



**Information** when you need it



May 2018

Welcome everyone to the May edition of the newsletter of the Border Rivers, St George and Dirranbandi areas "The Cotton Thread"

I am sure everyone has been flat out with picking with not a lot left to go in the valley. I am hearing very mixed feelings about the yields that people are getting but positivity about how the cotton defoliated and the quality and turnouts.

Look forward to catching up soon,

Thanks

Sall

## What are the gins and classers saying!!!

### **Owen Webb, Area Manager - MacIntyre Valley, Mungindi & Western QLD, Namoi Cotton Limited**

Picking is around 85% completed in the MacIntyre Valley. The final 15% will be picked over the next 4 weeks as it is all at different stages of maturity. Overall, warm dry conditions over March and April have assisted growers with very clean defoliation results. It has also allowed them to pick for longer hours in the day which has seen a large crop being picked in a short period of time. The majority of the cotton that has been delivered so far has been low in moisture content and generally quite clean. The gin has been able to operate with minimal cleaning equipment in a lot of cases and the quality of samples has generally been very good. Turnouts have been between 43 and 45% for Sicot 746B3F, 42 to 43% for Sicot 748B3F and 39.5 to 42% for Sicot 714B3F. Yields have been quite variable and have been on the disappointing side given growers expectations in January & February. Average irrigated yield is currently at 11.31 bales/ha and rising as later picked cotton is delivered and ginned. Average dryland yield has been 1.80 bales/ha. On the classing side, colour has been excellent with plenty of samples being classed as 11s or 21s. Staple length and micronaire have all been fine. The only significant discounts to speak of have been short staple cotton out of dryland fields.

### **Ben Suttor, Queensland Cotton St George**

Average yields are around 11 bales/ha with turnouts from 41.4-42.5. Quality is good with a little high micronaire, leaf and colour grade is good. It has been a nice dry pick with no contamination and moisture issues. Transport movements have all been well managed. We are about 60% through ginning.

### **Jon Hurford, ProClass Goondiwindi**

Colour and leaf quality to date has been excellent in all valleys, with the exception of 1 isolated area which was subject to heavy pre-picking rain. Fibre length has been very good in irrigated cotton, however dry land growers are likely disappointed in this regard, due to the tough, dry finish. Strength results are also very good with a very high percentage of bales reading over 30 GPT. Micronaire is very mixed with some specific, hotter growing areas registering high percentages of 5.0 and above.

## Crop destruction

As picking of Bollgard 3 cotton draws to an end, we enter the time of year where pupae destruction and ratoon control begins. Depending on your situation and time of defoliation, you may have a couple of different completion requirements to finish off your season. Please keep in mind that all of these requirements are on a field by field basis.

- 1) All Bollgard 3 fields you applied the 'first hit' of defoliant to on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, will need to be mulched OR slashed within 30 days of picking.
- 2) All Bollgard 3 fields that did not have their first hit of defoliant by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March will be required to be mulched OR slashed and then pupae busted as per Bollgard 3 RMP, by the 31<sup>st</sup> July '18.

The Resistance Management Plan (RMP) states that Bollgard 3 cotton that requires pupae busting, must be ploughed to a depth of 10cm and width of 30cm either side of the plant line. This process will destroy the tunnels created by the pupating *Helicoverpa* caterpillars which pause their life-cycles over winter. Pupa busting does not require 100% of cotton plants to be removed, but in my experience, the ease that a cotton stub can be pulled out of the ground does have a direct correlation with the quality of the pupae busting job. From an agronomic perspective, using the pupae busting operation as a good ratoon control opportunity is integral.

Last year, around our region, there was some regrowth on the Bollgard 3 cotton that was mulched but not pupae busted, in full compliance the RMP. The RMP does state that the Bollgard 3 cotton stubble needs to be managed to prevent regrowth. Depending on your situation, there are a number of different control options available to help with managing regrowth. Root-cutting, plant-line ripping, double cropping and herbicide application will all help in the reduction of regrowth. However, a multi-faceted approach has proven to be the most successful so far. Ratoon cotton can be one of the most difficult to control weeds in our farming system, so please discuss with your agronomist which approaches are most practical for your situation.

Thanks to Tom Luff, Regional Business Manager Gwydir & Border Rivers Monsanto for this contribution

## Training

The second round of the fabulous program GROW which aims to "Generate Regionally Outstanding Women" has opened but you will have to get in quick. GROW is a 6 month professional development program covering 3 topics - leadership and personal effectiveness (organisation, time management, communication), Work Place Health and Safety and Staff Management. The program is funded by AgSkilled for women involved in the Cotton and Grains industry in NSW and is aimed at people with management delegation within their business (or aspiring to do so).

This year, GROW will run in 4 locations, beginning in late June.

- North Star
- Breeza/Spring Ridge/Quirindi
- Parkes
- Wagga Wagga

Numbers are strictly limited (some locations are almost full through word of mouth!) so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, please touch base with Bec Fing **M: 0427 107 234 E: [housepaddock@bigpond.com](mailto:housepaddock@bigpond.com)**

## myBMP

Australia's myBMP farms produce the world's best cotton using responsible and efficient management practices. The program includes online self-assessment mechanisms and practical tools and auditing processes to ensure that Australian cotton is produced according to best practice.

myBMP is the Australian cotton industry's voluntary farm and environmental management system for growers. Designed for all cotton growers, big and small. An online self-assessment program which identifies best management practices and standards for Australian cotton production. A system that allows growers to compare practices and measure improvement, confidentially. Aligned with internationally recognised quality assurance programs and

marketing initiatives for sustainable cotton production A way to access the latest research and farm management information Top 5 grower benefits of myBMP

Growers participating in myBMP benefit in a number of ways, including: Access to premium global markets, including the Better Cotton Initiative More efficient and more profitable cotton businesses Safer farm operations and safer workers Responsible land management Cutting-edge management practices.

Contact Cate Wild, Cotton Australia or Sally Dickinson, CottonInfo to find out more.

## Dates for your Diary

- 23 May, Dirranbandi CGA AGM at the Dirran Pub
- 19 June, CSD AGM Wee Waa
- 20 June, End of Season Review Goondiwindi
- 29 June, Wincott Talwood Ladies Morning Tea
- 17 July, CSD Crop Management Tour Goondiwindi
- 19 July, CSD Crop Management Tour St George
- 27 July, Mac Valley Golf Day
- 7-9 August Cotton Conference, Gold Coast
- 24 August McIntyre Valley Cotton Awards dinner

## What Can I do!!

- Why not "Soil Your Undies"!!! Curious to know more???? Let me know if you would like to get involved.
- Support your local CGA! Have you paid your membership?
- Register for myBMP!!
- Register for the Cotton Conference and book your accommodation!!!

### **Sally Dickinson**

Regional Extension Officer - Border Rivers, St George & Dirranbandi | CottonInfo  
M 0407 992 495 | E [sally.dickinson@cottoninfo.net.au](mailto:sally.dickinson@cottoninfo.net.au) | W [www.cottoninfo.com.au](http://www.cottoninfo.com.au)



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