



# Lower Namoi Cotton News

*"news to feed the biggest bolls"*

Newsletter inquiries..... contact Judy English, LNCGA Public Officer, phone 6795 3777.

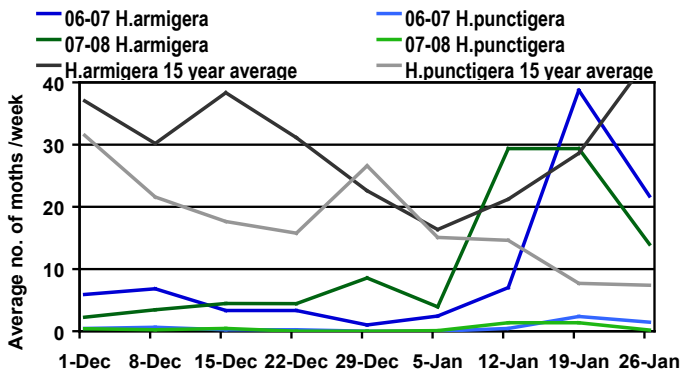
February  
2008

## Sorghum Pests and their Thresholds

From Tracey Farrell, NSW DPI, 6799 1548 and Colin Tann, CSIRO, 6799 1500.

From flowering onwards sorghum should be monitored for Helicoverpa, Rutherglen bug (RGB) and midge. January pheromone trap catches show an increase in *H. armigera* activity (dark green line in the graph below).

### Lower Namoi Pheromone Trap Catches



In recent seasons there have been some changes to thresholds for these pests based on latest research outcomes. Consider the following;

Sampling	Helicoverpa	RGB	Midge
When	Twice weekly during flowering and early grain set.	Twice weekly from flowering onwards.	Daily during head emergence and flowering between 9 and 11 am.
What	5-10 heads in 5 places through the field.	Distribution will be patchy and higher on field edges.	The mid flowering panicles on heads within 10 m of row in 4 places through the field.
How	Beat individual heads into a bucket. Count larvae.	Beat individual heads into a bucket. Count adults and older nymphs (not 1-3 instars).	Visual is best. Focus on a couple of branches of flowering florets. Keep your eyes still for several seconds looking for the small red flies (1-2 mm) walking around.
Threshold when grain = \$250/t	Assume 1 larvae eats 2.4 g of grain.	25-50 bugs /head. Nymphs present at harvest may cause grain contamination.	Hybrids with LOW midge rating = 1 midge/panicle. Hybrids with HIGH midge rating = 3 midge/panicle.

Source: QDPI&F. For further information visit their blog pages. Visit: <http://thebeatsheet-ipmnews.blogspot.com>

Disclaimer: Authors represent the position of their organisation, however this may not be the shared position of all organisations contributing to this newsletter. Every effort is made to ensure the information presented is correct at the time of publication.

### Newsletter Contributors



## Progress of WUE Grants

From Jane Macfarlane, Namoi CMA, 6799 2417 or 0447 261 014.

The Namoi CMA and Cotton CRC are working with 14 cotton growers who manage 8,066 ha of irrigated cropping land to improve farm WUE. Projects funded within the \$1.2 M program include; measuring irrigation water applied by furrow systems, completing whole-farm water balances, quantifying storage losses and monitoring soil moisture. Across the 14 farms, the program aims to:

- reduce deep drainage and salt mobilisation potential.
- improve on-farm WUE by 15%, saving almost 5000 ML.
- improve the productivity and profitability of the farms.

Andrew Revell of "Wire Lagoon", Wee Waa says the project is allowing him to "optimize production from every megalitre of water". Andrew applied for the funding to benchmark current water use and modify irrigation management. Mitch Carter from AIM Consulting at Wee Waa says "Measuring current water losses opens growers' eyes to how they can improve their water budgets."

For further information please call the Namoi CMA on 67002417 or 67429220 or visit; [www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au)

## Noticeboard

### LNCGA Meeting – All welcome

At CRDC on 20 February, 12 noon RSVP Judy English 6795 3777.

### Pre-season Pulse Update

At IA Watson Plant Breeding Institute on 20 February, 9 am. RSVP Tracey Farrell 6799 1548.

### 'Pasture to Pocket' Workshop

At Wee Waa, 18-20 February. Contact Jane Macfarlane 6799 2417.

### Namoi Carp Muster

At Narrabri, behind the Crossing Theatre on 1-2 March. Contact Ryan Breen 6742 9210.

