



the cotton wrap

March 2017

SEASON SUMMARY

There is a report of Solenopsis Mealy Bugs found in a vegetable garden at Gunnedah. Whilst widespread in QLD until now they have not been reported in NSW. They have been observed in large numbers in Central Qld and more recently on the Darling Downs and also the McIntyre Valley which is being put down to the wet winter and number of host plants available. Beneficial insects are our best form of control as chemical options are limited and so high usage of broad spectrum insecticides have been shown to flare Solenopsis Mealy Bugs. Frequently the 'hot spots' (dead patches), have at their centre, a ratoon plant. Thorough crop destruction following this cotton season will be extremely important.



Suspected Mealy Bugs near Gunnedah

All the information you need in regards to Mealy Bugs can be [found here](#)

Reporting. All new or unusual detections of mealybug need to be reported. In NSW, call the Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. In QLD, call DAF on 13 35 23.

If you prefer YouTube follow these links-

[mealybug in cotton](#), [what to do if you find a mealybug hotspot](#)

The Liverpool Plains are in the middle of sorghum harvest which is pretty disappointing and dryland cotton crops are starting to crack open with defoliation imminent with a few Mites and some SLW reported. A few isolated showers with some hail damage around Blackville and Pine Ridge a week ago and reports of 80mm through Breeza and 50mm south of Boggabri and Tambar Springs over the weekend.

Narrabri region has seen a few storms and some pretty handy rainfall of 50-75mm around the weekend. Edgeroi and Culgoora have been getting a few storms and don't look too bad but not much elsewhere in the area. A few sprays for SLW going on around the region.

Walgett area into Wee Waa are seeing SLW control and also a few Mites in crops as well. Crops are cracking open pretty quickly now with 1 to 2 irrigations left and a few crops over 30 nodes and still wanting to flower so some Pix® is being applied. A heavy storm west of Wee Waa dumped from 20-60mm in an isolated strip from Merah North back to Rowena a week ago which provided some relief.

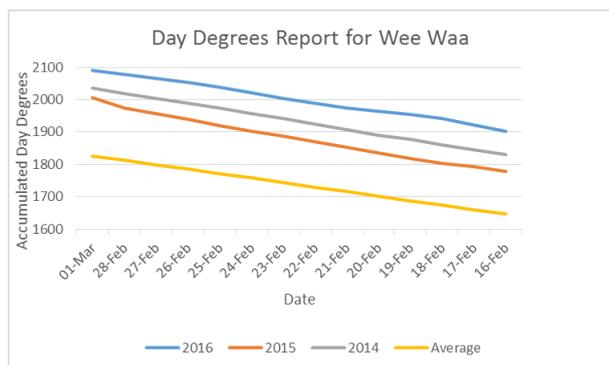


DAY DEGREE REPORT

The records continue to tumble, the numbers tell the story of this season.

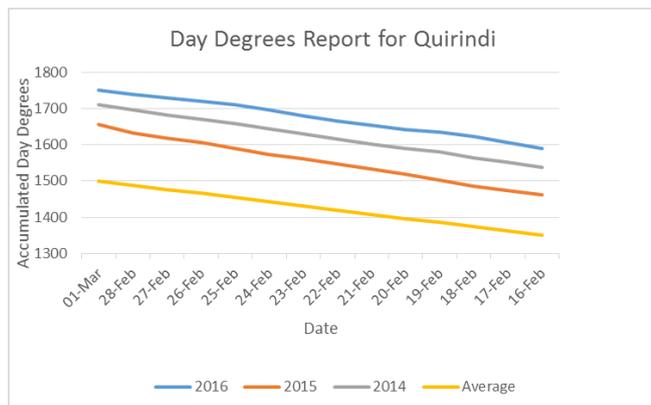
Wee Waa Research Station

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	63	39	48	30
Cold Shocks	29	0	9	14



