



The Schillers - Four generations of wheat farming

Times were primitive way back in the 1800s, before tractors, headers with GPS and air-conditioned cabs were invented. Twenty acres was considered a good day's work. Today two to three hundred acres (80 to 120 ha) is acceptable.

August Schiller (left) was one of the many settlers to come from Germany to South Australia. He was the first settler at Sutherlands after William Sutherland, in 1885.

August was the first generation of Schiller to grow wheat here. It was very dry at Sutherlands, so a tougher variety of wheat was used compared to the wheat used back in Germany. He used a horse drawn plough and combine to work up and sow the paddock respectively. He was a blacksmith and invented the "trailing harrows" which were dragged behind the combine to cover the soil over the grain during sowing. A horse drawn stripper harvested the heads and a winnower was used to clean the grain. The wheat was then bagged. Alternatively, hay could be made with a binder that formed sheaves.



Paul Reinhold Schiller in the early 1900s sowed the wheat like the previous generation but used a horse-drawn Sunshine harvester to harvest and clean the heads.

Arnold Schiller, third generation wheat farmer, was the first Schiller to use a tractor, instead of horses. A tractor-drawn cultivator and combine were used to work up and sow respectively.

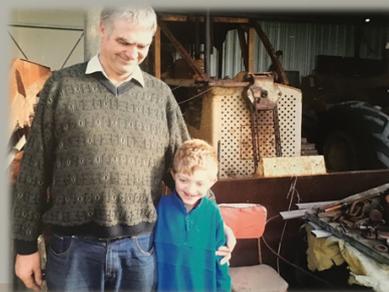
The Sunshine harvester was altered to enable it to be towed by a tractor. Later a P.T.O. header was used with a comb that 'cut' the grain off rather than 'beating' it off. Bagging was only converted to bulk grain in the 1970s.

In the late 1900s and early 2000s, Peter Schiller, used equipment that was similar, but bigger and wider. An air-seeder was used to cultivate and sow the grain, and a boom spray with a GPS was used to kill weeds. Tractors had cabs with air-conditioning, GPS and radios. A self-propelled rotary header with air-conditioning and GPS was used for harvesting.



Today many of the limitations of previous generations have been addressed so progress is much easier and faster.

Who knows what our future generations of farmers will be using! Diesel is slowly being phased out. Therefore electric, automatically driven tractors and headers with GPS are currently being developed.



Samuel Schiller, 10 years old, Sutherlands, SA