

As this edition of the Gwydir Grower goes to print, we've just experienced a record breaking October heat wave. It would be nice to think this is not an indication of things to come, but if last season is anything to go by, we're all going to be challenged again this year. A significantly reduced area is currently going in the ground, as it is across most of northern NSW and southern Qld. Unfortunately, cloud seeding has never really taken off, so it's up to other areas of research to make sure that the information is there to get everything right that is within a grower's control. So research and trial work continues in earnest and The Gwydir Grower will come out each month during the season to make sure that all that information is getting to you.

Trial Update

I wanted to give a quick run down on some of the different trials that are happening in the Gwydir Valley this season. Keep an eye on this section of The Gwydir Grower to learn how these trials are progressing. If there are any growers or consultants who are conducting other on-farm trials that they think might be interesting to everyone else, please let me know and I'll include them here.

RDO Nitrogen Program

We've moved across the road to Redmill this season and are looking at Nitrogen fertiliser use efficiency across 3 rates, on both a back to back cotton and fallow field. We want to build a better picture of the fate of N, the losses and how we're accounting for these. We're also looking at whether soil compaction may be playing a role.

Nitrous Oxide Emissions Project

On the back to back field at Redmill that has the 3 different N rates, N₂O emissions are being measured from the soil and irrigation water. The soil emissions will hopefully validate the current research on when in the irrigation cycle the most losses occur, and the water emissions component should fill a gap in research in this area.



One of the 36 gas chambers in the field, used to collect the nitrous oxide emissions from the soil

CSD

Quinny's trial program includes:

- Plant population & uniformity trial
- Experimental RRF evaluation
- Experimental BGII evaluation
- Conventional RRF comparison
- BGII Fusarium screening
- Row configuration & irrigation strategies with GVIA
- Seed Treatment trials
- Ambassador Sites x 8 - the CSD Ambassador program will monitor all the inputs, operations and outputs of 1 field on 8 high performing farms, plus more in other valleys. The idea is to build a picture of the elements going into achieving outstanding results. These trials will be very interesting to watch over the coming seasons.

Irrigation

Rose Brodrick and Coast will again be teaming up with GVIA to look at limited water and row spacings over 30, 40, 60 and 80 inch configurations. They will also be working with Quinny on the row configuration trial at Moomin to add to data that has been collected for a number of seasons now. The canopy temperature

CottonInfo is a joint-venture of CRDC, CSD and Cotton Australia



After more information from a Gwydir Grower article? Give Alice a call on 0427 207 167



sensors will be out again, with a few growers using them across the Valley.

Soil Compaction Remediation

Mentioned in the August Gwydir Grower, this trial is investigating 3 biological treatment strips of wheat, safflower and vetch, as well as a treatment of mechanical ripping.

Funding Available

The **CRDC Grassroots Grants Program** is open now until the end of November. This is a great avenue for accessing funding to tackle issues that are relevant to the Gwydir. If you have a trial or project in mind please let me know and we can look into putting an application together. Grants are up to \$10,000 and the scope for possible projects is quite broad.

In Case You Couldn't Make It...

In early September, a keen group of dryland cotton growers from the Gwydir and Namoi travelled to North Star, Bongeen and Dalby to kick tyres and hear what's happening in the dryland space. I could only make it to the first farm, so here is Geoff Hunter's wrap up of the trip:



This month 25 growers and Consultants had a great tour of different farming systems and equipment around Queensland's Darling Downs. Nick Campion at Croppa Ck is looking at ways to get P and K in deeper and is also using a strip tiller. John Cameron has some

beautiful country up there at Bongeen, now worth \$3500 per acre. Cowboy has a great setup with his root cutter set up behind the mulcher and Jamie Grant plants all of his cotton with an airseeder. This proved to be an effective way to share ideas and generate lots of thought on knowledge gaps, particularly around:

- Planters- single disc vs double, disc vs tyne, trash and depth control.
- Fertiliser placement and movement of P
- Ratoon and Volunteer control
- Water Injection
- Improved Roundup Ready only cotton varieties



Insect Research

Dr Lewis Wilson and his team have a busy season ahead of them, with some really interesting projects happening. Most of these are being conducted at ACRI (Myall Vale) but Lewis is after some input from growers on a few projects. Such as...

* PhD student Dean Brookes will be looking at green vege bugs and differences in populations, suspecting there are some different lineages out there. Please let me know if you have GVB so that Dean can come and collect some samples

*Investigating role of sooty mould in breaking down honey dew and the effects on fibre quality. If you get

CottonInfo is a joint-venture of CRDC, CSD and Cotton Australia

any sooty mould please let me know so they can come and collect some samples.

*There is a possibility of some future research on silverleaf whitefly distribution, sampling and thresholds in central regions compared with the northern CQld regions. This year preliminary work will look at silver leaf whitefly distribution in the canopy as last season it seemed the heat forced the SLW down into the canopy and this affected sampling effectiveness at node 5.

*Still on SLW, a DNA marker has been developed for SLW and GVB. This can be used to identify which predators have this DNA in their guts and will allow determination of precisely which predators are targeting either pest.

*Another GVB experiment will compare a hard, soft and nil approach to look at the best management option without creating a SLW problem

*Finally, a damage experiment will look at late season thrips on both leaf and flower damage, to see if this contributes to further yield loss.

So busy times in the bug world!

Gwydir Bug Check

While we're talking bugs, I'm going to attempt to collate some weekly bug data across the Valley and send this out to you all via email. The idea is to monitor the movement of insect pressure across the Valley and help with the area wide approach to management. The finer details are yet to be sorted out but the cooperation of consultants will be hugely appreciated in this area.

Finance Update with Justin Barnes

To mix it up a bit this edition, we're taking a look inside the finance world...

What is keeping you busy at the moment?

A combination of sourcing finance for clients who are buying equipment, looking to refinance and also property purchases. Banks remain relatively cautious and are assessing applications thoroughly.

Tell me something that has had you puzzled or challenged recently.

The direction of interest rates is a common question at the moment. They are at historical lows here in Australia but for how much longer? There are mixed signals with the housing market booming along in the capital cities but on the other hand the retail sector is not that healthy and the mining boom seems to have come to an end. There are also some big economic issues overseas still that are yet to be played out. Fixed interest rates have drifted back recently so there may be some good opportunities there.

What should growers be thinking about at the moment?

Communication is a big thing. It might be the Bank, accountant, creditors – keep talking in the good times and especially in the tough times when cashflow might be tight.

Thanks Justin 😊

Keep In Touch!

Another way to stay on top of what's happening is to follow Twitter. Keep an eye out for #gwydircottongrower and use it if you have anything



relevant you'd like to share. As well as emails, I'll post on Twitter for field days and reminders so follow us on @AliceDevlin7 and @CottonInfoAust.

CottonInfo is a joint-venture of CRDC, CSD and Cotton Australia



After more information from a Gwydir Grower article? Give Alice a call on 0427 207 167

