



# the cotton wrap

## **DECEMBER 2017 SEASON SUMMARY**

The Walgett area is reporting widespread damage from 2-4,D drift. East of Walgett Wal Friend, James and Jim Moore are all seeing severe damage and also an area near the Bugilbone Siding at "Dundee" and also through John and Ken Stump. A little damage at Rob Harris at "Myralga" but the damage seems to be a little less that way.



*2-4,D damage at "Carlton" Walgett.*

Rainfall has been generally good through October and November and the cotton after some early Thrip damage is starting to power away. Reports of some early squares on the seventh node which is encouraging and good retention with few insects being reported. The rain has caused some headaches with winter harvest with quite a bit of chickpeas being harvested into December.

Reports from the last decent change which came through included Phil Christie with 38mm west of Bellata. Will Winston-Smith 58mm at Rowena and James Moore 80mm east of Walgett. While out at Walgett last week I helped Hiz from CSIRO install four canopy sensors at "Bynia" with thanks to Dave

Miller and MH Premium Farms for their cooperation. This trial will look at a limited water scenario where we will vary the irrigation applications with our aim of maximising water use efficiency.



*Erecting canopy sensors at "Bynia" Walgett*

Bellata and east saw Ian Gourley and Drew Penberthy around 25mm and closer to the hills about the same although a few extra storms has added to final tallies.

The new weather station at Jeff Hamblin's, funded through a CRDC Grassroots Grant, recorded 39mm and this was typical around Wee Waa and Burren Junction. Narrabri 3 week totals were between 50 and 100mm.

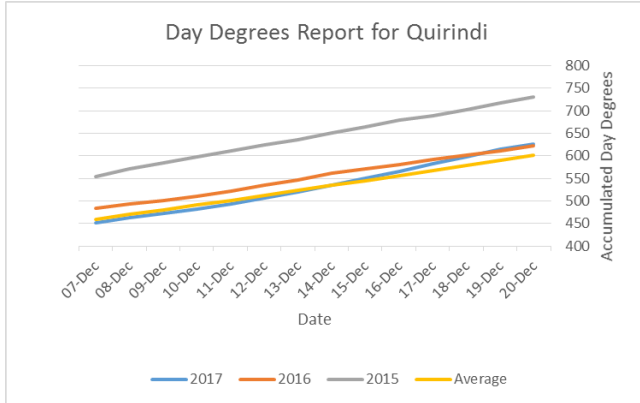
East of Narrabri Darren Eather received 22mm but with a few storms has seen totals at around 120mm since the start of October and a similar story west of Boggabri with some handy totals.

The Liverpool plains has some very dry areas with Ian Carter telling me it is very dry and to the west through Tamarang much the same but north up around Breeza Rod Grant has fared decidedly better with totals of over 100mm since 1 October.

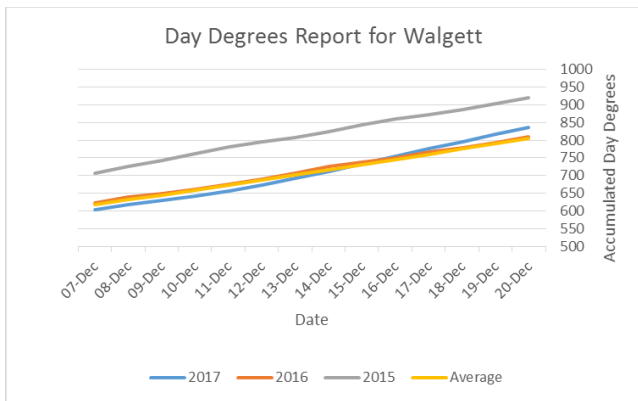
## DAY DEGREES

Accumulated day degrees from planting date of 16 October until 20 Dec.

