



Macquarie bale up

NOVEMBER 2022

2022 SEASON

When is the time to wrap up the 20/21 season, as she still rolls on for so many? The gins have only just finished and in my relatively short 20 years of cotton experience I haven't seen that happen before. The right planting window was as hard to pick as a broken nose, once the soil warmed up the rains kept on coming. Major flooding with record rainfall for October many of our roads have been closed and logistics is the new Covid in some respects with getting cotton on and off farm as well as harvest.

It was anticipated that around 38,000 ha was to be planted in the Macquarie and with late planting finishing last week it may end up coming back to between 25,000 – 28,000ha however it has been hard work to try to get too finer a point on that number.

Trangie NSW

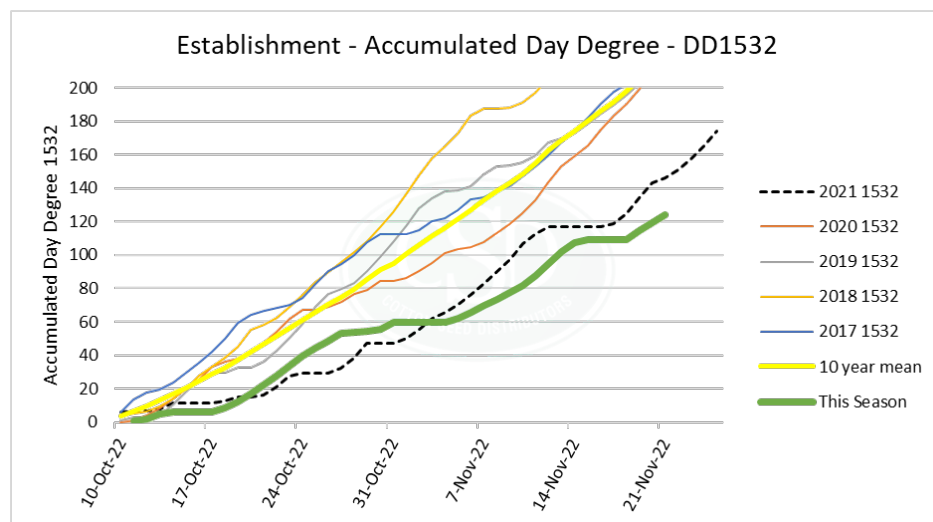


Fig 1: Source csd.net.au Day Degree Accumulation early season.

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Richard Williams Initiative (RWI) – Disease Action Groups (DAG)

Last season disease was a big issue in our valley and after visiting several farms doing the sampling, I couldn't help but think perhaps some answers to good management of disease lies with what some growers are doing year in and year out on their farms. This coincided with CRDC doing a review of its current disease program to get an external set of eyes to see how we are going in terms of getting the right research done and making sure it gets to our growers.

There are certainly some gaps in the research, and no doubt disease research is challenging, particularly when working with a pathogen like verticillium. It is not easy. While valuable resources go into the monitoring of disease, and trying to understand the pathogens better, in terms of 'on farm' management solutions - as an industry, we don't have as many options as we would like.

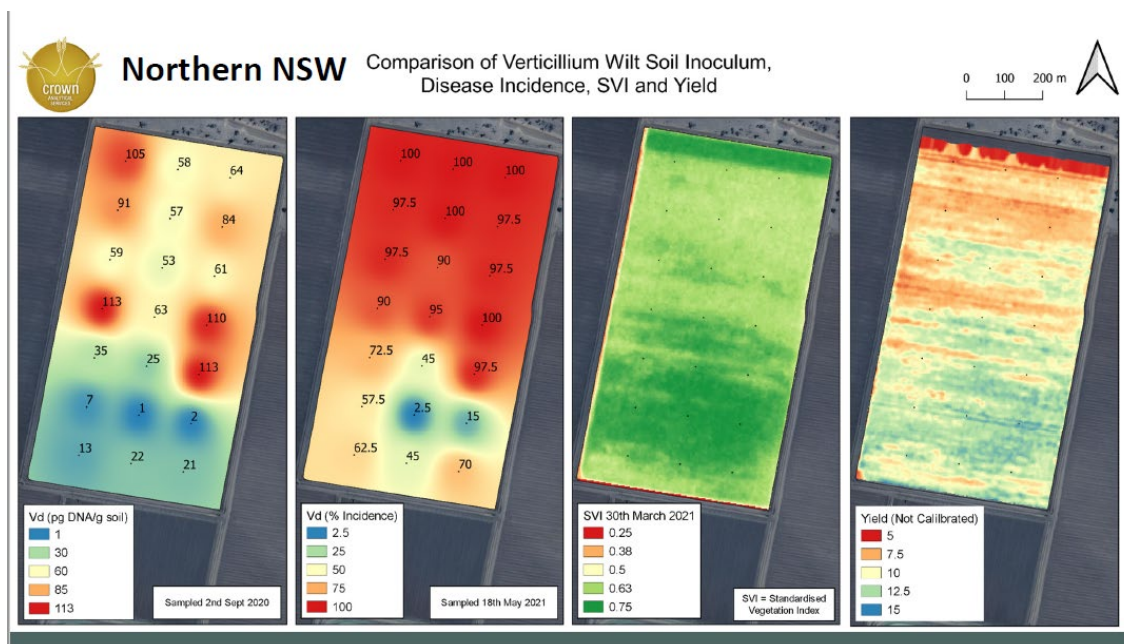
Solution: Enter stage left the Richard Williams Initiative Disease Action Groups (DAG). Co-funded by CSD, CRDC and Crown Analytical this investment will support research led by growers on the ground, investigating the effect of farming practices on disease levels and crop returns. The research will involve growers and agronomists actively collaborating in each stage of the research, through the establishment of eight 'Disease Action Groups' facilitated by the CottonInfo Regional Extension Officers. Each action group will investigate 2-3 management practices that aim to reduce disease incidence and improve cotton productivity.

