

# Biosecurity – we all have a responsibility

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While Australia's national quarantine system helps to prevent the introduction of harmful exotic pests, the threat they pose is still very real. In addition to the possibility of pests entering via natural routes, rapid increases in overseas tourism, imports and exports make it all the more likely that incursions of exotic plant pests will occur. Biosecurity is the protection of your property and the entire industry from the entry, establishment and impact of exotic pests. As an exotic can affect everyone, farmers, agronomists and the community, it is important that everyone plays a part in biosecurity preparing for and managing threats.

## Anyone going on to farms has a biosecurity responsibility

- **Come Clean Go Clean** – Vehicles, farm equipment and people can carry pests, especially attached to soil or plant debris. People can even carry aphids from farm to farm. Clean down between farms, including vehicles and footwear. Suggest using an on farm vehicle where possible.
- **Spotted anything unusual?** – Investigate unusual symptoms and pests and get them identified. Vigilance is vital for an early detection of exotic plant pest threat.

## Growers have a biosecurity responsibility

- **Check your crop frequently** looking out for unusual crop symptoms and if you find anything suspicious, report it immediately. Make sure that you and your farm workers are familiar with the most important cotton pests. Don't move the infected material. **Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881**, a dedicated reporting line that will be answered by an officer from your state department of primary industries. Early reporting improves the chance of effective control and eradication.

- **Come Clean Go Clean** – should be practiced on all farms regardless of whether pests or diseases are known to be present. Communicate your requirements using clear signage to ensure only essential vehicles and equipment gain access to any growing area. Provide contractors and visitors with a dedicated wash down area with farmcleanse and a decent water supply to clean their equipment and tools prior to entry and exit.
- **Visits to farms overseas should be declared** on re-entry to Australia. All clothes and footwear should be washed before returning. Fungal spores can even be carried in hair, so a shampoo is worthwhile.
- **Ensure all seed is pest free.** This includes cotton and other refuge and commercial crops. Keep records of all farm inputs just in case.
- **Maintain zero tolerance of cotton volunteer plants and other weeds** at all times throughout the year to prevent pests harbouring there.

## Industry has a biosecurity responsibility

Plant biosecurity in Australia operates as a partnership between governments and industries, with all parties sharing responsibility for maintaining the integrity and performance of the plant biosecurity system.

Cotton Australia Ltd is a member of Plant Health Australia (PHA), the national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia. PHA is a not-for-profit company funded by subscriptions—one-third by the Australian Government, one-third by state and territory governments and one-third by plant industry members. Research bodies including the Cotton Research and Development Corporation have associate membership of PHA. As part of its preparedness initiatives for the cotton industry, PHA released the second version of the Cotton Industry Biosecurity Plan (IBP) in February 2010. PHA coordinated the production of the plan with expertise provided by Cotton



Image courtesy CSIRO

Spotted anything unusual?

Cotton growers are the key to protecting Australia's crops from exotic insects and diseases like cotton leaf curl virus.

It is important that you are aware of the risk, and if you spot anything unusual on your crop you should always check it out and call your local entomologist, pathologist or the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. The call is free (except from mobiles) and early detection will help protect your industry.

Visit [www.planthealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au) for further information.



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LOOK. BE ALERT. CALL AN EXPERT.

1800 084 881