



BIOSECURITY case study

Come Clean Go Clean stops weed spread at St George

Come Clean Go Clean is an industry-wide biosecurity campaign aimed at preventing the spread of insect pests, weeds and diseases by managing controllable risks related to farm hygiene.

The experience of St George cotton grower, Cleave Rogan (pictured), has demonstrated that a farm wide Come Clean Go Clean strategy can have clear and tangible benefits, particularly in stopping new weed species from establishing in his paddocks.

Applying the principles and practices of Come Clean Go Clean to manage not just disease, but also to stop the spread of weeds, has become an important part of Cleave's day-to-day management.

"We really embraced Come Clean Go Clean many years ago," Cleave said.

"I found an emerging weed problem on a farm we were developing on new country, so it became clear that our equipment was the only potential source of infestation. With that realisation I decided to take action.

"Initially I implemented a wash-down process with FarmCleanse between fields. Before equipment went on to the next field, it would be blown down and then washed to remove all plant material, including weed seeds. FarmCleanse is used in the wash down for disease bio-security.

"This ensured that the management tactics I was using in one area to reduce the seed bank were not being negated by the introduction of new seeds.

"We are now at the stage where we have fields divided into management units. We insist on clean downs between these management areas. As part of a wider farm hygiene and weed management strategy, this has enabled us to keep on top of new weed infestations.

Cleave recognises that Come Clean Go Clean is not always convenient.

"There is nothing like impending rain to really make you question your resolve about clean down, however the benefits speak for themselves," he said.





Highlighting farm hygiene

Come Clean Go Clean is often considered only in the context of preventing the spread of disease, however CottonInfo Technical Specialist Ngaire Roughley says it cuts across all aspects of crop protection, including herbicide resistant or difficult to control weeds, and exotic diseases.

“Preventing a problem from coming on to your farm is much easier and more cost effective than having to manage that problem after it has spread to your property,” Ngaire said.

“The industry spends a lot of time and money on trying to reduce weed seed banks in order to prevent herbicide resistance. All this effort can be undone if Come Clean Go Clean is not part of everyday management. While a farm cannot be barricaded from all unwanted pests, adopting and ensuring compliance to a few routine best practice procedures can greatly reduce risks.

“Central to protecting your farm from new threats is to ensure that all machinery, vehicles and equipment entering cotton production areas are inspected for soil and plant debris and, if found, cleaned and disinfected with Agrisan or Farmcleanse in a dedicated wash-down area before they are moved.”

Ngaire encourages growers to strategically assess their biosecurity risks. Planning can help ensure that Come Clean Go Clean is an easy part of the farm routine.

“Sit down with a map of your property and work out where entry risks may be and how they could be managed. Think about your whole farming operation including other crops and animals which can also be affected by biosecurity incursions.

“Almost anything moved onto your property can be a potential source of pests and diseases so it is important to have practical plans in place to manage this risk.”

myBMP is a good source of guidance on risk management strategies, best practice recommended by industry, and useful resources to help growers prepare and implement risk management plans. Visit www.mybmp.com.au.

What is best practice?

People:

- Prepare a farm biosecurity plan which assesses the risk of insects, weeds, and diseases entering the farm, and how these risks can be minimised or managed. Make the plan available to all staff.
- Ensure that all farm personnel, consultants, contractors and visitors are made aware of farm biosecurity requirements including the need to Come Clean Go Clean.
- Brief all farm personnel, consultants and contractors on the required action to take if they identify unusual pests, diseases, weeds, or plant symptoms.

Crops:

- Monitor crops regularly for the presence of pests, or associated symptoms. Familiarise yourself with existing diseases, pests and weed species on your farm. This is the key first step in identifying new incursions. Report anything unusual to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881).
- Implement systems and records to ensure all farm inputs (eg seed, fertilisers, and stock fodder) are ‘clean’, including requirements for weed hygiene declarations for equipment, and keeping newly arrived animals separate during a reasonable ‘quarantine’ period.

Vehicles, machinery & equipment:

- Ensure all machinery, vehicles and equipment entering cotton production areas are inspected for soil and plant debris and, if found, cleaned with decontaminate in a wash-down facility before they are moved either on or off your property.
- Restrict the movement of vehicles on farm by establishing a sign posted, designated parking area for visitors and contractor equipment, located away from production areas. Use farm vehicles to transport visitors around the farm and keep a log of visitors to help with trace back if an incursion occurs.

For more information, contact:

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