



the **cotton wrap**

March 2017

SEASON SUMMARY

Some useful rainfall around which has been a little late for most irrigators who had already put away the pipes. The rain which fell a week ago seemed to favour the Liverpool plains with 20-40mm common, with some good falls of 80-90mm in places from Breeza across the lake. The follow up this week saw those areas miss out with the best rain through Narrabri then south and east getting 60-80mm but not getting as far as Harparary where they are all starting to go to church. East of Walgett at "Nithsdale" 70mm, Carlton 40mm, Drilool at Burren Junction 60mm but west of Walgett has missed out on both rain events although further north at Bullarah Hall 20mm fell with 5km up the road getting 70mm. Moree had a very heavy fall of 60mm in short time but it has been patchy around the Gwydir. There were also some very substantial falls of 100mm in the Macquarie Valley but it too has been patchy. The forecasts for the next 3 months are been between wet and dry so I am predicting somewhere in between.

Crops are looking a little better thanks to some cooler weather and there are some nice crops on the Liverpool plains. Judging of the annual crop competition took place last week and these crops may have been spared from the extreme heat with 'parrot beaking' of bolls much less evident. There was some evidence of the relentless heat though with this picture showing signs of sunburn which is actually quite rare to find as it only

happens when rainfall is followed by high intensity sunlight.



Red stems and mottled leaf showing signs of sunburn

There was also a bit of innovation with Mark Hamblin trialling the use of exhaust emissions which is showing promising results compared to his more conventional input system.



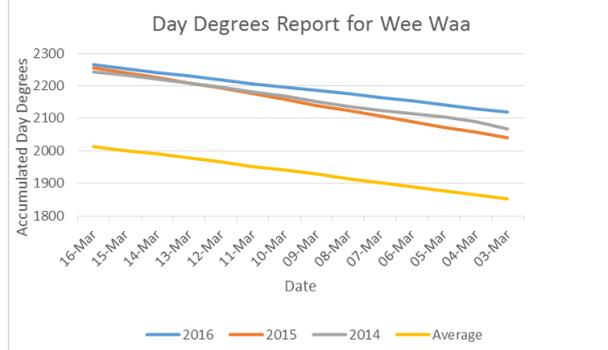
Mark Hamblin with his setup to inject exhaust fumes for crop nutrition.

DAY DEGREE REPORT

Autumn weather now prevails with some cold nights already experienced.

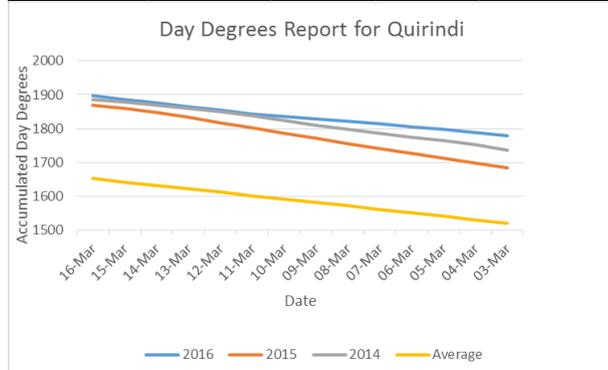
Wee Waa Research Station

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	63	49	53	31.2
Cold Shocks	25	0	9	14.4



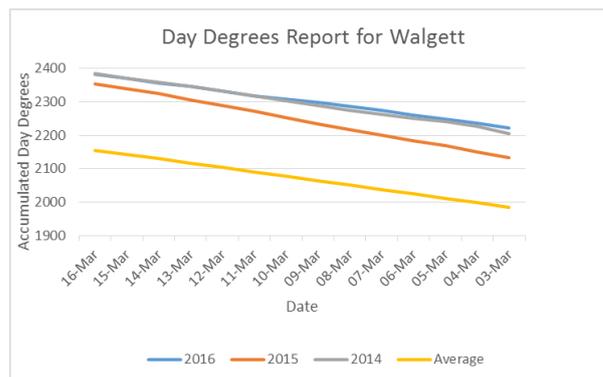
Quirindi Post Office

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	43	29	20	14.4
Cold Shocks	39	13	24	33.4



Walgett Airport

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	82	58	66	46.3
Cold Shocks	29	2	12	12.8



DRYLAND

A field day worth a look is on in the Gwydir next Tuesday 21st March starting at "Alice Downs" with CSD variety trials at 3pm. The second stop is at "Myall Plains" where CSIRO are conducting trials using hormones to manage crop growth and also plant stresses like dry hot weather or waterlogging and the day finishes with a BBQ and refreshments. There will also be some discussions about picker vs stripper.

GROWER OF THE YEAR FIELD DAY

A good turnout at the annual Grower of the Year Field Day held at "Connamarra" near Quirindi. Ian, Marilyn and Harry Carter are predominantly Dryland growers winning this award due in part to the innovation they have adopted on their farm. Harry spoke about the trialling of water injection to aid in cotton crop establishment due to the short planting window available to them and this was followed by Rob Eveleigh speaking about some new products which could possibly reduce the amount of water needed by helping the seed to attract moisture.

We heard from Graham Brodie who is trialling the use of Microwave technology to kill weeds. It can also be used to heat the soil to a depth of 10cm which can kill pathogens so would be useful in disease control. Costs at this stage are estimated at around \$60/ha on a broad acre scale for weed control and there are some difficulties in delivery due to the need to place at 3cm from plant but the technology has potential and is being explored further with the possibility it could be incorporated in some robotics technology with QUT.



Rob Eveleigh explains some trials using moisture attractants and other seed treatments to enhance seed establishment.

IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

With support from CottonInfo and the Upper Namoi CGA

BUS TOUR FOR OVERHEAD IRRIGATORS

“Optimising crop performance under overhead irrigation and getting your system right”

29th March 2017

Meet in Gunnedah at 6:45 am for a 7 am sharp departure. Finish with a BBQ lunch

Visit 3 leading farms and hear from over a dozen speakers during an informative day on these topics:

- Converting from flood to overhead
- Optimising overhead irrigation – dos and don’t and lessons learnt
- System Automation
- Planting in Circles – impact on management
- Sprinklers vs Bubblers
- Managing energy and pumping costs
- Lateral and flood comparison
- Technology for Scheduling and Crop monitoring
- Panel with growers, consultants and technical speakers

**For more info contact or to RSVP contact
Rebecca Fing STBIFM 0427107234**

What’s on.

Tuesday 21st March- Dryland Field Day,
3pm at “Alice Downs” and CSD field trials
and finishing with CSIRO hormone trials at

“Myall Plains” with a BBQ to follow, email drycotresassoc@gmail.com or adevlin@csd.net.au

29th March- Irrigation Tour in Upper Namoi,
7am -12. Ph Rebecca on 0427 107 234.

30th March - Upper Namoi CGA Dinner. Phone
Julie 0427 426 393

5th April- Canopy Sensor’s “Where did it
start and how far can we take it”? with
James Mahan from the US in Wee Waa. Ph
Geoff on 0458 142 777.

WELSHY’S WEATHER

The current conditions took most multi-week models by surprise. East-coast lows have been few and far between in the last nine months. These systems are unrelated to ENSO or Indian Ocean state and occur more randomly. Looking forward into April conditions at this stage look fine and clear. Similarly with the bigger picture: El Niño conditions looking more likely now with the IRI in the US moving from 50% probability in February to 65% this morning. The Indian Ocean is a smaller body of water and still uncertainty remains with the positive (dry) forecast through winter and spring from most global models. Caution is the word for 2017 winter crop based on this info.

Until Next time

Geoff Hunter

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Best Practice