We are looking forward to working with a group of growers who are keen to develop on farm management that will help them better manage disease – and form our Macquarie Disease Action Group. We have DAGs across eight cotton regions and to date we have 48 fields lined up to be part of the project.

The project will run for at least three seasons, being a catalyst for further industry disease research.

Each region ran some priority setting meetings to determine what the growers wanted to work towards – in the Macquarie, the top three were:

- Establishing some baselines for soil inoculum levels by getting Crown Analytical Services (CAS) in to measure fields with disease – it is hard to work out if what your doing will have an impact if we only measure things like yield, which can be impacted by so many environmental factors.
- Measuring the impact of rotations – CAS will do the baselines (inoculum mapping) and then come back up to twice a year and see what impact they are having on inoculum levels. (See below for an example of a heat map that CAS provided) Other data will be overlaid once the heat maps are developed and precision ag will play a part in seeing the overall impact of the disease.
- Using data from the first year in the project the DAG will flag some management practices they want to further investigate, this might be the use of Monosilicic Acid at planting or other products that we want to ground truth and validate results.



Source: Rob Long Macquarie valley disease workshop 2021

The words 'Action' and 'Participatory' are a big part of this project if you think about like a bus – the growers and consultants will be the ones steering the bus and deciding when and where it goes, and the facilitation groups will be responsible for keeping up the fuel and tyres intact, and maybe providing a few snacks and refreshments for the passengers.

Looking forward to seeing this project tackle the issues and move towards better practices that will help growers manage disease and remain sustainable long term.

If you want further information, please see the attached flyer, or give me a call.

BIOCONTROL OF FLEABANE

Fleabane and cotton country go hand in hand – early control is essential, and it cannot be done by relying on in crop glyphosate applications - [click here to see case studies showcasing the war on weeds](#)

The cotton industry is targeting Flaxleaf fleabane as it has become a significant weed over the last few years. [\(66\) Flaxleaf fleabane rust fungus | A new weed control tool - YouTube](#)

It is native to South America and is a prolific seed producer and the light seed can be spread significant distances by wind and water. It is difficult to control with herbicides so is a good candidate for control using a biological approach.

GOOD STUFF



I could not think how to write this one up, so it is going to get its own heading of **Good Stuff**. Last Friday I attended a 'survive the bog' day out at Nevertire when I ran the pub test over the day "was it worth leaving the farm for"? "Did I get something to impart"? the internal answer came back an astounding YES. The day was a collaboration of local business and was run by Delta Ag at Nevertire, as you can see from the flyer below there was some other support services there and two blokes from safe work NSW. To make it even more worthwhile if you registered with safe work NSW you could give your ABN and get \$1000 rebate to use towards safety gear for your business.

We heard from some experts in recovery and lifting and things really did hit home to me how at times of shite hitting the fan sometimes we do get complacent (on the 12th bog of the day) and that it can have significant impact on our health and safety. Too many have lost their lives while just trying to do their best and this is a message everyone should listen to.

