

MIA farm walk report.

Thanks to Barry Haskins for running this event at short notice. The following is Barry's report for the morning at Whitton on December 6.

"We had a very successful morning, with about 15 people attending. A few of the Benerembah blokes didn't turn up as they were harvesting wheat.

We had quite a few guys from Commin's partnership (managers and workers), Ian and Irene Fraser, and a few other local cotton first timers.

Alan Jones (Commins' Consultant from Elders Griffith) was also there which helped.

Most cotton is between 10-14 nodes. The Benerembah growers have had a lot of mirid pressure, and accordingly quite a few crops have been sprayed with Regent. Retention in some fields as low as 50%. Most has had second in crop water. Pythium and "rhizo" have been an issue in some crops.

It was very timely to remind growers of water budgeting, as a few guys were too relaxed, and following discussions will either have to cut cotton short by stretching irrigations (of which both Alan and I advised strongly against), or reduce area. The message was pretty load and clear. Thanks to Mick Storrer for the use of an Enviroscan® soil water graph, which gave a very clear picture to the growers regarding peak water use post Christmas..

N management is well underway, most people water running urea with their first few irrigations.

I think all in all they are doing well, Alan Jones and James Hill (and Pat McGuinness) seem to be keeping things ticking nicely, however the strength of these get togethers was enforced today, where each grower can chat with one another, and we can address key issues as they arise. Everyone said they got a lot out of the morning."

I am making arrangements for the next MIA Cotton Farm Walk to be held (at this stage) on Tuesday the 9th of January.

All local growers and consultants are encouraged to attend.

Day Degree Accumulation 1st Oct – 21st Dec

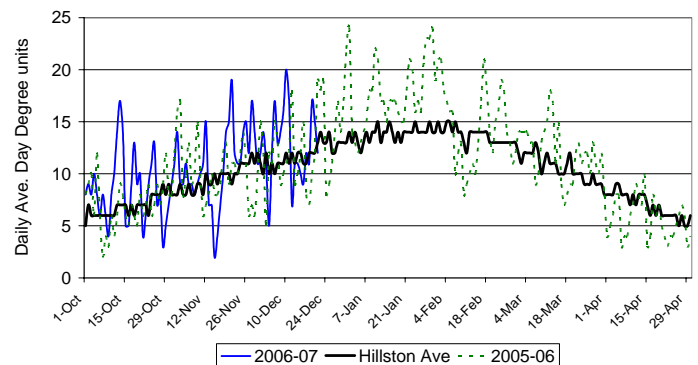


In all areas, above average warm to hot (and unfortunately dry) conditions continue. Combinations of heat and irrigations are now starting to show increasing plant growth and 1st flowers have arrived in some of the early fields this week.

Met site	06/07	05/06	Aver	CS (*) 06/07	HD(*) 06/07
Benerembah	778	690	669	33 (38)	13 (6)
Carrathool	787	677	672	37 (40)	13 (7)
Whitton	828	696	655	32 (39)	16 (6)
Hay	796	697	703	38 (35)	14 (8)
Hillston	856	771	740	34 (30)	18 (9)

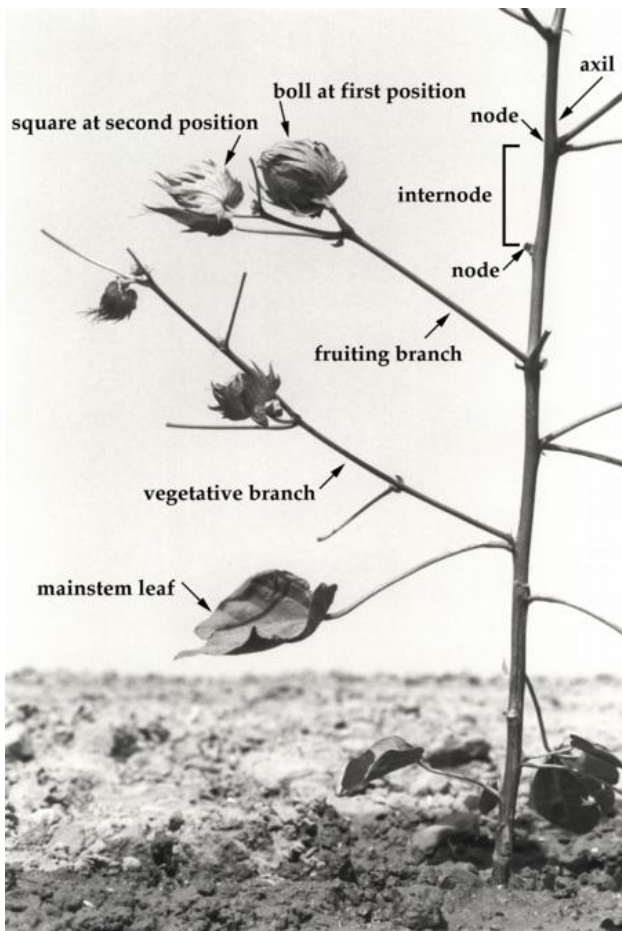
* Figures in brackets indicate average cold shock and hot days to 21/12/06.

