

What's going down in cotton town.....

By Amanda Thomas

Latest weather and climate news By Jon Welsh Cotton Info Team

A real challenge to find good news out of any weather and climate media lately. The waters around Australia have cooled in line with a signature El Niño event but interestingly, above average rain is predicted for July.

A basin wide warm Indian Ocean is one of the few shining lights for atmospheric moisture supply. We are also entering the season for east coast lows with two notable ECL's occurring already wetting the Darling Downs and Hunter Valley this autumn. El Niño has no correlation with these events which can improve higher catchment storage levels with as little as 4 days' notice. The big picture drivers in the Tropical Pacific are not where we need them for rainfall this spring. One thing we can guarantee is higher temperatures during this period, so modest fertiliser applications of winter crops are essential given the current outlook. Caution is definitely the word for this month when planning winter crop and running scenarios on summer cropping areas.

Cheers

Welshy

For all the latest weather details head to the cotton Info website

www.cottoninfo.com.au/moisture-manager-e-newsletter

Season Summary

The tail end of the season was pretty busy time for growers in terms of what went on in the valley, plenty of field days and workshops had record attendance, even though some growers didn't have much cotton in this year the thirst for knowledge has not been quenched. Seasonally the Macquarie has had a strong finish to the 2014/2015 crop. Most growers used less water than last season but experienced at least a bale and half greater yields.

Bob Ford from CSD reported the performance of Sicot 74BRF has been outstanding across the Macquarie with many growers yielding above 12 bales/ha and some exceptional yields going above 16 bales/ha. Boll weights are on average 20% higher than average and bolls/m in CSD's Ambassador Trials averaged 165 in the Macquarie. This year saw the first trials of Bollgard 3 varieties with all three new experimental yielding well. The best of them at Westwood yielded 15.5 bales/ha. This year will see a ramped up Bollard 3 trial program for full commercialisation in 2016/17.

From the early reports from the Gins Turn outs for Sicot 74 have been up around 44% and Sicot 71 is averaging around 41%. Post rain harvested crops definitely showing some quality issues with the majority 41s. The density of the crops

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have meant that four leaf is a bit more common than last season and the Gins are using maximum heat and all lint cleaners but finding it harder to get a better result. Length and strength and Mic are all in the right area.

The southern End of the Valley is just about finished picking and yields have been consistently higher than last season , 12 bales to the hectare is a common average , however there are some fields going well above this .

The Northern end of the valley has had a great season as well, most growers were able to get a good amount of picking done before the rain. A lot more ginning needs to be done before we go sprouting around the big yields, but if rumours are true we have a few fields sitting well above the 16bales /ha mark.

The end of the season didn't have too many surprise issues with insects, with a few growers having to control some pale cotton stainer and late season whitefly. Defoliation was pretty smooth sailing, with an average of about 2.5 hits, this was attributed to the warm conditions and light winds that got rid of the leaf in a pretty swift manor.

Our situation for next season is not looking great at this point, here is a summary from Susan Madden of MRFF on the water allocation prognosis

- High security, town water supply and domestic & stock licences will receive their full allocation at the start of the 2015/16 water

year. Delivery of carryover is also assured for 2015/16

- There is approximately 22 GL remaining in carryover in irrigator accounts and 38 GL in environmental water accounts (including 27 GL in the Environmental Water Allowance)
- Inflow of about 40 GL is required into storages during the month of May for a 1% allocation announcement

Burrendong remains at 13.5% with inflow for the month of May at 4 GL at the start of this week.

Under very dry conditions a Bulk Water Transfer from Windermere to Burrendong may be required in December 2015, with Burrendong expected to be drawn below 10% by the end of the 2015/16 summer

CRDC have some big news !

Work is underway within CRDC for future R&D investments – specifically, those in the 2016-17 financial year.

