

Dear Review Members,

I am fourth generation farmer. Mt Gt. Grandfather moved to Wagerup from Yanathan in the South of Victoria in the 1890's.

My Grandfather was a group settlement foreman in Manjimup W.A. and established a farm in the Karri Forest.

My father at 20 ( with his wife Maureen) took up this land in the Mt. Marshall Shire W.A. in 1960/61, cleared and established the farm where I now farm along

with my wife Noela and 2 sons, Jonathan and Kale who are in their early 20's.

My father started using chemicals to control weeds and insects in the 1970's and fell very ill in 1984 in the middle of seeding and went

from 85kg to 65kg and was admitted to Sir Charles Gardner Hospital in Perth, so my younger brother Gary and I (I was 20) put in our

6000 acre cropping program with the help of friends and neighbours.

My father, Ted Aitken (who died of cancer) remained on Cortisone for the remained of his 15 yrs and passed away on the 30th December

2000 aged 61 yrs. (his grandfather, father and 3 brothers lived into their 80's).

It was in 2000 that I visited an organic farm with an interest in farming without chemicals and in 2005 started farming using natural

farming systems.

For the first 25 yrs of my farming career I used lots of chemicals and fertilizers (up to some \$300,000 worth annually).

Seeing my father pass away somewhat too soon and us always in debt (in 2004 after the money was in from the yrs work we still owed

250,000 and we decided not to borrow another \$800,000 to do it again).

We decided to visit another organic farm and in March 2008 we applied for organic certification through NASAA (National Association of

Sustainable Agriculture Australia).

The best years of my farming life these last 6 years and I so enjoy smelling the soil again instead of chemicals.

I did harvested in December 2010 with a fellow organic farmer and his name is John (and wife Jenny) Schwarz at Loxton S.A. who helped me to go

in this direction and who has been organic farming for 18 years and his farm is thriving.

I have developed good markets for my organic produce in Perth (Wheat and Rye).

Noela and I have not had to teach our sons how to use agricultural chemicals apart from back line on the sheep occasionally.

I went to Cunderdin Agricultural College and my sons did a certificate 2 and 3 in Agriculture through TAFE W.A.

We so enjoy farming here and hope to be still able to farm organically which is best for our health (and probably for our customers to), and

to supply organic produce to an ever increasing customer and we trust that you will still enable us to continue to do this.

I realize this will arrive after your 5pm but not by W.A time, so am still sending it onto you.

Your faithfully

Phil Aitken