

Farm Management



Digital tools transform farm management



As digital farm management tools grow in popularity, two Kangaroo Island producers are testing the technology’s usefulness when it comes to internal data recording and farm security. Through the Department of Primary Industries and Regions’ Kangaroo Island AgTech Demonstration Program, Ashley Ness is looking to digitise his record keeping, while Josh Graham is hoping to combat stock theft.

Digital record keeping

Ashley Ness

TECHNOLOGY:	AgriWebb
LOCATION:	Parndana
PROPERTY SIZE:	285 hectares
ENTERPRISES:	Sheep and cattle

Ashley operates a 285-hectare mixed farming enterprise just outside of Parndana where he runs an 1100-head sheep flock and 50 cattle.

He recently took part in a 12-month trial of AgriWebb farm management software, aiming to replace the collection of paper notebooks that had long served as the backbone of his farm records.

“I always had a notebook in the ute, but these days I need half a dozen books to keep all the records we need,” he says.

Ashley first heard about AgriWebb through word of mouth within the local Agriculture Kangaroo Island (AgKI) group and was keen to explore how it might simplify his recording systems.

He was drawn to the promise of a single digital platform that could record livestock treatments, chemical use, paddock sprays and inventory. As someone who does not describe himself as especially tech-savvy, he found the platform increasingly intuitive the more he used it.

“We’re all moving towards doing more things on computers and online,” he says. “It’s simpler than a bunch of notebooks.”

Ashley uses AgriWebb on his Android phone and PC but plans to install an iPad in the ute to improve usability in the yards.

“It’s a bit difficult at the moment to stand there in the yards and get all



the data in on the small phone screen, but once I have an iPad I think it will be incredibly simple,” he says.

While the trial included features for managing staff, task scheduling, and performance graphing, Ashley focused mostly on the core functions related to livestock and paddock management.

With the support of his partner, who helped set the system up, Ashley now finds they can both check key data like stock numbers and paddock locations quickly and without needing to track each other down.

He has already experienced real-time benefits.

“If I’m in town when worm test results come through and I need to drench, I can go on the app, see what I have in stock, and pick up a new drench straight away. I don’t have to go home and rustle through the chemical shed,” he says.

Although he is still exploring how to make the most of the platform, Ashley has committed to continuing with the software since the trial ended.

“Technology isn’t really my thing and I’m still learning to make the most of it, but it’s already really useful. I’d recommend it for sure. I’d tell other farmers it’s something worth giving a go,” he says.

“There is great value in the ability to log farm activities in real time, rather than relying on memory at the end of a long day.

“You can record batch numbers, expiry dates—everything—in the moment. It only takes a couple of minutes and that makes a big difference.”



Farm security

While Ashley focuses on record-keeping, Duncan producer Josh Graham is adopting technology for a different aspect of farm management: security.

Josh, who farms 4000ha of sheep, cattle and crops near Parndana, is installing a network of security cameras from Land Watch Australia.

“We lost 100 head of sheep to thieves about five years ago,” he says.

“Around the same time, two of our neighbours had about the same number taken.”

He hopes the new technology will act as both a deterrent and a practical monitoring tool.

The Land Watch cameras will be strategically placed across the property to monitor vehicle movements and boundary activity. The system includes remote access capabilities, allowing Josh to check live footage or review historical recordings from his phone or computer.

“We haven’t had a chance to install the cameras yet, but when they’re working it will give us peace of mind,” Josh says.

Together, Ashley and Josh’s case studies show two ends of the farm management spectrum—internal data recording and external risk management—but both reflect the growing role of technology in the modern agricultural landscape.

“Even if you’re not that into tech, these tools are getting easier to use, and they really can make a difference,” Ashley says.

About the program

The KI AgTech Demonstration Program, funded by the Australian Government Regional Recovery Partnerships program, allowed KI primary producers to road test technologies free of charge on-farm and share their experiences with other producers on the use and benefits of the technologies.

More information: www.pir.sa.gov.au