



family business grows

BY BALANCING FARMING AND CONTRACTING

FARMING AND CONTRACTING ARE A NATURAL FIT. THEY GIVE MULTIPLE INCOME STREAMS, AND THEY PROVIDE FARMERS THE GEAR THEY NEED TO DO THEIR OWN WORK AND ADAPT TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Grant Jolley of Jolley Farms on the Fleurieu Peninsula, south of Adelaide began contracting about 1980. It was the usual story – he was doing his own work, neighbours asked him to do theirs, and eventually he was contracting as well as farming.

“Milk prices were low and dairy-ing alone was becoming unviable so the extra income was valuable. In those days there was less machinery and farmers relied more on contractors.”

Grant, along with help from his father (who passed away a few years ago), milked in the morning, went contracting, and then returned for the evening milk.

In the last 15 years, the family farm that Grant and his wife Debbie now own has expanded from 150 ha to about 910 ha and contracting has declined, but it still takes up a lot of the family’s time.

“We used to do a lot of seeding for other farms with the Duncan seeder, but then clients bought

their own and started doing their own work,” Grant says.

“It’s a lot easier to just make decisions on your own land. The worst part about contracting is when the busy periods begin you cannot be everywhere, and everyone wants you at the same time.”

Debbie does the bookwork for farm and contracting business, and also cares for the calves. Their two adult sons, Ben and Randall, also work on the farm.

“Ben does all the fertiliser cartage and Randall does a fair bit of

JOLLEY FARM IS IN THE HINDMARSH VALLEY ON THE FLEURIEU PENINSULA.

the tractor work, but we can all step into the dairy to milk, and do anything that needs to be done.” Ben and Randall are both married (Ben to Brooke and Randall to Mel), and there are three grandchildren. Mel and Brooke both have their own businesses so usually work off-farm, but are both happy to help out on the farm if needed.

JOLLEY FARM HAS BEEN IN THE JOLLEY FAMILY’S HANDS FOR GENERATIONS.



GRANT JOLLEY SAYS HE MAKES MEDIUM SQUARE SILAGE BALES FOR HIS OWN FARM BECAUSE OF THE CONVENIENCE.

◀ The mix of farming and contracting provides variety and work all year for staff.

They have two fulltime workers, Wayne and Nelson, who do the maintenance and drive tractors either on the farm or contracting.

“We’ve been really lucky. Wayne is from a farm at Carrington and is very experienced. He can do anything.

“Earlier this year we purchased a drone which is a really useful tool for checking crops and Nelson usually operates it taking photos.”

Peter has been milking for the Jolleys for the more than seven years, and Trevor is semi-retired, but returns to the farm to work for the hay season.

The 150 ha family farm is the dairy platform. They milk 250 Holstein Friesians in a 10 aside herringbone shed to supply La Casa del Formaggio cheese factory in Adelaide.

“It’s a good fit for us. We used to supply a big corporation, and then three years ago we had the opportunity to supply this smaller family business. They wanted to source their milk from local dairy farmers on the Fleurieu Peninsula. It’s much more personal, and consumers like to have a paddock-to-plate link.”

The beef unit ensures a good quality of life for all the calves born on their farm, including the steers.

The family built a shed last year for the cows to calve in. Animal welfare is now a very important part of farming practices so they do whatever can be done to improve their welfare.

“We did this to make things good for the animals. We lead feed them twice a day before calving which makes them become easier to handle and gets the animals used to grain feeds. The calves are feed twice a day. Then we wean them off. Our cows and calves are quiet to handle due to more interaction from us.”

The family owns and leases support blocks in a 30 km radius of Jolley Farm. The blocks are on Hindmarsh Island and at Finniss and Middleton. They would like



more land closer to home, but with an increase in tourism on the Fleurieu Peninsular and more lifestyle blocks, land is becoming too expensive.

They harvest about 500ha of wheat and barley and 120ha of faba beans off the run-offs. The faba beans are sold, while the cereals are harvested or made into hay for the dairy and beef cattle.

They also make small and medium square bales and round bales and sell what they do not use themselves.

Contracting work is mostly around the southern Fleurieu Peninsula. The soils vary greatly throughout the area and can include wet flats and sandy loams along with some hilly to undulating country.

