

Peter and Katherine Herrmann

Murrami and Yanco, NSW

When Peter and Katherine Herrmann began growing walnuts at Murrami in 2015, a reliable water supply was crucial.

As one of only two Australian walnut growers of scale, partnering with Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) for reliable, recordable, and controllable supply was a must for this family-based business. Walnut trees take five years to bear their first crop. "It's a long time to hold your breath," Peter says.

Peter's family has farmed in the Yanco irrigation district since the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) was established.

The millennium drought changed the way they looked at their country. Water tables vanished at that time and country opened to horticulture that wasn't traditionally considered horticultural land.

In the switch from a mixed farming enterprise of rice, corn, cereals, legumes, and sheep, the Herrmanns undertook soil amelioration with cropping regimes and gypsum before planting walnuts.

Another step towards the new enterprise involved MI's help in rationalising water titles. MI worked with them to address the odd-shaped blocks dating from soldier settlement days, resuming MI easements and unused channels.

Recordable

The Herrmanns needed to prove the concept for their enterprise, and to do that they needed certainty of water delivery.

"We needed a modern system that was recordable – so we can pull out a spreadsheet and say, 'here's what's been applied and how,'" says Peter.

"We wanted the professionalism of private investment to match our aspiration for this business. We needed benchmarks and institutional-grade reports on our walnut production. That's where we needed MI - because it's impossible to offer production security without that reliable supplier of water."

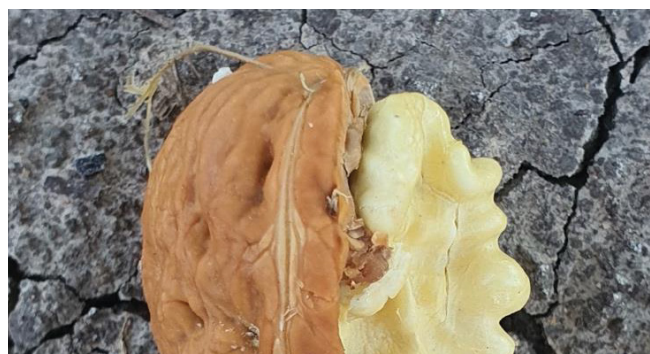
- Peter Herrmann, Duxton Nuts Pty Ltd



Controllable

The walnut trees are irrigated by a surface capillary system. The Herrmanns have introduced on-farm a fully automated system that requires coordination to MI's supply.

"While our system is based on surface capillary irrigation, and we don't use pressurised pipelines to deliver water to the trees, MI's water delivery system is critical to what we built. Our system is fully automated at Murrami, and in winter 2021, MI's final automation works completed the picture," Peter explains.





Alongside this automation, the Herrmanns use MI's EASYWATER app, which they find very good to use.

Peter says that MI is making the most of the opportunities of modernisation. He also appreciates MI's customer focus and credits their planners for their support with special requests through this transition period.

"If you need to turn the water off within six hours, the team have manually done that – so the planners and the channel attendants are very responsive."

Now and the future

Those trees that were planted in 2015 produced their first commercial crop of walnuts in 2021. And now with 580 hectares under 100,000 trees, MI's initiatives and investment, and the many family investors behind the Duxton Nuts enterprise, Peter says, "We know we're going to be in business for a long time."

"We are stewards of the burgeoning, abundant walnut industry."

- Peter Herrmann, Duxton Nuts Pty Ltd

mirrigation.com.au

Staying ahead of the game, using our modernised system to drive efficient operations and enable our region to grow in a time of less water.

