



The minimum soil temperature for cotton is 14°C and it is recommended that sowing does not occur until soil temperatures at planting depth are maintained at 14°C for at least 3 consecutive days. For those thinking about planting early, general historical trends suggest that soil temps will not be warm enough for sowing until late September into October for the Gwydir Valley.

### What Extension Can Do For You

The information in this Cottontale aims to refresh people's minds about the role of their local extension officer and what services we can provide for you; the Gwydir Valley cotton industry. We welcome feedback on issues that you think are important, where you feel research needs to happen, and evaluations of our extension activities. Our aim is to extend research to assist cotton growers to implement best management practices for future productivity and sustainability.

The Cotton Catchment Communities CRC's National Cotton Extension Team provides the cotton industry with access to timely, relevant research information, coordinates activities, facilitates interaction and communication and undertakes local trials. Regional Extension Officers, District Agronomists and specialist staff in the areas of Irrigation, Nutrition, Integrated Pest Management and Education provide a close link between industry and research.

In addition to the regional role, each member of the extension team contributes to a national extension effort through one of the National Priority Teams. These teams work closely with researchers to ensure that consistent messages are extended across the industry with minimal duplication of effort. The three teams are Water, Plants and Soils and Crop Protection. For the Gwydir extension staff, Janelle is

part of the Water team, and Lauryn is part of the Crop Protection team.

The National Cotton Extension Team carries out regular evaluations to ensure that activities are reaching the mark and achieving positive outcomes for the industry. Through regional reference groups, growers and consultants help to set priorities for the extension program.

These are some of the ways you can get most value from the extension projects:

- Join in field days, seminars and industry meetings.
- Have trials conducted on your property by researchers and extension staff.
- Call your local extension staff with ideas and questions for activities in the region or about research projects.
- Have input to your regional reference group or CGA committee.
- Be part of whatever will help you in your business and give your extension team feedback about what activities will be of value to you.

Extension officers also provide relevant, timely information, communicated to the industry through a range of sources, including:

- INFORMATIONpaks – WATERpak, ENTopak etc are a compendium of information on specific issues;
- Cottontales newsletters, field days and farm walks;
- Workshops on specific issues such as the Irrigation Cotton and Grains series;
- Collation, distribution and interpretation of regional data published in the trial book;
- The Cotton CRC website [www.cottoncrc.org.au](http://www.cottoncrc.org.au);
- Links with research – the extension team provides a communication channel between research and industry, and between different regions;
- Benchmarking – growers can compare themselves to peers. Benchmarking also allows the extension team to focus on elements that show the greatest variability between farms.

If you have any suggestions or enquiries for us please contact myself or Janelle, as we are here to support the Gwydir growers and consultants.

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*Thanks to Ingrid Christiansen's article 'Your cotton extension network' for the framework of this article.*