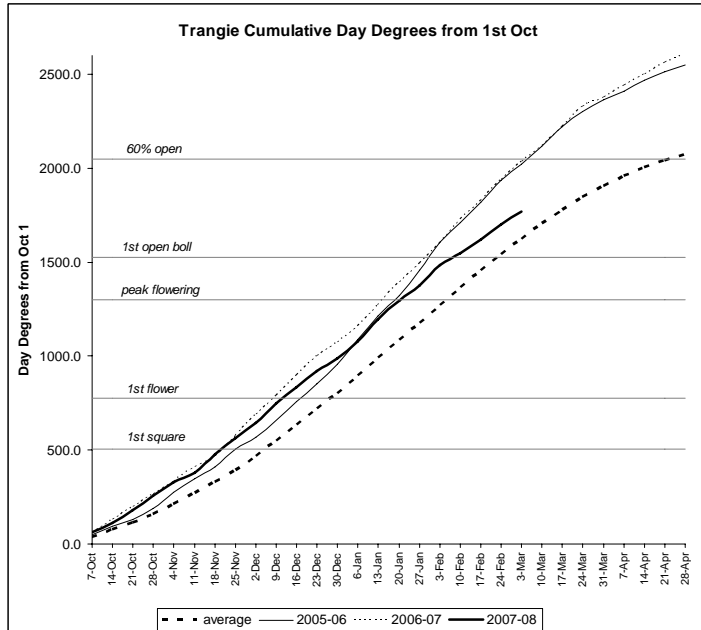


### Day Degrees



### Water Use Benchmarking

The Cotton CRC has recently been benchmarking water use in the cotton industry for the 2006/07 season using the program Watertrack RAPID®. The table below shows the average results for the 5 farms that participated in the Macquarie Valley.

Performance Indicators	Bales/meg	Comments
Total Gross WUI	1.2	includes effective rainfall
Total Gross Available WUI	1.2	includes effective rainfall and starting soil moisture
Gross Irrigation WUI	1.3	applied irrigation water only (excludes rainfall and soil moisture)
Crop WUI	1.6	crop transpiration only

WUI – water use index

The results from the Macquarie highlight the following:

- There are many different ways of calculating water use. When calculating and comparing bales/meg it is important to understand what WUI is being used as this can have a large influence on the figure obtained.
- Including effective rainfall and starting soil moisture in the figures for the 2006/07 season had little influence over the WUI as there was very little, if any, effective rainfall. In other seasons (such as the current one) it may make a significant difference.

The growers surveyed were particularly interested in the water loss calculations. The average total available water loss for the five farms was 27% however there was a large difference between the five farms ranging from 1.5% losses to 40% losses. The large difference in

losses was due to a number of factors including type of irrigation system, proximity to irrigation source and whether an on farm storage was used. All of the growers agreed that it was a valuable exercise to try and quantify their on farm losses and look at ways of trying to reduce them.

This benchmarking process will be completed across all the major cotton growing valleys in Australia which will give the cotton industry a better understanding of water use in the industry. More data will be available once this process is completed.

### Cotton Industry Skills Recognition Program

Skills recognition is a process which counts experience, skills and knowledge that you have developed while working in the Cotton Industry towards a nationally recognised qualification.

These skills and knowledge may have been gained through community involvement or work in the industry.

A formal recognition of your skills means you could:

- Gain a national qualification
- Use the qualification to enhance career development opportunities
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Enhance your self confidence
- Use the qualification as a basis for further professional development.

The Cotton Advanced Skills Recognition Program is offered to farm managers to assist them in gaining a national Diploma qualification specialising in cotton production.

The Cotton Intermediate Skills Recognition Program is offered to supervisors and leading hands to assist them in gaining a national Certificate IV qualification specialising in cotton production.

There is no minimum educational qualification required for either program and qualifications are recognised nationally.

For more information on this program please contact myself or email your interest to Bec Smith at

[housepaddock@bigpond.com](mailto:housepaddock@bigpond.com).

### Pale Cotton Stainers

Cotton stainers are recognised as occasional pests of cotton and there have been reports of this pest causing damage in the district this season. A new fact sheet on pale cotton stainers has been produced by the Cotton CRC outlining their lifecycle, identification, monitoring, damage, thresholds and management options. This is available on the web at [www.cotton.crc.org.au](http://www.cotton.crc.org.au) under industry/publications or by contacting me.

### Upcoming Events

**MCGA Annual Cotton Field Day** 18<sup>th</sup> March.

**Macquarie Valley Cotton Industry Golf Day** 3<sup>rd</sup> April.