

The Cotton Wrap - The September 2016 Early Edition



Welcome to the 20th edition of the Cotton Wrap!!

Integrated Pest Management

There has been lots of talk about insect control from last year, with Mirid sprays becoming more common. I thought this update from Sally Ceeney was a good reminder for everyone.

‘Abamectin resistance in Two Spotted Mite is now common’ - Prior to 2010-11, abamectin resistance was rarely seen in Two Spotted Mite (TSM) populations. Since then, resistance has regularly been detected, and is at concerning levels. The 2015_16 resistance testing results of TSM by Dr Grant Heron, NSW DPI, showed 6 of the 9 populations tested had resistance. Percent susceptibility ranged from 44 to just 25% susceptible. These results for abamectin suggest restraint in usage is now required. A common use pattern for abamectin has been to apply in combination with mirid sprays as an ‘insurance spray’. Mirid sprays can be disruptive to beneficials so the inclusion of abamectin reduces the risk of subsequent mite outbreaks. However, this practice may ultimately lead to abamectin failure against mites. In general, the numbers of TSM in crops across most regions has dramatically reduced. This would suggest that insurance sprays against mite outbreaks in most situations may be unnecessary, and may be having a negative impact by increasing the levels of abamectin resistance.

Issues to consider:

- Spraying mirids below threshold may increase the chances of flaring other pests, such as mites and SLW
- The use of an ‘insurance’ spray against mites at below threshold values may increase the risk of resistance

Take Home Messages:

- Control pests at industry recommended thresholds
- When making spray decisions and insecticide choices, consider the impact on beneficials and risk of flaring non-target pests

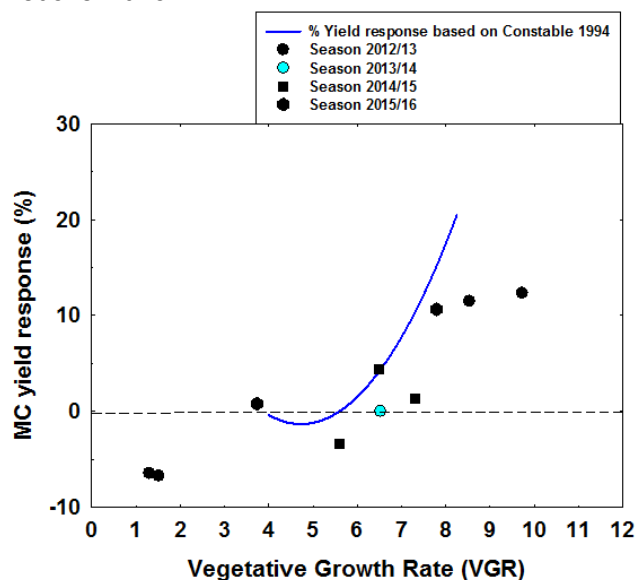
More information on insect thresholds, control options and impact on beneficials can be found in the 2014-15 Cotton Pest Management Guide.

<http://www.crdc.com.au/publications/cotton-pest-management-guide-2014-15>

Research

A project conducted last year by Sandra Williams and the CSIRO team looked at Mepiquat chloride (eg Pix®) applications and affect on yields. This is being compared to earlier work conducted by Greg Constable on earlier varieties. Sandra continues. The following Vegetative Growth Rate (VGR) at first flower/Yield response graph is what we have been adding to over the last few seasons. So we are comparing data measured from the latest cotton cultivars with Greg Constable’s data from the pre-Bollgard era.

It is indicating that with cotton today, you will get a good yield response if you apply Mepiquat Chloride to crop with high VGR’s at first flower, but this response is less than the response that we used to see in conventional cotton. The results are also indicating that occasionally you may see a yield loss if applying Mepiquat chloride to cotton with low VGR, which is what occurred in the 2012/13 season. Greg’s data did not show this.



To understand more about VGR go to the Cotton Production Manual.

Another project Sandra conducted was regarding the effect of Mepiquat chloride on root growth of cotton. No significant differences in root growth was measured from the glasshouse study. Rates applied 0, 0.25, 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 L/ha.

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Sandra Williams with her trial on Pix affects on roots.

Around the Traps

It's wet or fast approaching that point! A good general change coming through the Namoi two weeks ago with around 20-40mm in most places with a little more down on the Liverpool plains and out around Walgett. Another change following has given a further 30-50mm with more to come this week in the forecast which is of some concern. Chickpea and Faba crops are not coping well and many cereal crops are a little wet too. Some heavier falls coming through from last week down on the Liverpool plains with 50mm common and Gordon Brownhill getting an extra 40mm in 2 hours on Wednesday night which put a good flow into the Mooki river.



The Mooki river at Pursehouse crossing

This, along with strong flows in the Peel river and Cox's creek the Namoi cut the Harparary bridge last Sunday with a peak just shy of 7m at Boggabri. Minor to moderate flooding is being forecast for Wee Waa and west so plenty of water about. There is a lot of interest in cotton possibly due to good water availability and low commodity grains pricing. If you are thinking of cotton get your orders in to CSD as soon as you can.

Human Resources

Thanks to go-getters Kim Powell and Leanne Eather we held a couple of workshops on HR with Mark Gardner from Vanguard Business Services and feedback was strong. The aim of the day was to develop skills in order to-

- be an employer of Choice
- better attract and retain staff
- understand our legal obligations.

Understanding legal obligations was by far was the most widely discussed and causes the most angst amongst growers. Many other issues were discussed in the 2 hours and included-

- Wages - hourly or salary, Award conditions or Common Law Contract?
- How do we communicate effectively with staff, motivate and encourage?
- Review of staff performance, bonuses and other benefits.
- Managing workloads, especially the quiet times.
- How do we attract people to apply for jobs so we have a pool to choose from and how to interview?
- How do we develop a Position Description which means something and adds value rather than being a template no one ever reads?
- You as the owner are also an employee and should follow the same employment principles.

There are good resources available on the myBMP website at the link www.mybmp.com.au. Register today for access to these resources and no you are not obligated to follow through to accreditation. The BMP website is undergoing an upgrade which will be

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launched on the 4th October and will enhance and build on what is already available to growers.

Whats On

Sayings of the Month

'I believe if life gives you lemons make lemonade and find someone else whose life has given Vodka and have a party' - Ron White.

'When you are courting a nice girl an hour feels like a second. If you sit on a red-hot cinder a second feels like an hour. That is relativity'. Albert Einstein.

Welshy's Weather

Looking out to around the 10th of October the Namoi looks to be continuing in a cool, wet pattern. The Southern Annular Mode is strongly positive and predicted to keep channelling in moisture from east and north. The record breaking Indian Ocean Dipole has defied the decaying trend and surged recently adding more moisture to the mix. A strong signal on all information sources for cool temperatures through October so most calendar of operations will be put back 2-3 weeks from normal. Keep an eye on Mondays e-news.

Where's that???



Dean Thompson and Nigel Burnett were quick on the draw last pic with it being the river crossing across the Nogoia river near Emerald in Qld.

Network Corner

This section relies on you so pass on something to add. Things for sale, workers wanted or some interesting pics.

Until next time

Cheers

Geoff

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