adoption Award as part of the 2017 AUSVEG VIC Awards for Excellence
- The award was for their active involvement in the Soil Wealth / Integrated Crop Protection demonstration site
- The trials included reduced tillage, cover crops and compost application
- Widespread adoption of the lessons from the trial is on the cards, with work towards planning scheduling of cover crops with commercial crops



Andrew Fragapane during a farm walk of a trial site at one of Fragapane Farms properties in Werribee South