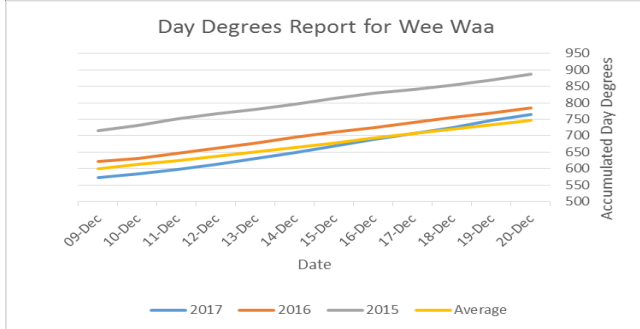
Qurindi	2017	2016
<b>Hot Shocks</b>	7	6
<b>Cold Shocks</b>	26	30



Walgett	2017	2016
<b>Hot Shocks</b>	13	19
<b>Cold Shocks</b>	11	20



Wee Waa	2017	2016
<b>Hot Shocks</b>	9	12
<b>Cold Shocks</b>	9	20



## INSECTS

Mirids are starting to build out around Bourke and will most likely require control before New Year. Heliothis egg lays have been high with up to 50mtr reported. Some small areas at Walgett requiring control for Thrips and Mirid numbers are starting to build and are close to threshold in some fields and may require control in the next few weeks.

Beneficial numbers are good with plenty of spiders, Wasps and ADB's. The Wee Waa area is experiencing very low numbers with crops growing through the early Thrip damage and retention is high with very little sprays required.

Simone Heimoana has reported good beneficial numbers and low pest numbers though apple dimpling bug numbers are on the increase. Simone also reiterated to me that beneficials need a food source to build up their populations and so some pests are needed for your beneficials to feed on.

To get a proper idea on spray decisions, beatsheet sampling is required because that is the quickest and most reliable sampling method to ascertain how many and at what ratio pests and predators are present in your crop. A spray decision should be based on the numbers of adults and nymphs present and on how these number have changed over the last week. The age, type and numbers of beneficials should also play a big part in spray decisions, and an assessment of damage gives additional information. The aim is to get your pests back to below threshold levels, so that beneficials can help you in managing them".

The best illustration of the way predators build up in a field came from a little experiment by Tanya Smith out at ACRI Tanya. She infested her field with whitefly and they spread out quite well so the following week she noticed a marked increase in amber-spotted and transverse ladybird beetles. Once they had consumed most of her whiteflies, ladybird beetle numbers diminished.

### WHAT'S ON

- 10 Jan-** Webinar Mid-season weather outlook, Ring Geoff
- 16 Jan-** Spreader Field Day at Boggabri, ring Geoff 0458 142 777.
- 17 Jan-** Spreader Field Day at Spring Ridge, ring Geoff 0458 142 777.



**9 Feb-** Nitrogen and Irrigation Tour, “Waverley”  
Wee Waa.

## DRYLAND COTTON

The DCRA held their annual field day at “Belvedere” Moree on 12 Dec with a great turnout. I have a few copies left of the handout on the day which contains some excellent results in detail so let me know if you would like a copy.

Key messages were:

- Ground cover is king
- Taking crops to yield produced a better GM than brown manuring in this season.
- Pulse crops provide the best benefits when moisture, nutrients and disease control are included.
- Summer cover crops are difficult to establish and even poor stands contributed positively to moisture retention for this trial.



*The DCRA planter bar*

Also unveiled at the field day was the much hyped planter bar and it did provide plenty of interest. The bar has been really well supported by Boss Agriculture, NDF, Excel, Norseman and Precision Seeding Solutions who all provided units. Air and hydraulic components were installed by Precision Seeding Solutions to give units access to all of their capabilities.



*Checking seed placement*

## WELSHY'S WEATHER

Once the current heat cells moves through before Christmas there is nothing in the forecast to suggest current hot conditions should persist. In fact, taking a glance at the correlations between temperatures and the current La Nina on CliMate App the skill levels are high-very high for average temperatures through the growing season. The skill level for rainfall during a La Nina condition is relatively low, suggesting a range of other factors affect precipitation in summer. Check out your location on Climate app. Looking now at multi-week models, a series of troughs may take up residence from the end of December right through January. None of these indicate the 150-200mm we need but none-the-less anything can happen with storms. Don't forget the mid-season outlook webinar on 10 January, 2018. Wishing you all a wet and relaxing Christmas.

*Until next time*

### Geoff Hunter

Regional Extension Officer – Namoi

CottonInfo

**M** 0458 142 777

**E** [geoff.hunter@cottoninfo.net.au](mailto:geoff.hunter@cottoninfo.net.au)

**W** [www.cottoninfo.com.au](http://www.cottoninfo.com.au)

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