

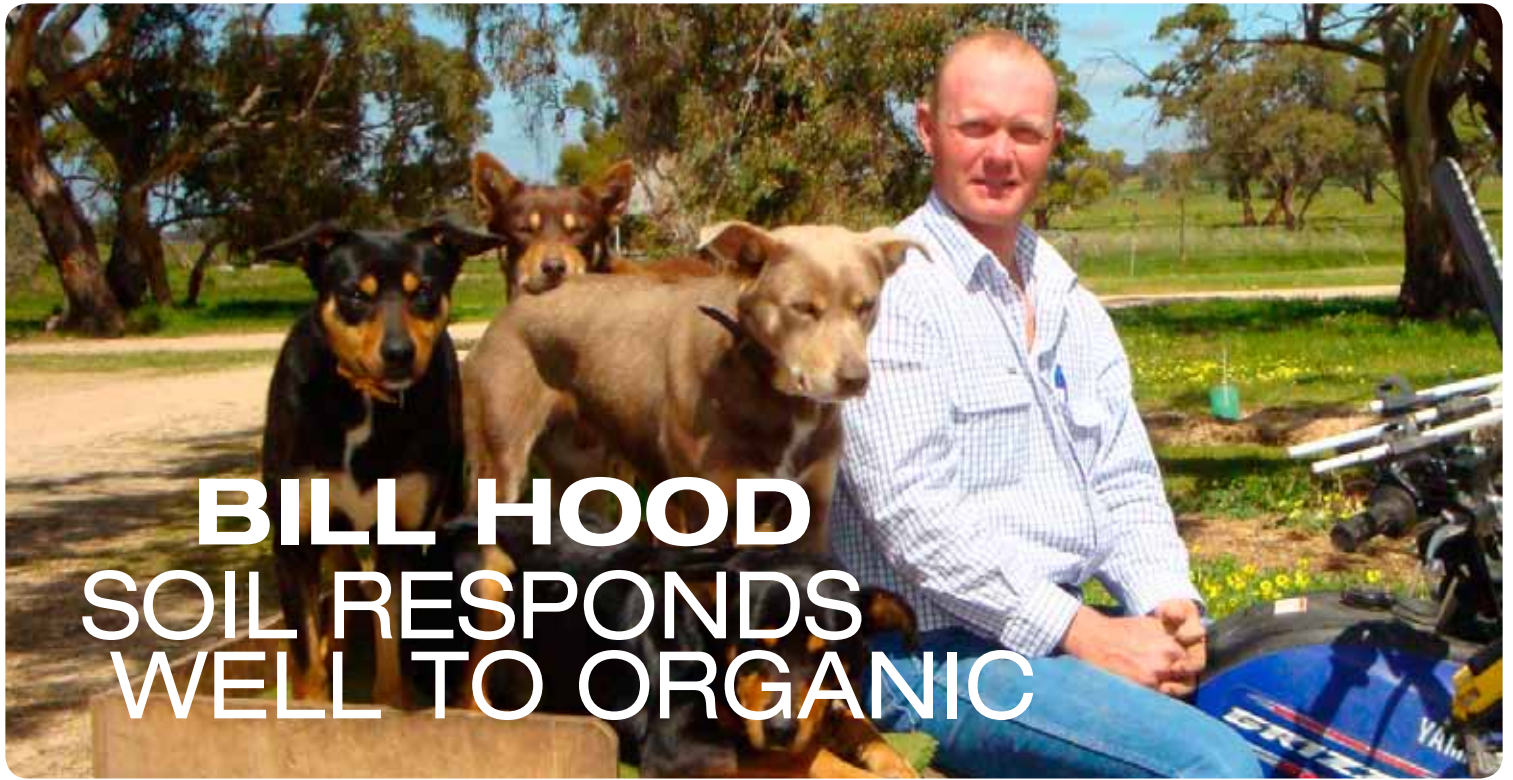
# feedback

commercial

UPDATE FROM NEUTROG #11

**BILL HOOD: SOIL RESPONDS WELL**  
**WINNELL AUSNATIVE FLORA**  
**ON THE TURF FRONT**  
**THE LANE VINEYARD**  
**SEAMUNGUS**  
**TELSTRA AWARDS**





# BILL HOOD SOIL RESPONDS WELL TO ORGANIC

Bill Hood farmed all over Australia before settling down in his wife Sal's home town of Keith in SA's Upper South East in the late 1990s.

Originally from Albury, Bill's farming career has taken him to New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. A third-generation farmer, Bill studied an Advanced Diploma in Farm Management at Orange Agricultural College where he met Sal, who was completing her Bachelor in Rural Business Administration.

