

Irrigated farm businesses

Increasing the resilience

Irrigated farm businesses currently face a number of problems—reduced water allocations and river flows, increased climate variability, and economic pressures.

In order to remain profitable and increase the productivity of water supplies, urgent action is required.

The Agricultural Production Systems Research Unit (APSRU) is conducting research on the resilience of irrigated farm businesses in eastern Australia.

This research project aims to provide farmers with best-practice guidance on how to increase the profitability of irrigated farm businesses—maintaining productivity and the resource base in the face of declining irrigation water supplies.

APSRU believes this can be achieved by:

1. designing more resilient and profitable farm businesses (e.g. enterprise mix, resource allocation, scale of the business, reduction in overhead costs, contracting vs own machinery)
2. optimising water allocation between alternative enterprises across all sources of water (run-off, river and bore) and soil types
3. improving the profitability–risk profile of the farm business by changing cropping intensities, and measuring and enhancing the management of climatic and economic risks.

This project will work towards these objectives by developing a participatory research program with case study farm businesses in the Riverina district, northern New South Wales, and southern and central Queensland. It will investigate the impact of alternative agronomic practices and whole-of-farm irrigation strategies on the trade-offs between whole-farm profitability (\$/ML), economic risk and environmental outcomes.



More information

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