Hillston Average Daily Day Degrees



Cotton Jargon

I had a quick look for some diagrams depicting plant mapping and found this one from UC – Davis, USA. I will continue to look for other examples of plant mapping. It is something that we will definitely cover at the next MIA farm walk in January.



The effect of drought on Cotton

Cotton Australia currently estimates the 2006/07 cotton crop at 1.276 million bales, which is the smallest crop ever since the industry undertook its major expansion in the 1980s. It is a 61 % reduction compared to five years ago, which is considered a normal year.

- The crop has been half its usual size for three of the past five years
- The worst affected areas in NSW are Bourke (99% reduction in area), Walgett (93% reduction), the Macquarie (72% reduction) and the Gwydir (59% reduction)

- The worse affected areas in QLD are Biloela (100% reduction), Dirranbandi (86% reduction) and the Central Highlands (82%)
- Some cotton towns, such as Bourke, have not had an average cotton crop for five years
- A drought impact study of businesses in one cotton community (Wee Waa) in 2004, compared to 2001 found:
 - Gross turnover of the combined businesses surveyed fell by 47%
 - Permanent staff numbers fell to 69%, casual staff numbers fell to 52% with one third of these leaving the region
 - Primary School numbers declined by 57 students (15%)

(Source Cotton Australia)

Uncertainty of MIA irrigation supply

Murrumbidgee Irrigation released a press release on December 15 where it was stated that *"..the performance of our conveyance allowance is at risk of falling behind previously estimated levels."* which may effect *".. their ability to deliver water through to the end of the current season for all users."*

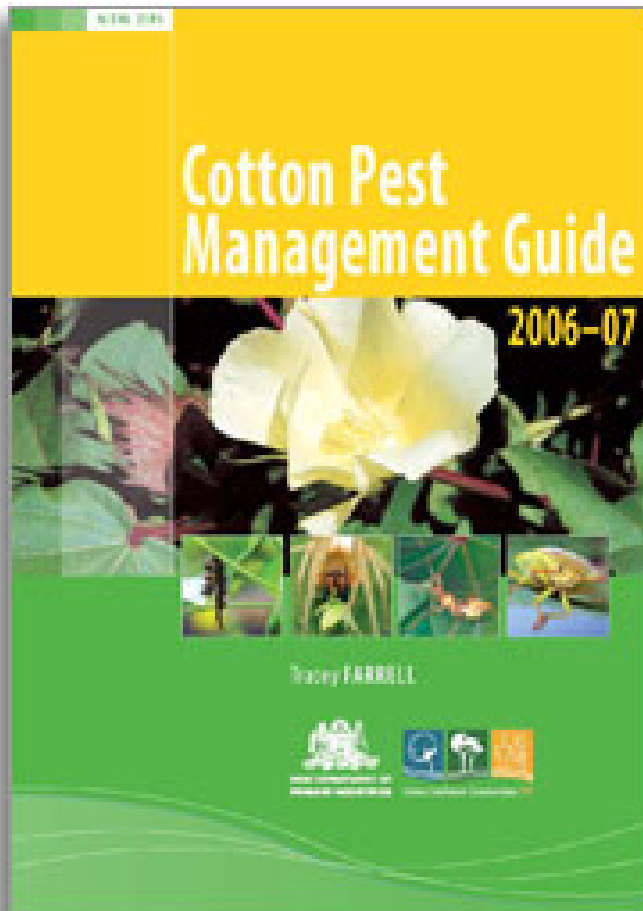
Growers were encouraged *".. to be as careful as possible about their water use for the remainder of the season."* and warned that *".. there is a chance of system closure in March if conditions do not improve."*



Some pictures of early December cut outs due to allocation adjustments post – plant



Cotton Pest Management Guide 2007



Anyone on the mailing list should have received this year's guide in the mail. If you haven't got one, contact me and let me know. The guide is also available online at : <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/cotton-pest-management>

CCA and CGA meeting report

The recent combined meeting between the Cotton Growers Association and the Cotton Consultants Association held in Griffith was a productive time. There were about 20 in attendance and many stayed on to sample the local pizza for tea.

Apart from discussing the current crops and related issues, the meeting discussed the 2007 field day and crop competition. Details of this are listed below.

Upcoming Local Events

Farm Walk at a MIA farm TBA,
Tuesday 9th of January, 2007.
Contact Dave Williams 0427 401 988

**Date Claimer - Lachlan and Murrumbidgee
Cotton Field Day 14th or 21st of Marsh 2007
(TBC in January)**

Prior to introducing the method of conscription, the more democratic process of calling for volunteers will be used to find people willing to help on the 2006 - 2007 Field Day / Crop Competition committee. The first meeting of this committee will be held on the **10th of January**. Anyone that is interested in helping is encouraged to contact either Jo Begbie (CGA) 0428 311 079 or Pat McGuinness.(CCA) 0429 875 815

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

All the best for Christmas and a much wetter New Year.

Regards, Dave Williams.



This picture has been included just in case you can't remember what wet looked like.