Bill and Sal's 2000 acre (800 ha) farm, called Hayfield, agists between 1000 and 1500 cattle in autumn and spring, and rears up to 3000 dairy bulls and heifer calves to 120kg. The couple have a busy year managing their stock, with about 80 ha of their farm irrigated in autumn and late spring to start and finish the grazing season.

Bill's studies and extensive travels have fuelled his interest in alternative and sustainable farming practices. In line with this, a few years ago the Hoods decided to take a look at improving their land. They concentrated on building up the soil, which ranged from heavy soil with shallow limestone to deep sand with loose limestone. After extensive research, they decided to swap from conventional NPK fertiliser and try organic.

Having switched to Neutrog organic fertiliser products three years ago, Bill says his pastures are responding well, with a considerable improvement in soil quality, and with cattle prices at a premium, he considers the investment in improving his land to be well worthwhile.

"I've seen an overall improvement in the health of the pasture and this is evident in the soil tests we've conducted," he said. "Our trace elements nutrient bank has increased and, while there's still a way to go, it's heading in the right direction.

"Soil tests have shown that the fertiliser has helped to release some of that tied-up phosphorous and we're expecting the increased organic matter in the soil to further improve trace element levels without losing production. Overall, I also feel better knowing the animals are eating grass that's grown using organic rather than chemical fertiliser."

While admitting to previously trying organic products which were "way too expensive", Bill thinks quality organic fertilisers such as Neutrog have more to offer than the long-trusted NPK products.


"We use chemical fertilisers in conjunction with Neutrog, for example spreading urea or SOA in winter to boost grass growth," he said. "Chemical fertilisers on their own lack trace elements that can encourage balanced growth, so I think using it with Neutrog balances the nutrients available which helps the lifecycle of the soil. I'm also very pleased with how the product transports and how it spreads.

"A lot of people will say in a good year 'I'll have a crack at using organic fertiliser' and then they'll only do it for a year. So I decided I would try this for three years – and it's worked. While we've been limited by below-average rainfall in recent years, the areas where we use Neutrog have been very good. I wouldn't hesitate to use more if I could.

"We're always driving to get more production and as we improve more country we will use Neutrog product to keep it at maximum production. There's no doubt it adds to the

health of the pasture which, in turn, adds to the health of the animal."

Neutrog Managing Director, Angus Irwin said "Bill represented a growing number of Australian farmers who were recognising the benefits of widespread usage of organic fertilisers as an alternative to chemical products. He said the farming community's willingness to at least try organic fertilisers – or a combination of organic and chemical products – has increased significantly in recent years, albeit off a low base."

"This coincides with growing concerns about long-term chemical usage and an emphasis on more sustainable farming practices," Angus said. "However, most importantly, it is as a result of an appreciation that organic fertilisers can perform as well as, if not better, than their chemical counterparts for the same cost." 





# THE LANE VINEYARD

Positioned strategically on the rolling hills around Hahndorf, lies The Lane vineyard and restaurant. This magnificent venue can not only provide you with a meal to remember, but also will provide you with food for your soul. To sit quietly and absorb the atmosphere and superb views is perhaps one of the simplest, but enriching experiences to be had.



The Edwards family, John, Helen, and sons Marty and Ben, are the guardians of The Lane. John's dream was to find a site which would grow vines which could yield high quality grapes producing complex, distinguished, sought after wines. One day, upon entering the gates of Ravenswood Farm - which previously grew potatoes, John knew he'd arrived. The first of his wines to be released, in 1996 confirmed John's belief in his choice of location. To that end a seven year relationship with the Hardy wine label began which saw John as the vigneron for the Starvedog Lane brand; only leaving in 2005 to realise his plans for The Lane.

Helen Edwards brings her executive management skills which have been honed over twenty years in the health sector, to the family business. Helen also sits on the executive committee of the South Australian Wine Industry Association as well as being a member of the South Australian Wine Industry Council.

2001 saw Marty Edwards join The Lane to manage the vineyard, as well as the EU and UK markets which they service. His career began in the Navy as a MineWarefare and Clearance Diving Operator. Marty successfully studied viticulture at Charles Sturt University, whilst combining his operational commitments and International Special Forces training.

Ben Tolstoshev joined the business in 2006 to manage the domestic market with national and cellar door sales. Ben's move into the wine industry followed an 11 year career in graphic design and art direction and previously held the role of new business development manager to Australian wine industry customers at ColloTYPE Labels.

