

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 25 February, 2026

# Local farmer shares the proof is in the data when it comes to farm business

Little is left to chance on Scott and Luke Clark's Jamestown farm, with their data-driven approach taking the guesswork and emotion out of decision-making.

Alongside their spouses and business partners Jaimie and Bernadette, the Clarks say a mindset shift towards treating the farm as a business had refined the way they run their operation.

Scott will be the keynote farmer speaker at the upcoming Hart Field-Site Group Getting The Crop In seminar in Clare on Wednesday, March 11, where he will throw open the gate for a look at what they are doing on-farm.

"We really asked ourselves is this a family farm, or a family business?", Scott says.

With parents Denis and Mary retired into Jamestown, Scott (pictured below) and Luke established some clear roles within the business, based on their strengths and experience gained in finance and agronomy before returning to the family farm.



"Our roles were born out of necessity really, wanting to make things work better and get where we wanted to be, and it developed fairly naturally when I came home on the farm in 1999 and Luke in 2004," Scott said.

"There's an old saying that 'if you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got', but we

really wanted to optimise our business and look at ways we could achieve that."

That shift has led to variable rate mapping across their Bundaleer, Belalie East, Spalding and Hallett blocks, where results vary dramatically between paddocks.



The Clarks also now only run sheep on their non-arable country, not on stubbles, have adopted controlled traffic and disc seeding, and have embraced technology including moisture probes, weather stations, PCT soil sampling technology, and the Agworld farm management system.

"It means we know exactly where the season is tracking, we have a gauge of where we're at all the time, and where we need to be to break even in poor years and maximise profit in good years," Scott said.

"There's not a lot of guesswork anymore.

"For example, last season, the Hallett block had moisture and Spalding didn't, so money was spent at Hallett and the crops were 1t/ha, better there than they were at Spalding.

"If we were to have had a guess at those moisture levels, we'd have probably thought it would be the reverse."

The Clarks operate on a legume, canola, wheat rotation in their 2500ha cropping program.

"Canola has been our most successful and profitable crop for the past seven or eight years, and was only just pipped by lentils this year," Scott said.

"It's expensive to sow, but it stacks up gross margin wise, so while it might feel like we're spending too much, at the back end, with improvements in ground cover and our increase in legumes, it's increased our canola yields significantly and it has become a big part of our rotation."

The biggest shift, Scott said, was financial certainty.

"I can go to our bank manager and be able to tell them exactly what our crop is going to cost, and if it rains how much extra urea we want to put on because we've soil tested," Scott said.

"I already know what my overdraft peak is going to be at the end of October and it means we can meet with the bank, have it all ticked off and it's just a stress you don't have to think about for the rest of the year."

Scott will give an insight into the family's approach to variable rate lime application, and the consequent improvements to the pH levels on their red sodic clay soils, also improvements to water use efficiency.

He'll speak about their early experiences with a centre pivot irrigation trial they are undertaking themselves at the Hallett block, as well as the importance of variety selection when it comes to their greatest risk, frost.

"Frost even more so than rainfall is our biggest downfall, and it costs us a lot more money than dry weather," Scott said.

"We do our own trials on varieties because we have to see what works on our place, the results really stand out on a yield map and that helps us with variety selection."

Scott will also speak about some of the things that have not worked on the farm.

"Things like snails, slugs and slaters means that the system is still changing, it's definitely not set and forget," he said.



Hear more from Scott at the free Getting The Crop In event on Wednesday, March 11, from 8am to 12.30pm at Futures Church, Stradbroke Road, Clare (just north of the Clare racecourse).

A light breakfast and morning tea will be provided, thanks to the support of Ag-fert.

SA Drought Hub will be running a free, crop establishment forum immediately after Getting The Crop In, where a panel of industry experts will engage with the audience to reflect on the learnings of the past season and delve into the complexities of seeding in 2026.

Register via Eventbrite, or the Hart website [www.hartfieldsite.org.au](http://www.hartfieldsite.org.au)

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