

Hartley Grazing Company, Mendooran NSW

Managing Water Reliability on a Large-Scale Property

The challenge

Sprawling across 25,270 acres, Hartley Grazing Company has 2,500 breeding cows, the majority of which are Angus cross-breeds. They consume plenty of water, and for General Manager, Norton Crane, that meant spending the equivalent of a day a week checking water levels.

"A complete water run, checking every trough, would involve driving up to 200 km on a motorbike. It's a thankless task, because if they're full you've wasted your time," he explains.

Before he installed an Observant system, Norton described water management as 'driving the car without the headlights on'.

"Water is the biggest issue in the country. Black soil doesn't hold water, so the cows rely on stored water."

He chose Observant because they already had a track record in setting up similar systems.

The Observant solution

Outwest Pumps and Irrigation, in Dubbo, teamed up with Observant, to install six units on Hartley Grazing's tanks, and a rain gauge on the main bore. The units report the tank levels, and pumps are set to start and stop to keep water levels 'close to full'.

Before installing Observant's system, water was having to be checked every day in summer and 2 - 3 times a week in every other season; with each water run being a full day's worth of work. After installing Observant's system, the water run now only needs to be done once a week.

Norton can also now check his water from his computer every morning, rather than driving out to the tanks. He currently accesses the data through the Observant software and will soon be checking it online on his new iPad.

"It's an extremely reliable product, built for a hard environment," says Michael Morris of Outwest Pumps and Irrigation in Dubbo. "It ensures you've always got the information you need right in front of you. And there's even the possibility to automate your pumps - so you really can do it all from your lounge room."



Norton Crane, Hartley Grazing Company, Mendooran NSW

Adding up the cost savings

Hartley Grazing Co estimate they've saved:

- Number of full days required for the water runs
- Wear and tear on motorbikes and vehicles
- Fuel in the motorbikes and vehicles
- Electricity running pumps when they're not needed
- Water, because tanks no longer overflow

Immediate benefits

Michael believes that for Harley Grazing the system has already paid for itself - and then some. "Two of the biggest costs on a farm are diesel and manpower, so if you can reduce those you're going to make significant savings."

Hartley Grazing used to have a jackeroo dedicated to water runs. Now that labour can be used for direct revenue-producing tasks such as sales, weaning and marking. "It has turned what was potentially a three to four man enterprise into a two man enterprise," says Michael.

By making the operation more efficient, Norton can also spend more time focusing on his normal cattle responsibilities, confident that he doesn't have to worry about water.

It's now easier to detect and resolve any issues with the pumps or tanks. "If I see the water levels drop suddenly on my computer, I know there's a problem and I'm out there fast," he explains.

Getting the Observant software up and running was no problem. "It was no trouble at all, the simplest thing in the world. It's just brilliant."

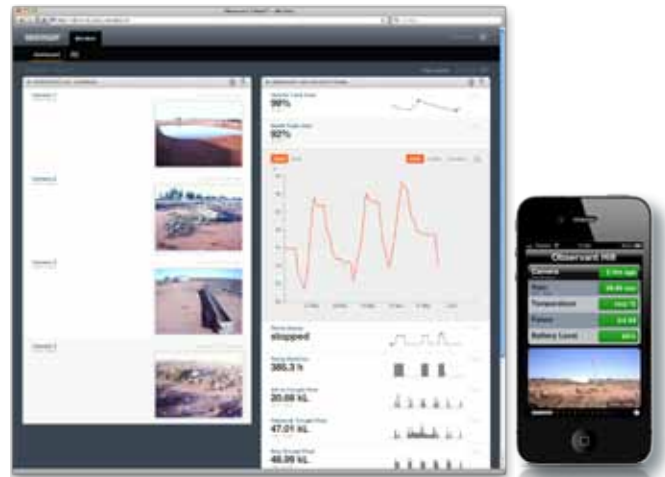
And for Norton, the biggest benefit of his new system is simply knowing that the water is there. "I don't know that you can put a value on peace of mind. That's the most important thing of all."

Extending the benefits

"Observant can help you do many other things too," says Norton. I could add flow meters, or scales to weigh the cattle. But first I'm going to add more sites, and automate the bore pumps to turn on and off according to the tank levels."

Norton will also be taking full advantage of his remote management system when he is absent from the property. He will be keeping an eye on the water usage using his iPad.

"Observant has a very good potential to change the way farming is done," says Michael. "There's an immediate advantage in the way you can curb inefficient ways of doing business, and the ongoing cost is just a fraction of the savings."



View

Keep track of critical water information on your computer or online.

Alert

Receive alerts via SMS or by email upon critical events.

Control

Control your equipment remotely with Observant software.

Observant Global™ Software Services



C2 water level monitoring solution
Hartley Grazing Company, Mendooran NSW

Observant is an Australian-owned company that designs, manufactures and distributes products and services for agricultural, urban and environmental water monitoring and management applications.

The solution, designed and built in Australia for Australian conditions, was specifically developed to improve water use efficiency in agriculture and to provide a tool for accurately gathering and interpreting information about remote water infrastructure for livestock and crops from a distance.

The Observant system is accessible for properties of all sizes and is supplied through a national network of resellers. It is simple to install and extremely cost-effective.

Observant's products recently received certification from Smart Approved WaterMark, Australia's independent water conservation label, for their ability to demonstrate real water savings.



Observant® is a registered trademark of Observant Pty Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders. Smart Approved WaterMark is Australia's water saving labelling program for products and services which are helping to reduce outdoor water use.

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Awards

2009 NAB Agribusiness Award for Excellence
Environment and Energy Management Award
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
(Finalist)

2009 Endeavour Awards
Australian Consumer / Trade Product of the Year
(Highly Commended)

2008 NAB Agribusiness Award for Excellence
Technology and Innovation Award
Australian Institute of Agricultural
Science and Technology
(Winner)



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