CRDC has introduced a revised procurement process for research investments from 2016-17 onwards: one that provides a greater focus on identifying the industry's research needs upfront, so that researchers can ensure their research proposals meet these needs. The first step in this process was a strategic forum, held with the Cotton Australia grower panels in Sydney in late May, to

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identify the gaps and opportunities for R&D investment. From there, CRDC is developing guidelines for researchers and issuing a call for Full Research Proposals, so that they can continue investing in RD&E for the benefit of the industry.

During 2015-16, CRDC will invest \$20.6 million into more than 150 projects across the five program areas of the Strategic Plan – farmers, industry, customers, people and performance – on behalf of Australian cotton growers and the Government.

This includes 22 new projects that will commence in 2015-16. These projects include:

- a project to increase profitability through improved nitrogen use efficiency with the OLD University of Technology;
- a project looking at optimising the management of manure in southern NSW cotton production, run by CSIRO;
- a project with CSIRO that looks at managing Bt resistance and induced tolerance in Bollard 3 using refuge crops;
- a project with the Australian Farm Institute that's investigating the implications of 'big data' for Australian cotton growers; and
- Research into breathable cotton for compression athletic wear with Deakin University.

CRDC is also continuing its commitment to funding the CRDC Grassroots Grants - that to date has invested almost \$290,000 in 33 grower-led projects, from weather stations to crop nutrition workshops. Up to \$10,000 is available under the grants

program for Cotton Grower Associations to fund capacity-building projects in cotton communities. If you have a great idea for a project, talk to your local CGA and put in an application when the grants open on 1 July.

The full list of CRDC projects for 2015-16, along with Grassroots Grants application forms, can be found on the CRDC website: www.crdc.com.au.

60 Seconds with a grower



Semi Irrigated/ Dryland

I am adding a new segment to the newsletter that will be a short sharp summary of a grower who has tried something new to them in the season. Auscott Macquarie had some semi irrigated/dryland cotton in this year with some pretty interesting results Bill Tyrwhitt is the first cab of the rank.

Area: 49Ha's

Variety: Sicot 71BRF

Spacing: 60 inch solid plant

Planting Density: planted at 14.5 seeds/m 10 survivors

Planting date and moisture conditions: 15th October 2014 – push probe in to 80cm

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Nutrition: 150 kg/Ha DAP + 120 units N

Megs applied (and timing) : 1.7 ML/Ha 16th January 2015 Incrop rainfall : 160ml

Insects / weed control : RRH 1.2kg/ha 10th December

Bales produced : 5.06 b/ha

Quality: 3.0-3.5 staple length – colour good length good

. Pic 1 : Dryland crop planted into standing stubble , photo by Jake Hall (Auscott)



What would you do differently:

We would Hedge bets have some 1 in 1 out, some solid next year, some 2 in 1 out so we can water between the rows if water turns up

Round the traps

Rob Tuck is up for re-election as a the Macquarie Representative on the Board of Directors for CSD. He has done a great job the past six years and it would be great to see him back in the seat for another go. If you cant make the meeting but would like a proxy please go to the csd website

<http://csd.net.au/agm/registered>



Renewables in Ag and Solar pumping seminar in Warren

Friday 5th of June At the Warren RSL (12pm to 3pm) Lunch Included. Lots of interesting speakers and topics including climate projections for this region, real case studies (100kW solar for cotton irrigating in Narromine), info about hybrid diesel solar pump engines, a guide launched for farmers on solar irrigation pumping and on-farm renewables and what the ERF can offer. Hope to see you there!

<http://register.environment.nsw.gov.au/ag>

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Pic 2: Dryland at Auscott ; Photo by Jake Hall



Trial Booklet

We are currently working on a trail booklet / valley summary from last season, it will have some case studies, strip trials, replicated trials and growers experiences (so be ready for the phone call to contribute). I would also like to hear from growers what they would like to see on the pages. We have grass roots funding to get it printed up and we have commissioned a report from Pat Hulme that looks at the Nutrition history in the valley and gives us an insight into where we need some more work done.

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