

The Cotton Wrap - The February Edition



Welcome to the 6th edition of the Cotton Wrap!!

Dryland Cotton

What a difference some rain makes. Same crop in November and just the other day at Ed Tomlinson's at 'Myall Plains'. Boll counts over 150 so setting up to be a nice crop. We are having a look on the 6th March if you want to come and see.



The NDF planter we will look at this Friday.

We will meet at Doug Cush's property "Salt Wells", 15 km East of Bellata at 2pm.

I headed out to "Kuranda" last week to a field day hosted by Scott McCalman for a look at his Dryland and liquid fertiliser trials. These brews are all mixed on farm and are based on the needs of the crop from SAP tests. The main aim is to increase root growth which leads to greater sourcing of nutrients and moisture and the savings are significant. The nutrition program for this year's cotton crop came to \$48.97/ha. The crop was planted on fairly good soil moisture and has had a tough time since then but still has a reasonable yield potential.



The dryland crop at "Kuranda" Boggabri.

At the field day we will also have a look at Paul Slack's machine below which he feels could be used to plant cotton. The designer and manager at NDF will be there with a few other configurations to look at as well.

Around the Traps

BG III progress was updated by Monsanto last week after the 'Big Day Out'. Some of the main changes sought with the application put into the APVMA was for a Resistance Management Plan (RMP) which reduces Refuges to 2.5% Pigeon pea, no pupae

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Best Practice

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busting if defoliated prior to March 31st and a planting window extending until 31st December. Still no price indications have been mentioned so it is well worth keeping abreast as it will have a big impact on every cotton grower in Australia. A limited release under a Stewarded system will occur this season with larger releases the following year if approvals are granted. Talk to Rob Eveleigh if you are interested. Keep an eye out for Verticillium as there is a few reports in the Namoi.

A few sprays for Mirids and Mites in our area, cotton is looking very good “touch wood” with the local crop competition judging occurring in the next couple of weeks. A few early dryland crops getting a defoliant now with most irrigated crops at or approaching their final water. Still waiting for the big break in most areas.

The Big Day Out- Energy Efficiency

Scott Morgan at “Kensal Green” Gunnedah hosted a field day last week on energy efficiency. Presently the power requirement of irrigation pumps and the fact they are used only 3-4 months per year makes it uneconomical to use large scale. As you can see below though Scott has solar set up on a lift pump on his farm. Storage of power with batteries is the main issue now but these are improving every day. Things I took from the day were;

- Ceramic light bulbs will replace LED’s, are brighter and last longer.
- Batteries will not last long if you draw down more than 20% of charge. Lithium ion the best.
- Indications were that for \$40-\$50 000 one would get a well set up system on your house to supply all power including a battery and expect 25yr life.
- Don’t just look at efficiency of solar panels but energy produced per day or year. Amorphous panels seem to be best.
- Junk Electricity
- Maximise energy efficiency before trying to reduce the cost of energy through renewables.



Solar panels used to power a lift pump on “Kensal Green”

Trials

No visual differences in the N trial at either site at Boggabri. Boll counts pretty similar also so picking time will tell.



Nitrogen rate trial at “Riverway” Boggabri.

Some big differences in the Pix trial at “Bellevue”. As noted I am not that tall (thanks Drew) but this is quite a tall crop which is significantly different to the treatment where we put 800mls Pix in January based on a high Vegetative Growth Rate (VGR)

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Until next time

*Cheers
Geoff*



CQ Update

Picking is under way and so far yields are reasonably good. Some growers to the East had some heavy rain around a month ago which caused some yield loss and boll rot, around Emerald through crops fared better and yields of 10-11 bales/ha are being achieved.

What's On

6th March Dryland cotton field day Bellata

12th March Grower of the year Field day Tim and Sally Watson at Hillston.

Saying of the Month

'Wonder is the beginning of wisdom'-Socrates.

Welshy's Weather

The MJO that spurned decent rain events during December and January looks benign for March, however the SOI has taken a dramatic positive shift to almost zero adding some confidence. WATL and other 0-10 day models are the best bet for decisions at the moment. Right now is a great opportunity to utilise temperature predictions for management; there are no heat waves forecast for March. What we can draw from this is that with heat waves unlikely, there may be enough cloud around from warm local SST's for storms to generate some relief rainfall

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