

GROWER PROFILE: MEET THE PROSSLINERS

BY MARGIE MILGATE

Gary and Robyn Prossliner, with their son Brendon, run a 20,000-vine passionfruit farm near Bundaberg. They have been growing the Panama variety there for 16 years, and before that 20 years growing capsicum so he definitely knows his farming!

In managing the farm Gary, Robyn and Brendan are supported by two other employees, and use up to six pickers when picking is in full swing.

Gary absolutely loves farming and would not consider doing anything else. What he loves is the real sense of achievement in farming when it all goes right. Sadly, that is not always how it happens as we all know.

He believes there are two things that are not great about passionfruit farming. Firstly, are the storms which can come in and destroy the crops you have been so focused on growing. Secondly the paperwork. Gary is a farmer and he loves to farm – not the reams of paper that seems to go with it today.

In giving advice to new or inexperienced growers, Gary believes you need to do your homework. Prices for passionfruit are not always high and you need to be able to manage for high and lower prices. Costs for both can be similar. You also must “work at it”. It is not easy, and you need to learn everything about the crop – and don’t forget there are always new things to know so stay curious.

The main thing Gary believes most people do not know about passionfruit are that they are not the best to eat when wrinkled. He would like to see supermarkets look after them better and be promoting that they can get better taste from non-wrinkled and larger fruit.

If he had his time over again Gary wouldn’t change a thing. He loves being a farmer. The only thing he would like to see is his other son on the farm as well.

Does he ever get to spend time off the farm? Gary was pleased to say that he and Robyn are going to Europe for a month in September, and it will be his first time abroad. His father comes from Austria and he is off to explore his roots. When he does get some spare moments, Gary loves to play with his grand kids and to go fishing!

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