

## AGRIRISK INNOVATIVE GROWER OF THE YEAR AWARD



### **SIMON AND SANDY DOOLIN** "CLEVELAND" NORTH STAR, NSW

Doolin Farming is a family owned and managed dryland and irrigated mixed farming enterprise at North Star in northern New South Wales, comprising two farms "Cleveland" and "Glenholma". The land is comprised of dryland (70 per cent), grazing (20 per cent) and irrigation farming (10 per cent).

The dryland country has a five year rotation with the main crops being wheat, barley, chickpeas and sorghum. New crops are constantly being sown to improve crop rotations. Control traffic has been adopted for the past 10 years with large gains in efficiencies, whilst no till farming practices have been adopted for the past 20 years with huge benefits to soil condition and moisture conservation.

The Doolin's innovations in crop rotation as well as water use efficiency savings through their use of centre pivots have achieved remarkable results. Overhead Zimmatic centre pivots are used for irrigation with water predominantly supplied from bores and the remainder from on-farm storages. The efficiencies of the pivots have increased dramatically with improvements in nozzle technology and pivot configurations. Over the years the Doolins have made adjustments to all the centre pivots to improve ease of operation and water use efficiency.

The pivots are long fallowed into cotton then doubled into wheat. For the last eight years cotton has been grown under the pivots with yields improving from seven bales per hectare to 12 bales per hectare. The water use is on average 3.7 megs per hectare to grow this yield, with the most recent season's crop (2009-10) averaging 3.2 bales per megalitre. A further by-product of their innovation in irrigation has seen the Doolan's save considerable money in labour costs.

The Doolin farming operation also has a long history of commitment to the cotton industry and agriculture in general with universities and plant breeding companies conducting extensive trials on their farms for over 50 years, resulting in up to date information on varieties and farming practices.

**FINALIST**

