

Welcome back Cotton Tales!

Hi everyone. I would like to introduce myself as the new Regional Cotton Extension Officer for the Macquarie. I look forward to meeting you all soon. It has been a few years since the local Cotton Tales were in production so it's great to see them back. Let's hope that this new start to extension in the region is also accompanied by some big rains and a big start to the upcoming season!

Centre Pivot and Lateral Move Irrigation Systems Training Courses

The Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures is offering training courses designed for growers and managers in CPLM irrigation systems. The course aims to provide knowledge on design, installation and management of these systems as well as providing skills in calculating capacity and scheduling irrigation.

The courses will be held over two days and will cover aspects such as system performance, design considerations, sprinkler packages and practical issues such as fertigation and plant growth. The course applies to all crops and participants will be provided with a 160 page technical manual.

Course dates and locations are based on interest and enquiries. For more details about the course please contact Gary Giddings, Rural Water Use Efficiency Officer on 6881 1278 or log onto:

www.irrigationfutures.org.au/imagesDB/events/CPLMcourse.pdf

Also the National centre for Engineering in Agriculture with the CRC for Irrigation Futures is offering the TOPUP CPLM training course for advisors/consultants and growers/managers. This is being held at USQ in Toowoomba on the 5-6th of December. The cost is \$1000 ex GST. For further details and registration log onto www.ncea.org.au/TrainingRelated/Centre%20Pivots%20Lateral%20Move.pdf

Management of a Dry Storage

Did you know when you first fill your storage after it's been dry, you can lose in excess of 2.5 ML/ha of storage floor? A key recommendation from the Irrigation Association of Australia (IAA) is to manage your storage the same way as you would manage a dry land field. You want to conserve moisture and reduce cracking. Therefore weed control is important. Growing a crop in your storage can cause significant drying and cracking in both the embankment and the floor and subsequent loss of valuable irrigation water. If the storage soil surface is allowed to dry and crack, soil evaporation losses increase and significant amounts of water can be lost as it runs down the cracks and the dry soil soaks up the water.

While your storage is dry, it is a good time to survey it and obtain an accurate depth-to-volume and surface area relationship. Often the storage was not accurately built to the "design" and actual volumes can differ by up to 20%. Over time, with a build up of silt and slumping of dam walls, the dimensions of your storage will change as well. Ideally a storage survey should be re-done after any remedial construction work on the banks or any other changes to the floor or borrow areas. Additionally, it is worth considering doing an EM survey at the same time to differentiate the soil types within the storage.

While your storage is dry your local surveyor can easily survey your storage. If you have access to GPS/Beeline you can survey your storage yourself and send the data to your local surveyor or engineering consultant for processing. To do this, drive in at least 2 pegs at ground level located near an inlet/outlet point as reference points or bench marks. It is necessary to drive back over these points several times during the survey to establish a good level as a permanent reference height.

It is also an ideal time to install a gauge board, or for greater accuracy, you could set up a permanent storage meter. One that is readily available is the Irrimate™ Storage Meter which consists of a pressure sensor that has an accuracy of ± 10 mm. It's easy to install and continuously measures and records storage volume and water surface area. Knowing exactly how much water you have gives you the ability to fine tune its use and assist with water budgets. Storage meters can also be used to get an accurate measurement of the amount of tail water and stormwater you recover and can be used to check pump capacity when pumping directly into your storage.

Once we receive some significant rain in our catchment, care needs to be taken when filling a storage that has been dry for some time. To avoid potential problems such as erosion and blow outs, dry storages should be filled slowly. If possible, the filling rate should be no more than 300 mm of water a day, and preferably less than 100mm a day.

Article by Janelle Montgomery and Peter Smith - NSW DPI.

New Cotton CRC website

The Cotton Catchment Communities CRC has a new website. This website has a wealth of information about the CRC, research and extension projects and many more things you want to know about cotton. www.cotton.crc.org.au

The Warren NSW DPI office has a new phone number: 02 6883 7100.