

New silos a winner at Condobolin

Condobolin farming couple Roger and Fabien Todd know only too well the benefits of storing barley on-farm to wait for a price premium.

They picked up an extra \$100 per tonne, or about 50 per cent more, by selling stored barley in August this year rather than at harvest in November the previous year.

Two new 285 tonne grain silos meant they were able to take advantage of the predictable price improvement.

"The thing with barley is it's tricky to store – due to the bugs especially," said Roger.

"These silos are elevated, fully sealed and aerated – so there's less likelihood of anything going wrong.

"We've had deliveries rejected in the past because we were using older, less reliable silos to store our grain – so we know the benefits of the new, modern silos."

The Todds are so convinced by the benefits that they have utilised a \$220,000 loan from the Farm Innovation Fund to increase their farm grain storage further with another two 285 tonne grain silos to add to the two put in last year with bank finance.

Roger and Fabien's property 'Wirrinun' includes 2500 hectares of controlled traffic system cropping and 7500 hectares of pastures for agistment livestock.

"We're finishing off a project with the grain storage," said Roger.

"The four silos will further improve harvest efficiency because they are placed strategically in the farm's controlled traffic area so the headers can keep going at harvest."

The Todds have also used part of the funds to vastly improve their stock and domestic water system with tanks and troughs fed from a reticulated supply.

"In 2003 we built a large 12 mega-litre dam in a good catchment area – but it is in a 300 acre paddock and we wanted to distribute the water to other paddocks," said Roger.

"This year we have put in a large solar pump at the dam, lifting water up to a 20,000 litre tank at a high point.

"We then reticulate the water to eight cup and saucer troughs around the farm – four 25,000 litre troughs and four 5000 litre troughs.

"We now have two watering points in most of our paddocks which is great for good even grazing." "With large mobs of 300 head running together, it helps having water at both ends of the paddock to distribute grazing pressure.

"Also, I think stock do better with fresh running water – especially sheep – rather than muddy dam water.

"The new system has definitely given us more options with our livestock."

Roger said he hadn't put a price benefit on the increased efficiency but it would be significantly more over time than the upfront cost.

"Like many investments on farm, the cost benefit of adopting something new is clearly beneficial but the upfront money is what is hard to find," he said.

"This loan has helped with that upfront money."

"We're also storing chickpeas and wheat at harvest time, as well as the barley.

"With chickpeas there are no local delivery points so it's best for us to store it on farm and deliver it to Dubbo afterwards.

