



the cotton wrap

JUNE 2017

SEASON SUMMARY

Picking is not quite finished yet with some dryland and irrigated still to go out at Rowena and west of Walgett with even a little bit down on the Liverpool plains. Rainfall has been patchy with falls of 50mm through patches around Burren Junction down to 9mm at Rowena and 25mm a typically number from the main rain event on the 19th May. This has meant that many have stopped planting due to a lack of moisture and north and west of Narrabri are really looking for rain. To the east, Harparary received the best of the rain with 75 mm and a further couple of falls since then have made things pretty wet while the Liverpool plains generally is pretty good too with planting in full swing.

Sharpco (USA) have track kits for heavy machinery. Shown below is a 7760 picker with tracks fitted, which may be something to consider for compaction. Follow the link to the Youtube video to see it working in tough conditions.



http://sharpco.com/wp/?page_id=2

Thankyou Ian Carter for showing me the site.

What a Year!

As the dust settles on what can best be described as a pretty tough cotton season Amanda Thomas REO for the Macquarie sat down with Mike Bange to give some insights which could explain just what happened.

Mike Bange said “when we think about last season a few things were major contributors to the yields and quality we have been getting”. When we look back on the summer we remember the hot, hot, hot, but before the heat was a cool start that impacted across the whole valley. Disease incidence was prevalent across all areas of the valley and insect pressure was high from early in the season, this combined to give us less fruiting sites on the plants in the first half of the season.

This was certainly evident in the 3 sites that we tracked here in the Namoi this season where we were well below in DD before Christmas then cruised past after that to the extent that for a 10th October plant we had close to the highest accumulated DD since records began back in 1957. Further to this we had close to a record number of hot shocks and cold shocks in the same year which no other year has come close to. There was some evidence of a distinct lack of fruiting sites in the plant below that 10-14 nodes. This could have been the fact that the plant got going a little late it was trying to compensate once conditions picked up but there was not the time available to fill the bolls as it did the previous seasons.

Some growers in the Macquarie have also noted that seed size is bigger this season. Mike Bange

thinks this could be related to the pollination in the extreme heat being reduced and thus we get smaller lighter bolls with less seeds and when the boll has less seeds they may be heavier or bigger. This also contributes to some of the lower out turn percentages we are seeing across the valley with gins in the Macquarie confirming that there is more seed weight per bale on average than in the past few years. Ross Brown from Namoi Cotton felt that in this region also seed size was definitely bigger.

The next issues was defoliation. It was not uncommon for three, four and even five passes this season, and from a climatic perspective we had pretty ideal conditions. So, could it have been seasonal as well? The short answer is yes, Mike Bange stated that "the extended and extreme heat can affect the formation of the abscission layer of the leaf". This means that the leaf will not drop even when the hormones are added that would usually make this happen. The simple explanation is similar to what we see in crop when we get cavitation or boll dangle, the plant is responding to its environment and trying to stay alive so it lightens the load. For a successful defoliation we need a shift in the internal hormonal balance within the plant. For a good overview of the process check out the physiology of defoliation a paper from Arizona <http://bit.ly/2qxYzdp>.

We were also gearing up to harvest another 15 bale crop and thus fertilised for this so possibly given this in some cases there could have been Nitrogen available and a shower of rain provided some moisture at the end of the season that did cause regrowth to be quite common this season. Ross Brown also confirms that trash levels were particularly high in the Namoi and the extra point that he made was that in these cases moisture levels when picking became very important for ginning efficiency and quality.

The industry publication Fibre Pak is a very good resource and can be found at the link below. www.cottoninfo.com.au/publications/FIBREpak

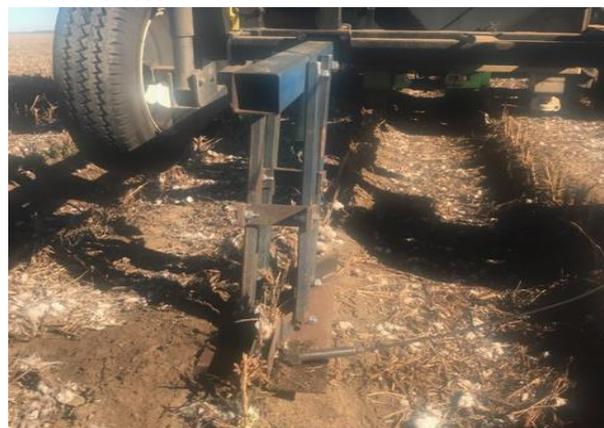
VOLUNTEER COTTON CONTROL

I have been seeing a few different methods for post season cotton control with a few growers talking about this Boss manufactured rig owned by John Stump. John also uses the same rig for hilling up and he can move tynes along the bar to suit different row configurations in his dryland and irrigated fields. As John says, "it is simple and tough and does a fantastic job controlling ratoons".



A Boss rig used for ratoon and pupae control

Another option which is very much in development stage is the Aquatill. I have spoken about this one before and the challenge is still the method of ground engagement. See below the latest prototype which is showing promising results. The most exciting prospect appeared to be the chemical trial whereby Starane® was added to the high pressure water jet and injected into the cotton stem without trying to cut it fully through. The small trial showed 100% effectiveness.



The Aquatill prototype



Results from one pass of the Aquatill.

WEEDS

I will leave this reminder in for the ICAN run weeds workshops for August. They will be in a small group format and will start at 8:30 am and limited to ensure active participation and discussion – so book early. The workshops will cost \$50pp (GST inclusive). For more information and to register – [click here](#).

While on weeds I came across this new 36m Tilco bar setup with Weedit® technology which David Ronald near Spring Ridge is using in fallows to control weeds.



36 metre Tilco bar with Weedit® spray technology.

WHAT'S ON

13th July- CSD Management tour at Gunnedah (10am), Wee Wa (5pm)
<http://csd.net.au/cmt>

17th July- CSD Management tour at Walgett (11am). <http://csd.net.au/cmt>

1st August Rowena- Weeds Workshop, Village Inn, 8.30 start. Contact www.icanrural.com.au/

3rd August Bellata- Weeds Workshop, Golf Club, 8.30 start. Contact www.icanrural.com.au/

4th August Gunnedah- Weeds Workshop, Services and Bowling Club, 8.30 start. Contact www.icanrural.com.au/

26th 27th July- Griffith, Cotton Collective.

5th & 6th Sept- Hawkesbury, Soil Biology Masterclass, cost \$195. Contact Jasmine Grinyer for details:

j.grinyer@westernsydney.edu.au

Phone: 02 4570 1335

RSVP: 31st July 2017

WELSHY'S WEATHER

The 2017 El Niño forecast has all but died with global models calling for neutral ENSO conditions for the remainder of the year. The Indian Ocean Dipole also contributes to winter cropping rain and the majority of models predict it to be in positive (dry) phase. If this occurs, we will receive less winter cropping rains and higher temperatures. Looking further out, the BOMs POAMA model has broken ranks with its global peers and is now leaning towards a La Niña (ish) start to summer, not dissimilar to 2008. This was a favourable summer cropping year, but a wet wheat harvest. Keep an eye on Mondays Moisture Manager for a review of the latest seasonal predictions.

GROWER SURVEY 2017

A quick reminder to fill out the annual grower survey. It has been emailed to some growers with a personalised survey link; others have received a hard copy in the post. For more information, visit www.crdc.com.au/growersurvey or call CRDC on 02 6792 4088.

Until Next time

Geoff Hunter

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