

## Rapid Monitoring in Dry Times: Drones Supporting Livestock Management at Dijoe & Glenvue

TEKFARM – Supporting Producers Adopting Technology | 31.10.2025

### OVERVIEW

#### Dijoe Station and the Mann's Family

When the seasons turn dry; time and visibility become a livestock producer's greatest challenges. For Ethan Manns, who manages composite meat sheep, rangeland goats and pasture-cropping enterprises near Tindarey in western NSW, the ability to assess stock and water points quickly is key to drought preparedness.

Through the Farmers 2 Founders (F2F) **TEKFARM™** drought resilience Program, Ethan worked with Pam Owers from **Elders Cobar** to identify technology that could improve on-farm decision-making and drought resilience.



Figure 1. Ethan Manns, demonstrating his drone mustering skills and new technology on his family farm, Dijoe Station during the Resilient Farming Field-day.

Pam and daughter Montana introduced the opportunity, supported Ethan through the selection and adoption of the technology, and later coordinated a field day at Dijoe Station, showcasing drought-resilient farming practices and running workshops on carbon farming and technology use in the region.

Ethan trialled a **DJI Matrice 30T drone** fitted with thermal imaging and a loudspeaker attachment to support mustering, water monitoring, and overall farm oversight. The technology has allowed him to survey large areas rapidly and make informed decisions without long hours in the paddock.

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*"It worked out better than expected, it's made stock handling and decision-making much more efficient," Ethan said*

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#### Building Resilience in Challenging Conditions

During hot and dry weather, Ethan uses the drone to not only improve mustering operations efficiencies but:

- Check water points efficiently by visualising thermal camera with thermal differences on poly tanks, identifying water levels remotely.
- Assess stock condition and location, for animal husbandry assessment and decision-making around rapid destocking if conditions worsen.
- Monitor fences and paddocks to prevent additional work or losses from boxed or escaped stock.
- Target pest management, using aerial scouting to detect and control feral pigs and other grazing competitors.

By reducing the time and labour required for routine checks and mustering operations, Ethan has been able to focus more time on proactive farm management and respond swiftly to emerging issues such as fire risk, water shortages and livestock that need management. **The most significant benefits came from casual labour expenditure**, cutting annual wage costs and easing recruitment pressures. Previously, Ethan operated a team of three or four for mustering; now, two-three staff, and a drone achieve the same tasks, significantly lowering labour expenses and paying for the drone in less than 12-months.

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## Supporting Future Preparedness

With Pam's guidance and the support of F2F TEKfarm, Ethan now feels better equipped to respond to challenging conditions. The drone has given him confidence that he can maintain oversight of livestock and water security even when access or weather conditions become difficult. Having this capability supports both day-to-day efficiency and long-term drought resilience, ensuring that vital resources and stock are monitored effectively when it matters most.

## Where to from here?

Ethan is looking at further attachments for his drone and is constantly finding new use cases that will benefit his farming operations into the future, such as pasture assessment and lambing surveillance.



Figure 2. The DJI Matrice 30T drone fitted with thermal imaging and a loudspeaker attachment.

*"It's given me peace of mind knowing I can check stock and water quickly, saving time and potentially stock health, by prioritising efforts" Ethan said. "That's what makes it worthwhile."*

## Getting Started

Producers interested in similar technology can access DJI thermal-capable drones such as the Matrice or Mavic Enterprise series directly through reputable online retailers or local precision-ag suppliers. Sky Kelpie Qld, Prisma-Tech, DJ1 Store, STEVTECH and Drone Sales Adelaide to name a few, while professional setup and training are recommended, these systems are becoming increasingly accessible and adaptable for broadacre and livestock applications.

F2F TEKfarm Advisor Pam Owers said, *"Working with a trusted local supplier who delivers reliable support is key to helping producers adopt and achieve long-term value from technologies like this"*



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**DISCLAIMER:** This document and the information contained within it are for informative purposes only following Elders involvement in the Farmers 2 Founders TEKfarm program. The information is general in nature and reports on a case study undertaken by Elders with Farmers 2 Founders. The information does not, and should not be considered to, constitute advice of any kind or a guarantee/representation as to specific results/outcomes that may be achieved. If you require detailed or specific advice tailored to your business, property or circumstances, please contact Elders. Elders are not responsible, and will not accept responsibility, for any loss or damage suffered if the information is relied upon.