

## Week 14 – envirodrums

12 October

Envirodrums have been dubbed as one of the crop protection industry’s most successful innovations. Envirodrums offer environmental, occupational health and safety and business efficiency benefits over single-use 20-litre containers. But is the levy on envirodrums reducing their affordability and cost-effectiveness?

This week, BCG asked Wimmera and Mallee farmers the following question:

**What are your thoughts on the use of envirodrums?**



### **Glen Liersch – Warracknabeal**

Glen and Donna Liersch operate a grain and cattle property 20km east of Warracknabeal. They have mixed duplex soils, a quarter of which is sown to each of wheat, barley and legumes, with the remaining quarter in fallow.

**Envirodrums:** “Overall, I think envirodrums are a great product, especially for bulk chemicals like trifluralin, glyphosate and oil. We normally unload envirodrums with the front end loader by the pallet, and use the flow meter and boomspray pump to transfer. This closed loop method means we can safely transfer chemicals into the sprayer. I also like the idea of helping to reduce farm waste disposal by returning the containers.

However, while they were initially marketed as free, there is now a \$20 extra fee as a container levy, making trifluralin more expensive in envirodrums. We were initially hesitant due to non-standardisation of the micromatic fitting. The weight and volume of the envirodrums can also be disadvantage. One hundred and ten litres is too large for some chemicals, and at 110kg, they are not very manageable and hard to move by hand.

But basically the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.”



### **Max Golder – Brim**

Max Golder farms 11km northwest of Brim. Half of his clay loam property is sown to cereals, and half to pulses and vetch. Max also runs ewes and lambs.

**Envirodrums:** “Envirodrums are the best thing since sliced bread. There are not heaps of chemical containers lying around the farm, which are a hazard, and I do not have to triple-rinse containers, which takes a lot of time and means I am exposed to the chemical. With envirodrums you can transfer chemical straight to the boom tank without the danger of spillage or coming in contact with the chemical, therefore the safety factor is very important.

One disadvantage is the extra charge that companies have imposed. The companies should make chemical cheaper in envirodrums to encourage farmers to use them for the safety factor.”