The services the contracting business provides include spraying, cultivating, seeding, silage, hay, and fertiliser cartage and spreading.

Most of their machinery is bought from the two local dealers in Strathalbyn, G&J East and ND&JA Giles.

“They are both very good dealers. Both have a good range of machinery and are very dedicated. They give us excellent after sales service. They know their products well and are on the forefront with modern technology.”

Jolley Farms has its own spray gear, a trailing Hardi Navigator 5000 with a 24m boom and auto section cut off.

Discing and seeding begins as

early as March for irrigated properties, and seeding is finished by mid-June.

Paddocks to be seeded are prepared with either the Lemken Rubin or the Kubota speed discs.

“They are both very good at handling trash left from previous year’s crops and at levelling any rough spots. They leave paddocks in perfect condition for

seeding after just one pass.”

In the early part of autumn they can both go straight into unsprayed trash, but once the rain starts, Grant sprays, discs and then sprays again before seeding. That gets rid of any weeds and makes it easier for the discs.

The Kubota discs arrived last year. The Jolleys chose them as



➤ **NEW HOLLAND 14720 MOWER CONDITIONERS ARE USED TO HARVEST PASTURE, LUCERNE AND WHOLE CROP.**



THE JOLLEY FAMILY HARVESTS THEIR OWN GRAIN WITH A NEW HOLLAND CX880NH.

◀ they were recommended by G & J East and they thought they would suit what the family do. The Kubota disc harrow works at about 14 kph. “At 6.0m wide, it covers a lot of ground.”

The older Lemken speed discs do a similar job and they often work the two disc harrows together.

Jolley Farms has three 3.0m

↗ Duncan seeders and two air seeders, a 6.0m Great Plains Spartan and a 6.0m Horwood Bagshaw.

The Duncan seeders are two Enviro 3000Es and one Renovator MK4. They are set on 125mm row spacings and Grant says they are very good at handling small seeds including clover, rape, turnip, oats and rye grass.

“They are really good precision seeders, though high maintenance. The crop is established quickly and very precisely. Duncan seeders will sow anything.”

The Spartan air seeder is used for cereals and broadacre jobs.

“At 6.0m it can sow larger acreage in a day. It is low on maintenance and does a very good job.”

↗ The Spartan is the seeder they go to for drilling into heavy stubble. It takes 1.5 tonnes of seed and another 1.5 tonnes of fertiliser.

Grant likes to put sow crops with fertiliser, and he then goes back once the crop is established to broadcast more fertiliser.

The Horwood Bagshaw air seeder is used mainly for general cropping and is a good all round seeder.

Silage season begins in September. Hay starts around the first week of October and continues to around mid-November.

Dairy farms use mostly medium square or round bale silage, sheep and beef farms want mainly hay, and lifestyle blocks want small square bales of hay.

The crop – whether pasture, lucerne or whole crop – is cut with New Holland 14720 mower conditioners. The conditioner makes it softer and probably saves a couple of days drying. Raking is with a 6.0m Krone Swadro rotary rake.

Grant says because of the amount of road travel between the blocks all of the equipment can be folded to 3.0m to move between blocks.

“This saves time as there is no need for escort vehicles. The farm is situated on a very busy road with a lot of tourist traffic.

“There are more rules on road travel with large vehicles, and everyone is less patient. Shifting anything wider than 3.0m is a real hassle.”



THE SELF-PROPELLED BALE BARON WORKS AT 16 KPH AND PICKS UP ABOUT 1100 SMALL SQUARES/HOUR.

THE FARMING AND CONTRACTING BUSINESS HAS THREE DUNCAN DRILLS IN ITS FLEET.

↗ A new Holland BB890 Crop Cutter medium square baler does both hay and silage.

“We used to do only round bale silage but changed to squares for our own farm, and now clients are also appreciating the convenience of square bales.

“They are quicker to make, easier to cart and to mix in our Jaylor mixer and they don’t roll down hills.”

The bales are 3x3x8 and the Jolleys produce about 10,000 of them a season. The only downside of squares is they need to be carted under cover quickly if rain threatens.

Two New Holland BR 760 round balers make 15,000 round bales per season.

