



the cotton tale

Southern NSW No 6. 11th February 2018

Weather conditions

An update is attached to this newsletter on the season up until the 10th February. There may only be two irrigations left to go with good management of the final irrigation timing resulting in soil water levels close to refill point at defoliation time (late March/early April).

Rain at this time can upset plans so keep a close eye on 7 to 10-day forecasts. Some slides here on crop development and the timing of the last irrigation from cotton researcher, Stephen Yeates, CSIRO.

Crop progress and Bug check

Most crops received their cut-out spray of Mepiquat chloride towards the end of January/early February. Crops have had a fruit shed with the cloudy weather, but boll loads remain on track for solid yields.

The main concern with insects has been the very high numbers of mirids well above threshold and most crops have had mirid sprays. Silverleaf whitefly numbers are low but reports from other valleys suggest that nymph numbers can build quickly, and action maybe needed. We are well above average day degrees in all locations in the south so close monitoring is needed.

Feathertop Rhodes grass



I have seen a few cases of this weed appearing in cotton fields so make everyone on farm familiar with what it looks like. If you have a small patch it is best to chip the plants out before they set seed. It is widespread on roadsides, so it will blow in. It is naturally resistant to glyphosate.

Some resources here to look at what can be done to manage FTRG. Don't be complacent because it can be a major issue in cotton fields. Patch management using a hoe can be very effective before seeding.

<http://bit.ly/2DWQWsx>

<http://bit.ly/2E01N5e>

Keep the spray on the weeds

A round of spray drift workshops run by Mary OBrien were held recently at Deniliquin, Whitton, Borellan and Lake Cargelligo. These workshops were

organised by the SVCGA through a CRDC Grassroots grant. Local funding also helped out. Well done. Excellent numbers at all events and feedback was very positive. Awareness and education on improving everyone's spray practices will be an ongoing activity. The Agskills program also has Advanced spray workshop programs that can be run with a great format of a workshop followed by individual on farm visits for spray equipment set up. Keep an eye out for these later in the year.

These workshops have made me think what is happening in alternative technology to the spraying process? Microwave technology to kill weeds is still in research phase but may develop quickly in the next few years. There are safety concerns that need to be addressed with its development, but technology can move very quickly!

Some examples here of some of the research work being undertaken

<http://bit.ly/2FFZmB0>

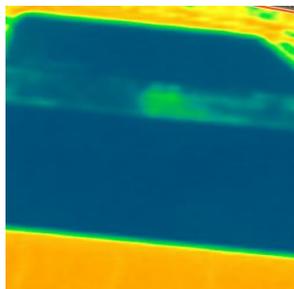
<http://bit.ly/2EzesZE>

<http://bit.ly/2EDIPiY>

Disease update

We have been testing the use of vetch in overcoming issues with Black root rot. The research in the 1990s looked at incorporating the vetch before sowing the cotton crop. There are issues with late preparation of fields so in the site that was tested at Hillston the vetch was grown over winter, then sprayed out and removed from the field. The results were disappointing as the spore load in the field went up dramatically. This was not unexpected as vetch is a legume which is a host for Black Root Rot.

I also saw a field in Coleambally this season where a strip in the field was heavily impacted by Black root rot and seedling disease.



NDVI image of the strip 31st January

This strip has a history of Pidgeon peas (a legume) two seasons in a row so it was enough to cause problems in establishing the next cotton crop.

Also, at this time of the crops development some of the late season diseases can start to show up. To confirm what is causing the disease the industry has a protocol in place to provide a free diagnosis of late season diseases. The form with instructions on how to collect and send samples is attached to this email. The industry late season survey will be conducted in March by NSW DPI pathologists assisted by CottonInfo REOs.

Predicting yields

Consultants and growers at this stage of the crop start to do boll counts and get an estimate on potential yields. Boll counts are just a guide as there can be variability in blocks and boll size is still being determined. CSD E&D agronomist Jorian Millyard indicates that a boll factor of 15 should be used. So count the number of bolls that are present in one metre at representative sections of the field and divide the boll number by 15 to get an estimate in bales/ha. You will get a range of estimates and it is best to be on the conservative side as a lot can happen before the finishing line.

Some interesting work we have been doing for the second year is using drones to take photos in different sections of the crop. These images are then interpreted by researchers where the data is feed into a model and yield estimates come back the next day. The work is trying to give yield estimates at the end of January, end of February and end of March. The research is being validated at this stage and it is aiming for commercial release in coming seasons.



Photo from Variwise program with blue areas indicating bolls

2018 Australian Cotton Industry Awards

Cotton Australia has called for nominations for the **2018 Australian Cotton Industry Awards, which recognise excellence and high achievement throughout the supply chain (deadline 5pm on March 30th, 2018).**

CEO, Adam Kay, said the Awards acknowledge the hard work of everyone in the industry, from growers and ginners to product suppliers, consultants, agronomists, researchers and others.

He acknowledged the support of the Awards program's major sponsors - ADAMA, AgriRisk, Cotton Seed Distributors, Incitec Pivot, and Monsanto.

Anyone in the industry can nominate themselves or others through the online nomination form at: www.australiancottonawards.com. Cash prizes are on offer for the successful recipients.

There are five Awards:

- Monsanto Grower of the Year
- AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year
- ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year
- Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year
- Incitec Pivot Service to Industry Award

Awards recipients will be announced at a gala dinner on Thursday August 9, held in conjunction with the 2018 Australian Cotton Conference at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (August 7th – August 9th).

Events coming up

- **Tuesday 27th March 9 am**, Monsanto Grower of the year field day, Cavaso Farming Ringwood, Kidman Way, Darlington Point.

Where is this?



Last month's answer- Weethalle silo art

Until next time.

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