### LNCGA Cotton Crop Competition

Entries close 22 February. Judging on 26 February. Contact Tracey Farrell 6799 1548.

### LNCGA Field Day

At Wee Waa, 13 March. Contact Judy English 6795 3777.





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## Day Degree Update

From Tracey Farrell, NSW DPI, 6799 1548 or 0427 260 344.

Daily accumulation is tracking at ~15 DD/day, suggesting we are 12–13 days behind this time last year. Even with the continuation of seemingly mild weather, DD accumulation remains within 1 day of the long term average.

Theoretically, early planted crops at Burren Junction should have reached 1st open boll in the first week of February and at Boggabri this should occur around the 10th February. Later planted crops should be cut out. It is important to remember that ~60% of yield is set after cut out, so radiation levels and temperatures over the next few weeks will strongly influence the yields achieved this season.

1/10/2007 – 7/2/2008	Acc. Day Degrees			Acc. Cold Shocks		Acc. Hot Days	
	2008	2007	LTA.	2008	LTA.	2008	LTA.
Boggabri	1482	1651	1475	14	22	9	25
Narrabri	1536	1721	1557	9	19	13	32
Wee Waa	1587	1772	1598	10	18	18	36
B. Junction	1610	1803	1624	10	17	19	38

## Drought Impacts on Wee Waa

From Yvette Cunningham, Cotton CRC, 6799 2471.

This week the Cotton CRC has released the findings of a study into the impact of drought on Wee Waa. The study of 25 small businesses (other than farms), schools and services found that the majority of businesses have restructured since 2001 to maintain their viability. For most the drought strongly influenced the decision to make permanent staff cuts. However reduced irrigator access to surface and groundwater has also influenced some businesses in their restructure. Of the businesses surveyed, 11 reduced permanent staff numbers and 7 reduced casual appointments. In total 62 jobs have been lost. Of the terminated employees, two thirds have left the area. The number of people accessing health support and counselling services have doubled and declining school enrollments (128 less students) have led to a loss of nine teachers. There is less capacity within the community and businesses to donate time, resources and funding; which are essential for the viability of schools and other community organisations. Member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries, said that while the findings were old news for many rural and regional business proprietors, they would be extremely beneficial in highlighting to the

government the true extent of drought support needed. For more information on the Wee Waa drought study, follow the link; <http://www.cotton.crc.org.au/files/28147692-0162-440a-b22c-9a38009d223c/weewaastudy.pdf>

## Mites in Cut-out Cotton

From Lewis Wilson, CSIRO, 6799 1550 and Tracey Farrell, NSW DPI, 6799 1548.

This week we have had reports from the field of increasing mite populations in cotton. Even late in the season, after cut-out, damage can be significant where populations are increasing rapidly. Mites should be thought of as an induced pest. If populations are increasing, consider why this is occurring, eg;

- neighbouring crops infested with mites are reaching maturity causing mite migration – maize is an excellent example. Mites can blow in from surprisingly long distances. If mites are first observed evenly throughout the field, it is highly probable that they have blown in.
- spray applications for other pests and/or spray drift from neighbouring crops reducing the contribution of natural enemies.

Mites have been a relatively minor pest of cotton in recent seasons. Use pages 14–15 of the Cotton Pest Management Guide to 'brush up' on the protocols for presence-absence sampling and for calculating economic thresholds. <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/field/fibres/cotton/cotton-pest-management-guide>

As thresholds are based on interpreting population trends, regular monitoring is critical. Regular monitoring will also ensure that if control is required it can be carried out at the right time. There is a much higher likelihood that a field will require retreatment to gain control if the population isn't discovered until ~60% of plants are infested rather than when only ~30% of plants are infested. Sampling should favour likely sources of mites. For example where there is a neighbouring maize field, commence sampling the cotton from the adjoining field edge. Also consider the potential influence of crops that are upwind of cotton.

Thrips are important predators of mites. Where control is required to prevent economic yield loss, consider the impacts of miticides on thrips as they differ greatly. Etoxazole and dicofol have a Very Low impact and diafenthiuron has a Low impact. Propargite, amitraz and chlofenapyr have a Medium impact and the impacts of OPs are High. (The IRMS does not allow for use of Abamectin in this Stage.)

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Newsletter  
Contributors



Lower Namoi Cotton Grower's  
Association Inc.



Cotton Catchment Communities CRC



Namoi Water

