

Hi Everyone

On Wednesday the 15th of Sept we held a planting workshop at Benerambah aimed at growers new to the industry with about 15 people attending. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Booth for providing the field and Wayne Salvestro for providing the planter. The key points discussed related to the advantages and disadvantages of pre irrigating and planting into moisture as below.

Advantages

The time interval between irrigation and planting allows the soil to heat up and therefore the seed is planted into a warm moist soil. There is reduced water logging as the seed is not submerged when watering up. Potential for more even germination as the field, depending on size, may be planted in one day. This compares to watering up which may take a few days. There will be a good germination of weeds therefore creating an opportunity to spray out prior to emergence. Wireworm control will improve as the chemical used to treat wireworm is quite soluble meaning that under these very dry conditions the product can be taken away from the seed when watering up reducing efficacy.

Disadvantages

Different soil types dry at different rates making it difficult to plant into even moisture across the block. The hills can dry too fast therefore requiring the seed to be planted deeper to chase the moisture. If the seed is sown too deep it is too risky to flush as the seeds may not have enough energy to push out of the ground. In addition there is also the expense of flushing in terms of water use and time.

Other topics covered at this day included the importance of planting early. It is very important to plant as soon as conditions are suitable. For the Murrumbidgee growers should aim to have their crop planted by the 5th October. One of the key parameters for planting is soil temperature which should be above 14°C at 8am at 10cm depth. On the 24th Sept the soil temp on a Murrumbidgee farm was 15°C.

Another key topic discussed was the Pesticide Application Management Plans (PAMPs). PAMP'S are a component of the industries Best Management Practices (BMP) and a legal requirement if Endosulfan is to be used.

BMP is the Australian cotton industry's commitment to continuous improvement focussed on reducing the impacts of cotton farming on the natural environment, neighbours, workers and the community; in other words, its environmental management system (EMS).

The BMP program is a coordinated industry effort, with Cotton Research & Development Cooperation (CRDC) managing the development and Cotton Australia managing implementation and auditing.

The Australian cotton BMP sets an example for the rest of the rural sector, by combining sound science and practical farm management.

BMP helps growers:

- identify and manage environmental risk;
- Create a safe workplace for staff
- Design cotton farms that minimise environmental impact
- Use pesticide in a safe & responsible manner
- Use all available options to control pests
- Minimise use of and recycle water
- Store and handle chemicals safely
- Contribute to catchment targets through individual on-farm improvements;
- And now – preserve and protect optimal fibre quality characteristics. (CRDC's Spotlight on Cotton R & D Magazine, Spring 2007)

Regards
James Hill



Coming Events

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| 23/10/07 | winter crop field day– Hillston |
| 25/10/07 | Cotton emergence field walk |
| 31/10/07 | Climate Change Forum – Hillston |
| 1/11/07 | Climate Change Forum – Griffith |
| 13/11/07 | Soils Symposium- Hillston |