



Information when you need it



Darling Downs

September 2021

Welcome to the September Edition

This is the first edition of the new season which looks to be shaping up to be a good one with good soil moisture, stored water and strong prices.

Please be aware of increasing mouse numbers in paddocks. Don't leave it too late to control them.

FastStart™ Soil temperature network

The green light for planting is when soil temperatures are at least a minimum of 14 degrees at 8am for three days and there is a rising plane of forecast temperatures.

Vigorous crop growth at the start is needed to

- outrun disease
- develop healthy root systems
- have a large and healthy canopy prior to flowering
- avoid unnecessary delays that shorten fruiting cycles and/or achieve earliness

So how early can you plant? There is no advantage in going too early and it can backfire and lead to gappy and poor plant stands if a cold front comes across. Judgement needs to be made using the 7 day temperature forecast.

CSD members have access to an extensive soil temperature network that gives guidance on when you have the green light to water up the crop. If you are not a member and wish to join up, please use the link below to sign up.

<https://www.csd.net.au/membership>





CSD Ambassador Update – Darling Downs

Larissa Holland – CSD Agronomist has provided us with an update on how the CSD Ambassador sites went this past season.

2020/21 Darling Downs Ambassador Summary

- The start of the season saw high insect pressure in parts of the region, as well as varied seasonal conditions that continued until first flower. These factors may have contributed to lower early season retention and the crop playing catch up through flowering.
- Low rainfall through November and December (until the Christmas period), resulted in a greater number of dryland crops than usual being planted later across the Downs.
- Low rainfall in February resulted in crops stressing through peak flowering. Dryland crops in particular suffered during this period and many cut-out prematurely.
- Towards the end of the season (into Autumn), higher than average rainfall was recorded across much of the cotton growing region. This had effects on quality e.g. colour and leaf, which can be seen in the classing data in the Ambassador network.
- Overall, after a hot spell in November the season was mild. Coupled with late rain, this affected the ability of crops to mature, as day degree accumulation was restricted. The later the crop was planted and if the crop was pushed the grow on, the greater the effect of the cooler season. As such there have been some issues with low micronaire across the Darling Downs, along with other regions in the cotton industry.
- This season was late in terms of defoliation and picking, with some picking going into August.



Ambassador network – Darling Downs (Avg.)	Sicot 748B3F (3 Trials) Irrigated	Sicot 746B3F (6 Trials) Irrigated	Dryland (3 Trials)
Yield (b/ha)	13.13	13.55	3.90
Classing	31 ~3	31~3	41~3
Staple (Decimal)	1.21	1.20	1.15
Staple (Imperial)	38	38	37
Micronaire	4.0	3.8	3.6
Strength (g/tex)	30.2	29.4	29.9
Turnout (%)	42.6	44.2	42.5
Uniformity (%)	81.3	81.6	81.2

Ambassador Management Information	Irrigated (10 Trials)	Dryland (5 Trials)
Total Irrigations	6.6	N/A
Estimated Water Use (ML/ha)	3.72	N/A
Total Nitrogen Applied (kg/ha)	223.0	41.5
Phosphorus Applied (kg/ha)	28.3	14.1
Potassium Applied (kg/ha)	82.3	10.5
Zinc Applied (kg/ha)	0.87	0.55
Total Insecticide Sprays	2.5	1.3
Pre-plant Roundup (L/ha)	0.4	0.5
Pre-plant residuals (L/ha)	0.4	0.3
OTT Roundup (L/ha)	2.4	2.2
Layby herbicide	0.4	0
In-crop cultivation	0.8	0
Flowering pix (L/ha)	0.25	0.10
Cut-out pix (L/ha)	1.34	0.44
No. of Defoliations	2.2	2.0
Season Length (days)	176.2	159.7

Sprayer Decontamination

Successful decontamination of a spray boom is vital to ensure herbicide injury does not occur to your crop and to avoid inadvertently reducing spray and equipment efficacy by mixing incompatible products. This process should also be part of a general maintenance program for your boom to ensure that it is working efficiently.

The cleaning process takes time, as there are many steps involved, depending on the chemical application history of the boom. Spray tanks and booms generally need to sit overnight with the cleansing agent to be fully effective. Be prepared to set aside a couple of days to do the job properly.

<https://cottoninfo.com.au/index.php/publications/decontaminating-spray-equipment>

New myBMP Manager

Rob Crothers has taken on the role of myBMP Manager for Cotton Australia. Rob was formerly the Regional Manager for Cotton Australia for the Darling Downs. He will work closely with Nicole Stott and takes over from Rick Kowitz.

Rob Crothers

myBMP Manager

Business Lead focusing on the grower relationships and participation

Ph: 0408 646 111

Email: robc@cotton.org.au

Nicole Scott

myBMP Customer Service Officer and as such is responsible for the management and operations of the site and supplying growers with quality and timely support

Ph: 1800COTTON (1800 268 866)

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Check for Soil Pests prior to Planting

A recent [CottonInfo e-newsletter](#) focused on how to check for soil pests prior to planting. Soil pests such as wireworms and, occasionally, earwigs can decimate plant stands while post-planting control options are largely ineffective. It is better to get a handle on numbers prior to planting and implement control measures such as in-furrow insecticide sprays at planting, if required.