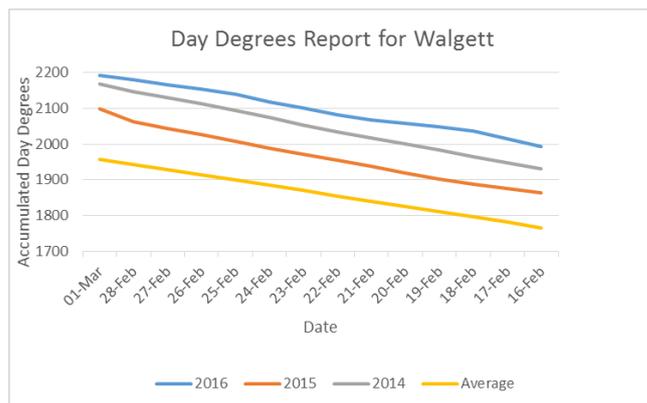
Quirindi Post Office

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	43	25	19	14
Cold Shocks	38	13	21	31.4



Walgett Airport

Date	2016	2015	2014	Average
Hot Days	80	50	61	43.8
Cold Shocks	27	2	12	12.5



RESEARCH

Carlos Trapero from CSIRO is working on an interesting breeding trial using host plant resistance for control of Mites and Silver Leaf Whitefly. This picture below shows a common variety used today in the foreground with the resistant plants in the middle which are noticeably greener and less affected by Mites. Whilst not giving commercial yield's yet it is showing some promise and is close enough that should a problem be encountered with chemical control the industry has an option.



Sicot 714B3F on the right and a new Mite resistant variety to the left.

ESTIMATING YIELD

Further to the discussion with Rob Eveleigh last Newsletter I also posed the question about estimating yield.

What is the best way to estimate yield for this season?

The most accurate way to estimate the yield is to pick the crop.... To be serious though many growers would like some idea of the yield for cash flow budgets and marketing. The 3 variables determining yield are the number of bolls, the amount of lint in each boll and the efficiency of collecting all the seed cotton from the field. Getting some idea of the number of bolls is relatively easy. Count the number of bolls per square meter at a number of representative locations in the field. Apply an average boll size estimate (amount of lint per boll). This can vary a lot between fields and within fields. Different years and different varieties give different boll weights. An example of the variation that can occur was last season where the average amount of lint in a boll recorded in the CSD Ambassador sites was about 2.4 grams and this was similar to the year before. A more average long term figure is about 1.75 grams of lint per boll. I suspect in many cases the amount of lint in a boll will be lower this season. This is the impact of extreme heat and moisture stress. Stressed dryland crops could be less than 1.5 grams of lint per boll. To get a more accurate estimate of boll size you can pick and weigh some open bolls. You will have to estimate the turnout or get some hand ginned.

Yield (kg lint/ha) = B(number of bolls/m²)x W (grams of lint per boll) x H (Harvest efficiency %)^{x10}

Eg (28)xW(1.75)x H(0.95)x10 = Yield (465.5) kg/ha

A crop with 28 bolls per square metre is expected to yield 465.5 kg/ha of lint – 2.05 bales/ha

The latest CSD Fact's on Friday has some useful information so follow the link below.

www.csd.net.au/fofs/320-boll-weights

IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

Auscott have installed 160 'smart siphons' on a field this season to trial the suitability. They are essentially a siphon through the bank with a pivoting elbow which is moved up (like below) and down into the water by a rope connected to each one and back to a hand winch. The last 2 irrigations have gone off without a hitch and so

they do have some potential, especially if it can be automated. Not everyone is easy to convince as the original siphons have been left there just in case.



Smart siphons installed on a field at Auscott Narrabri.

What's on.

16th March - Grower of the Year Field Day, "Connamara" Quirindi., a bus will travel from Boggabri leaving at 8.45pm

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

WELSHY'S WEATHER

The remainder of March looks like typically stable Autumn weather - broader climatic indicators generally reset themselves this time of year. Expect warmer than average conditions leading up to picking. There are signs that if the local atmospheric conditions turn favourable in the Tasman/Corals sea regions that it can yield a decent rain event. Unfortunately the longer term indicators for winter crop prospects remain bearish, although Indian Ocean indicators remain unsettled but still heading in the wrong direction. Keep an eye on the CottonInfo Moisture Manager for updates.

Until Next time

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