The philosophy at The Lane is to work with the land and nature. Every day a vineyard walk is conducted. This allows Marty and John to capture the nuances of each site. Their aim is to eliminate herbicides and pesticides and promote organisms within the soil profile, which in turn will allow for natural control of pests within the vine canopy. The grapes are hand picked or carefully machine harvested and the delivery distance from vine to production is no more than 10 to 300 metres. Care indeed! Everything being in harmony. Fitting this philosophy are the Neutrog products - Seamungus and Rapid Raiser. Seamungus being used in 2009 with a follow up application of Rapid Raiser in 2010.

The Lane Vineyard takes sustainability seriously and is working at being socially responsible, environmentally sound and economically viable.



Charles Bertram Managing Director of Neutrog South Africa visited The Lane with Angus Irwin MD Neutrog Australia, on his recent trip to Australia *n*

## NEUTROG WINS TELSTRA AWARDS

BUSINESS AWARDS



- 2010 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINNER & NATIONAL FINALIST
- AMP INNOVATION AWARD
- SENSIS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD
- 2010 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FINALIST
- PANASONIC AUSTRALIA MEDIUM BUSINESS AWARD

[www.neutrog.com.au](http://www.neutrog.com.au)



## WINNELL AUSNATIVE FLORA EXPORTING SUCCESS

The word 'view' does not even begin to describe the stunning panorama one has from the paddocks where Bruce and Sue Winfield grow their native flowers. Bruce laughs and says, "yes, this is my office".



Bruce and Sue have an extensive background in native flowers. Bruce is a 4th generation native flower grower and Sue has been heavily involved in the

business since her marriage to Bruce in 1990.

Bruce and Sue purchased the family farm when Bruce's parents retired in 2001. They own and manage over 208 hectares of native flowers. Winnell AusNative Flora grow cut native flowers, exclusively for the export market. These are exported by Bruce's sister and her family who manage the export business. Over two semi-loads are cut each week and within the week these flowers are in florist shops throughout America and Asia. Over 54 varieties are grown including, Thryptomene, Boronia, Chamalecium, Leptospermum, Eucalypt and Acacia.

In 2004 they diversified which led to their wholesale nursery which is known as the Aussie Flower People. They not only supply all of their own farm requirements, but also provide stock to local nurseries, water catchment authorities and local landcare groups.

Both Bruce and Sue are passionate about natives and the benefits of growing them. Sue is a highly regarded public speaker on her subject, addressing such groups as landcare, garden clubs, farmers who are re-vegetating and other public forums where there is an interest in our wonderful range of native plants.

Bruce comments, "we grow in a climate which is well suited to the varieties we specialise in. Having said that we still need to consider the requirements of the plant. To that end, we have had great results with Seamungus, using it to improve our sandy ridges. Once a plant has received Seamungus, it's not really fair to compare to a plant grown without Seamungus.

"The growth, health and vigour with the Seamungus is just perfect. Also, having only 1% phosphorus, it makes it ideal for even those natives which are particularly sensitive to phosphorus. In a business sense to us, it means that we can cut many more bunches per plant, which is a great increase in yield. Another great application we've found for Seamungus has been with newly planted stock. Once again growth differences are obvious." *n*



Suncorp Stadium

## ON THE TURF FRONT...

Some of the grounds using Neutrog products include:

Suncorp Stadium	Grand Prix, Phillip Is.
The Gabba	Freedman's racetrack
AAMI Stadium	Allan Scott Park
Prospect Oval	Caulfield racecourse
Adelaide Oval	Moonah Links Golf Course



## ON THE IRISH FRONT

## SEAMUNGUS™



Growing potatoes on some 900 acres, Pat Reynolds is Ireland's largest potato grower.

Earlier this year the Reynolds commenced a trial of Seamungus on 10 acres at Tara, County Meath, growing 'Lady Clare' potatoes – Seamungus was applied at 415kg per acre (1 tonne per hectare).

The crop was contracted to Largo Foods for crisping. At the outset, Pat's son Shane said "We are always looking for ways to improve the quality of our crops. Large customers such as Largo pay a premium for certain characteristics such as high dry matter, so a product like Seamungus could really improve the return we get from this crop."

Only very recently harvested, the Seamungus treated area produced a significant increase in yield of 1.4 tonnes per acre (3.36 tonnes per hectare), with a noticeable difference in the size and uniformity of the produce.

Such a result will see more widespread use of Seamungus within the Reynolds potato growing program.

With a name like 'Seamungus' it was bound to work in Ireland!! *n*



**Just try it.**

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