



2009 Finalist

AgriRisk Innovative Grower of the Year

Commins Partnership: Roger & Tim Commins – Whitton, NSW

Over the years, Roger and Tim Commins have implemented many innovations on their property, the most important one being the terraced, bankless channels they developed seven years ago for more efficient irrigation. The Commins brothers were the first growers to use channels without banks on sloping ground, and through this innovation, have managed to increase their property's water use efficiency, save on labour costs, decrease the incidences of waterlogging, and bring forward their harvest time. As proof of the effectiveness of these terraced channels, they have become a model for new irrigators in the Lachlan Valley to follow.

To ensure the long term sustainability of their farming operation, Roger and Tim continually look for ways to refine their farming techniques and improve their best management practices. They have developed a system of incorporating heavy maize stubble in their cropping cycle instead of burning it. Their development of the terraced, bankless channel irrigation layout has yielded the biggest improvement in irrigation efficiency over any of their existing systems. Increased water use efficiency is also a priority, and all irrigation is timed using soil moisture probes. Over the past ten years, the Commins brothers have also diversified their operation to take advantage of business opportunities that have arisen. They plant crops such as seed sunflower, seed onions, faba beans, commercial hemp and wheat in addition to their cotton crops, and have branched out into siculture and liquid fertiliser manufacturing. Roger and Tim host a wide range of industry field days as their property is a prime example of a successful diversified farming enterprise. They take risks with their innovative approach to farming, and have established themselves as highly successful growers and leaders in their area.