

Hi Everyone

March has certainly been a hot one which has provided the finish that the crops needed. This is illustrated below in table 2 where the day degree (DD) figures for both the first half of February and the first half of March are compared.

Day degree for the period 5th Oct. to 17th Mar. 2008

Met site	07/08	06/07	Average DD	Cold shock 07/08 (Av)
Benerembah	1915	1977	1692	24 (45.6)
Hay	1928.1	1927.8	1751	26 (41.1)
Hillston	1985.3	2021.1	1845	20 (32.5)
Whitton	1907.2	1996.2	1688	23 (45.5)

Table 1

Day degree comparison for the 1st half of Feb. & the 1st half of Mar.

	Av. DD	07/08 DD	Cold days (<11°C)	Hot days (>36°C)
1 st – 16 th Feb	238	198	0	2
1 st – 16 th Mar	183	219	2	11

Table 2

Cotton Industry awards

The Australian Cotton Industry Awards aim to recognise excellence and encourage the industry's future leaders. The 2008 Cotton Industry Awards are now open for nominations in the following categories:

- Monsanto Grower of the Year
- Cotton Industry Young Achiever of the Year
- CSD ACGRA Researcher of the Year
- Cotton Service to Industry
- AgriRisk Innovative Grower of the Year

Entrants for the Young Achiever, Researcher and Service to Industry Awards can be nominated by self, an industry peer, employer or cotton industry organisation.

Nominations for the Grower and Innovator of the Year award can **ONLY** be made by local Cotton Grower Associations - maximum of one for each per CGA.

Entries close on Friday 11th April and winners will be announced at the ACGRA Cotton Conference on the Gold Coast in August 2008. Entry forms are available for download from the Cotton Australia website at www.cottonaustralia.com.au

The benefits of biodiversity - a few key messages from the Ecosystem Services Review (14 February 2008)

Beneficial insects are present in pastures, dry land lucerne, native shelter belts (tree species included eucalyptus, acacia, casuarina and melaleuca), large river reds along river banks and the travelling stock route adjacent to cotton fields. The beneficial insects are active during the winter months and some used the non-crop vegetation as egg laying sites. Using rare-earth labelling it was demonstrated that beneficial insects moved from the native shelter belt into the cotton fields. This highlights the importance of the non-crop vegetation not only as a source of beneficial insects, but also a breeding site of some beneficial insects.

Key Researcher's in the field of biodiversity.

David Perovic is a PhD student at Charles Sturt University, in Orange. He is investigating the role of non-crop areas in the conservation of natural enemies in cotton landscapes. With particular focus on landscape complexity, arthropod movement throughout the landscape and modelling landscape connectivity.

Ingrid Rencken recently completed her PhD from the University of New England. The focus of her thesis was the importance of non-crop vegetation to beneficial insects. She is currently employed with the DPI&F in Queensland where she works as a development extension officer.

Future dates

26th March 2008- Defoliation workshop for new and potential growers @ Peter Booth's Farm, Bringagee Rd

Topics to include

- Methods to time defoliation date.
- Discuss the last irrigation date in relation to the March heat wave and the issues associated with a drier profile at defoliation.

1st April 2008- Climate Change Workshop at the Hillston Exservices Club.

29th April 2008 – School excursion to the Gin and to observe picking operations at Hillston.

For further information on any of these events please contact James.