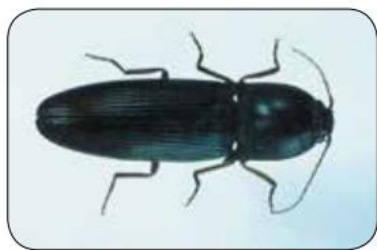
The true **wireworm** is a soft-bodied, cream-coloured larva with a flattened, dark brown head. 20mm (Photo: L. Wilson)



Several species of false wireworms may occur in any particular crop, depending on locality, soil type, organic matter and tillage practices. Larvae feed on germinating seed and chew on seedling roots and shoots, resulting in patchy stands. 35mm (Photo: L. Wilson)



The black field earwig can be a pest and a predator. They can be a seedling pest in a wide range of crops, and also a predator of larvae, pupae and wireworm. 14mm (Photo: K. Power)



Adult true **wireworms** are grey to brown elongated beetles that jump and click when disturbed. They are known as click beetles. 25mm (Photo: J. Wessels)



Adults of the large false wireworm (20mm - left) and the southern false wireworm (9mm - right). (Photo: D. Ironside)



The common brown earwig is a nocturnal predator of caterpillars. 24mm (Photo: K. Power)

How to check?

Digging randomly in the soil is generally ineffective and **bait sampling** 3-4 weeks prior to planting is regarded as the most effective technique.

Bait sampling involves the burial of soaked grain or cut potatoes at several (or more) sites in a field for 5-7 days then checking for the presence of the pests or damage to the bait (easier to see with the potato). The baits attract pests to the site so that they can be identified in the soil. Bait sampling guidelines are outlined in the [Cotton Pest Management Guide 2020-21](#) (CPMG) and a video on how to conduct bait sampling is available on the [CottonInfo Youtube](#) channel.

How Many is Too Many?

While there are no specific thresholds developed for cotton, summer grain crop thresholds can be used as a guide. One or more wireworm larvae per bait is considered damaging and 2-3 earwigs per bait (50 across 20 baits) is likely to warrant control measures. See the [CPMG](#) for more detail and control options.



New CRDC Research and Development Manager

Welcome to Elsie Hudson in the role of R&D manager for the CRDC. Elsie was formerly a Regional Extension officer with CottonInfo based in the Namoi.

The new role is combined with a change of location for Elsie who has recently moved to Goondiwindi.

On-Farm Trials

Are you considering testing a product, trying different fertiliser rates or investigating why an accidental or unintended event seemed to produce a different yield result?

On-farm trials can be a great way to learn and evaluate things of interest to a grower. Getting a more reliable or valid result from a trial can be achieved with some planning and following a few simple tips.

1. Keep the question simple
2. Try to limit result to one of two outcomes. A “no result” can be informative.
3. Include a control or nil treatment
4. Replicate treatments to account for background variation (ie soil type)
5. Mark the trial site – physical and geo-reference (so it can be found later and for future reference)
6. Record results accurately

For more detail and explanation, see the [August 2021 CottonInfo e-newsletter](#) about on-farm trials which includes a video on the topic.

I will be continuing my retention trial again this season. Lookout for the past seasons results coming soon!

Do you have these in your fields at present?



With the planting window not far away for this season, we need to be mindful of common weeds (such as sow thistle, brassicas/ turnips and volunteer cotton) on verges, fallows and other cropping areas that may give migratory species a localised area to establish in prior to cotton being planted. These common winter/spring weeds can be hosts for Silverleaf whitefly, mites, and mealybugs to name just a few. It may be timely to inspect some of these weed patches if you have any and have a look to see if they are harbouring any pest species. For a more detailed list of hosts, please refer to this [SLW Booklet - Dec 2020.pdf \(cottoninfo.com.au\)](#) for further details.

Dates for the Diary

- Darling Downs CGI AGM - 4pm Friday 10th September - Russell Hotel

Annabel Twine

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Feathertop Rhodes Grass **Workshop and Field Walk**

Join Mark from ICAN Rural for a workshop and field walk looking at Feathertop Rhodes Grass.

Topics covered include:

- ***Latest research underpinning management***
- ***Biology and ecology of FTR***
- ***Importance of farm hygiene***
- ***Herbicides and herbicide resistance***
- ***Management tactics— crop competition and crop sequencing, double knock and in crop post emergent herbicides, optical sprayers and tillers, targeted tillage***
- ***What's happening beyond the paddock boundary? Discussion session with local council and other stakeholders***
- ***Area wide management of weeds***
“Tackling Weeds Together”
- ***Field walk looking at roadside trials***
- ***Existing weed trial work***

Cost: FREE

Morning tea and lunch provided



When: Thursday 7th October

Where: 81 Macwilliam Rd Tummaville

Time: 8.45am till 2.00pm

RSVP: 5th October

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GRDC
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CORPORATION



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



CRDC



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Best Practice

