

ROGUE COTTON – A PEST PATHWAY TOO YOUR PLACE

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What is the extent of Rogue Cotton in our farming areas?

With rogue cotton becoming a seemingly common sight along roadways and drainage lines a survey was conducted throughout Queensland and parts of northern New South Wales covering over 13,000km of roads and drainage ways to gauge the extent of the problem. During the survey plants were geo-tagged for future reference and subsamples taken to determine disease status and pest insect presence.

What did the Survey find?

Spilt seed cotton during module cartage was the primary source for rogue cotton plants. Densities were highest adjacent to cotton farms and near gins suggesting most seed cotton is lost soon after loading or unloading modules for transport. Sunwater drainage channels in the central Queensland and St George irrigation areas were also hot spots for plants.

Nearly half of all plants sampled across all regions were found to be positive for Cotton Bunchy Top Disease (CBTD). The high incidence of CBTD confirms the movement of aphids between these plants and potentially back into cotton fields.

The Take Home Message for the Cotton Industry

Rogue plants and volunteers are worth controlling. The high incidence of disease was the most concerning finding of this study. The prevalence of disease particularly in plants close to cotton farms suggests that there is a large reservoir of CBTD which is a potential launch pad for a disease epidemic in a high aphid activity season. On farm volunteers in fallow or rotation cropped grain fields are also likely to harbour significant levels of disease and pose the same risk.

Controlling rogue or volunteer plants where possible will greatly reduce the risk of CBTD gaining a foothold on your farm.



1. **ROGUE** cotton growing along an irrigation area drainage line.
2. **THIS** CBTD infected rogue plant is growing on a roadside adjacent to a cotton crop. This plant was 2 years old.
3. **CIVIL** Engineering structures provide protection for perennial rogue cotton plants to survive between seasons. These plants were positive for CBTD.
4. **ROAD** construction works can encourage rogue plant establishment through incorporation of seed cotton.