



CQ Cotton Update – No 4 (29/5/2015)

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Welcome to another edition of the CQ Cotton Update. It's been a while since our last newsletter and there has been lots happening! For those who weren't able to make it to the Area Wide meetings last fortnight, some of the information has been collated for you here. For more information on any of these topics, please get in touch with one of us.

Ginning update

Ginning is complete for the 2014/15 season and the results have been very positive. The Emerald irrigation area achieved an average of around 10.2–10.4 bales per hectare, with some farm averages of up to 12 bales per hectare. Quality has generally been excellent, with the majority of crops achieving base grade or better for all quality parameters. In particular, the colour has been exceptional, with 90% of bales classed as good middling or strict middling.

MyBMP soil health workshops

Liz Alexander from Blue Dog Agribusiness recently organised a number of workshops for growers in the Central Highlands to take a deeper look at good soil structure and nutrition levels, the effective use of nitrogen, and soil carbon levels. Growers were also able to review the myBMP soil health module, marking off relevant practices as they went through the program.

The workshops were jointly funded by CottonInfo and the Fitzroy Basin Association, and were presented by Dr Chris Dowling from Back Paddock.

Research roundup

Reniform nematode rotation trial at Theodore
Thanks to Dr Linda Smith, DAF for this summary.

A field trial was set up to look at the effect of non-host crops on reniform populations in the soil. In the USA those that have a reniform problem always rotate cotton with a non-host before going back into cotton – this is the only way they can get a profitable cotton crop.

Treatment	Reniform/200 ml soil
Cotton	708
Fumig8tor forage sorghum	18
Grain sorghum	18
Corn commercial (PAC 606)	9
Corn benchmark (PAC 727)	13

- Pacific Seeds Fumig8tor is a bio-fumigant which aims to improve soil health and reduce pathogens and nematodes.
- Trial showed results were no different to rotating with grain sorghum.
- Fumig8tor seed is quite expensive and requires

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several slashings and incorporation to promote bio-fumigation effect. Toxic to cattle.

- Grain sorghum is a good option – a cash crop that requires less maintenance than Fumig8tor
- Corn also performed very well.
- The trial will be oversown with cotton next season and we will assess each plot for yield and population, in order to follow the effect of each rotation option on the following cotton crop.

If any growers are interested in conducting a similar trial on their farm, please contact Linda Smith.

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Verticillium wilt

There has been a lot of concern about the new strain of defoliating Verticillium wilt this season, particularly down south where it has been identified around Moree and Goondiwindi amongst other areas.

At this stage, not a lot is known about the new strain, including how widespread it really is. To understand the distribution of the new strain, DAF is asking growers and consultants to keep a close eye on their crops for Verticillium wilt disease symptoms – see below.

We don't know how this strain was introduced into Australia; however common pathways for entry often include second hand machinery infested with soil and/or trash, and human movement of infected soil or host seeds.

What can you do?

- Inspect crops for signs of Verticillium wilt, noting

that they can be similar with symptoms of Fusarium wilt. They begin with patchy yellowing between the veins of the leaf. Light to dark brown discolouration can be seen in the stem when cut diagonally and, as the disease progresses, there is a sudden and almost total defoliation and shedding of the bolls.

- If you suspect the disease is in your crop, call the National Exotic Plant Pest Hotline and send several stem samples to your state pathologist.
- Practice biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Remember - Come Clean, Go Clean, on the farm and between farms as Verticillium can spread via wind, water or attached to vehicles and machinery.

Volunteer cotton trials

A recent collaboration between DAF and Nufarm has seen the development of two pilot experiments on the Darling Downs, which aim to identify the potential of different herbicide strategies for the control of large volunteers using weed seeking technology. At this stage there are three very promising herbicide combinations which will be pursued with further experiments in the 2015/16 season. The objective of this work is to generate a data package to support label changes for several compounds so that effective herbicides are identified and usage tactics and rates registered.

Last November, a survey was conducted across the major cotton growing regions in Queensland and northern NSW in order to assess the prevalence of cotton volunteers and the factors that may be driving abundance. The survey confirmed that volunteers are a significant problem across all of the regions, but are most likely to be found in back to back fields. Cotton crops that followed an 18 month bare fallow or a grain

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rotation showed significant reductions in volunteer abundance in the following season. Of the higher risk(back to back) fields surveyed, the growers who had the most success with volunteer management were those who combined two or more tactics (i.e. pre-plant spraying and inter-row cultivation) than those who used a single tactic. These results will be reported on in greater detail in the next (winter) edition of CRDC's Spotlight magazine.

Coming up:

- The Emerald Show is coming up on the 2nd and 3rd of June. The CHCG&IA is looking for volunteers to help set up and man the stand. In previous years the cotton stand has been immensely popular with the general public, so if you are able to help out for a few hours next week, please contact Emma McCullagh on 0438 789 488.
- The CHCG&IA Awards Dinner will be held on the 24th of July, 2015 and the awards committee is chasing nominations for the highest farm yield award, highest quality award, irrigator (grower) service to industry award and the Iain Mackay Memorial award (non-grower service to industry). If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else that you feel deserves recognition, please see one of the awards committee members (Lance Pendergast, Ngaire Roughley, Gail Spargo and Renee Anderson) for a nomination form, to be returned by the 10th of June.
- QLD DAF, NSW DPI, and CottonInfo are joining forces to deliver a workshop on IrrisAT, a weather-based technology that uses remote sensing to provide site-specific crop water management information. Dr

John Hornbuckle (Deakin University) will lead the workshop, which is scheduled for the 28th of July, from 8.30am until 4.30pm at the Emerald DAF. For more information contact Lance Pendergast on 0448 601 842.

- The CQGS Innovative Farm Machinery Tour will be taking place on the 23rd and 24th of June. The tour will travel to farms around the Gindie, Comet, Capella and Dysart areas and will demonstrate many innovative technologies in planting precision, wheel track renovation, spray technologies and more. For more information contact Max Quinlivan, Farming Systems Extension Officer at DAF on 0418 708 252.
- The Department of Agriculture & Fisheries, in conjunction with the Queensland Farmers Federation and Ergon Energy is conducting a series of 2 hour information sessions for regional irrigators. Workshops will include information on irrigation energy saver audits and electrical safety in irrigation amongst other topics. The date and venue for these workshops is to be confirmed, but for more information please contact Naidu Bodapati, Senior Industry Development Officer at DAF on 0421 877 717.

CQ in the Spotlight

It was great to see the Central Highlands featured in number of articles in the latest Spotlight magazine (Autumn 2015). From irrigation research, to weed population surveys and the success of the new weather stations – make sure you check it out. The online version is available to download at http://cottoninfo.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/SpotAut15_8%20WEB2_0.pdf

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