The bales are tube-wrapped with bales stacked two high.

“Continuous wrappers use a lot less plastic, so there’s less waste to get rid of and it’s better for the environment, and cheaper for farmers.”

The Anderson continuous wrapper came with excellent recommendations by local dealers.

Grant and the team generally make tubes of about 250 bales. Farmers often feed out 10 bales at a time so go through a tube quickly.

“We have three small square balers, which make about 60,000 bales a season. Most of the bales go to people with horses or to fodder stores although we keep some to feed our own calves, as it is so convenient,” Grant says.

Two of the small square balers are New Holland 757s and one is a Massey Ferguson 1840. Generally two or three balers work at the





THE 6.0m HORWOOD BAGSHAW AIR SEEDER IS USED FOR GENERAL CROPPING.

A GREAT PLAINS SPARTAN AIR SEEDER IS USED FOR CEREALS AND BROADACRE JOBS.

same time to speed things up. Can you imagine picking up 60,000 bales by hand as it used to be done? The Jolleys have solved the problem of shifting small squares with a Marcrest Bale Baron. This cunning beast gobbles up bales, arranges them and releases them as bundles of 21 bales. "The Marcrest Bale Baron is fantastic. It is quick and saves labour. The small bale market is increasing with the number of horse owners in the area and the Bale Baron has enabled us to grow this side of the business." Straight after baling the Bale Baron is on the job. It takes 10 minutes to load a truck and trailer with 25 packs (which amounts to 525 small square bales). "It brings it back to being a one-man job. The bales are carted and safely stored in sheds before they can be weather damaged." The Jolleys used to have a trailing Bale Baron, but this season traded it in on a self-propelled. "It freed up a tractor and is a lot

quicker and faster. It has a chute in the middle and I just need to steer," Grant says. "It works at 16 kph and picks up about 1100 small square bales per hour. Before we got it small square bales were the least favoured bales for us to do as they were the most labour intensive." Harvesting grain is from mid-November until about Christmas. Fleurieu Peninsula is not a big cropping area, hence they have bought their own New Holland CX880NH harvester for their wheat, barley and beans rather than relying on contractors. Fertiliser keeps Ben busy from March until September. He carts 10-tonne 'Stork Bins' of fertiliser out to properties whose owners have ordered fertiliser through their preferred rural stores or fertiliser agents. Stork bins are on legs and farmers load their spreaders by backing under the bin and opening a chute on the bottom of the bin. Grant and his sons tried a lot of tractors over the years and now they have six Fendts. "Once I got my first Fendt none of us wanted to drive anything else, so I have gradually replaced all of our tractors for Fendts," he says.

CONTRACTING HAS ENABLED JOLLEY FARM TO EXPAND

It has provided work for Grant and Debbie Jolley's sons Ben and Randall so they can remain on the farm. The farm has been in the Jolley family's hands for several generations and life at Jolley farm is always busy as the farm grows and the business becomes more diverse. "It would be our wish that our sons can continue farming the family farm into the future and hopefully our grandchildren have the love for farming that we have," Grant says. **AC**

"The Fendt tractors are very comfortable and fuel-efficient with excellent technology. They seldom have mechanical problems. We also value the road speed of 55 kph for getting to jobs quickly." The models they have are 724, 720, 718, 716, 514 and 512, and they range in horsepower from 240hp to 120hp. All the tractors run with the standard Fendt GPS. "We used to use foam markers and now it is all GPS and so much more efficient. We are not overlapping or missing spots, which saves money on chemicals." Also important to the business are the trucks, trailers, and a drop deck semi-trailer. A Freightliner does most of the fertiliser cartage and two Volvos and a

Scania drop deck semi cart bales between properties. The trucks were bought second hand and are doing a splendid job. Otherwise whenever possible, the family likes to buy new gear. They prefer new tractors and trade them in while they are still in good condition to get a good price. "We used to trade in at about 3000 hours, but now we have tractors on 7000 hours and still going perfectly. The Fendts have good resale value even after 6000 hours." **AC**

BY POPULAR DEMAND FROM HIS SONS AND EMPLOYEES, GRANT JOLLEY REPLACED ALL HIS OLD TRACTORS WITH FENDTS.