The take home messages that I got from the day were

- Each bog or 'recovery' as it known in the game, is different and has different risks – step back and take your time think through how you think things are going to go and then think how they could go wrong and make sure you eliminate as many risks as possible. If you have a gut feel it's not going to be good result, have a break or ask someone else what they think – DO NOT RUSH IN – STEP BACK AND LET YOUR THOUGHTS SETTLE – DON'T GO IN ANGRY
- The soil probe is a useful tool – you can have a quick stab and get the best path out of situation –
- Check over your gear especially snatch straps – little tears can mean a reduction in function by at least 50% -

- What you hook up to is just as important if not more important than what you use – if you are using things like soft shackles avoid sharp or square edges. Watch the video below for tips on where and how to secure your recovery gear.
- Avoid joining two snatch straps together – they are not designed for this if you need extra length then use a wire rope/ cable attached with an appropriate weighted shackle or master link - There is a delay on recovery gear so ask the experts and do not go for cheap imitations.
- Bigger does not mean better in snatch straps once again call an expert and get advice before purchasing the biggest they have online.

Well done to all who supported this event it was a true example of collaboration for a purpose.

I caught up with the safe work guys and here some info they had to impart – also some really good rebate options that don't take too long to do – they did mention they are always happy to come out and do provide advice and options to improve your on-farm safety – they would rather that than be called out after an event.

See below for messages from Rhys Dive.

SafeWork NSW are working furiously on raising the awareness of the dangers of recovering bogged machinery through the numerous workshops held across the state and offering eligible business the \$1000 safety rebate to assist with the purchase of safety equipment. These workshops have been very well received with record numbers of people attending.

We also have a very dedicated team of people who are working on releasing additional publications and safety information that address bogged machinery and safety around farm vehicles. As soon as it is released, I would like to take you up on your offer of sharing the information across your network.

Industry groups like yours are so important in assisting us reach out to businesses, farmers & ag workers and passing on the message of farm safety. An example of this is a video created by Kondinin Group. Kondinin Group are an agricultural research company based in WA who recently put together a recovery of bogged machinery video in simple language that is easy to follow. <https://www.farmingahead.com.au/harvesting/news/1363050/podcast-safety-signage>. YouTube link if above doesn't work <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOsJABr6JoE>

The event held at Nevertire was registered with the SafeWork NSW rebate team to ensure that eligible business can claim a safety rebate to directly assist with the purchase of safety equipment for the business.

If business were unable to attend, they can still apply for the rebates, however they will need to have an interaction with SafeWork NSW. This may be attending a SafeWork NSW educational event or completing the 12-minute SafeWork NSW 'Small Business - Easy to do WHS' webinar or have a SafeWork Inspector attend your business or farm where they will be able to provide practical WHS advice specific to your business and industry to help you make your workplace safer.

Please find below the links to the SafeWork NSW webpage including the eligibility information and application form for the small business rebate and the Quadbike rebate.

\$1000 SafeWork NSW Small business rebate information

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/1000-safework-small-business-rebate>

Quad bike rebate information

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/quad-bikes-and-side-by-side-vehicles/rebates>

SafeWork NSW farming safety information

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/agriculture,-forestry-and-fishing/farming>

If you have any further questions in relation to the rebates, please email safetyrebate@safework.nsw.gov.au or call 131050

Kind regards,

Assistant State Inspector, WHS - Regional

SafeWork NSW | Department of Customer Service

P: 02 6392 7626 | M 0436 678 225

E rhys.dive@safework.nsw.gov.au | www.safework.nsw.gov.au

181 -187 Anson St, Orange NSW 2800

That's it for another Bale up – here is hoping all the gaps in the graphs are closer to average next time I report back!

Amanda Thomas

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Information Document for Growers, Consultants & Industry

The Initiative

Disease Management in Cotton Farming Systems – a Participatory Action Research Approach to Deliver Solutions

Background

This initiative will be supported via Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD) Richard Williams' Commercial Research Initiative with additional support from the Cotton Research Development Corporation (CRDC) and Crown Analytical Services (CAS). The initiative will run for 3 years and adopts participatory action research. This approach allows for input, decision making and ownership by participants, who are most affected by the outcomes.

A need was highlighted for further disease work around management practices that occur on farm. Many growers and consultants are proactive in trying various management practices on farm and this is an opportunity to create a platform that will capture and validate these practices across the industry.

Utilising Crown Analytical Services, certain disease-causing inoculum can be measured. In particular, this project will be investigating Black Root Rot and *Verticillium dahliae*. It is important to note that *Fusarium oxysporum* inoculum cannot be measured yet, however this project will gather data on this disease where possible.

Crown Analytical Services

As leaders of the initiative, Crown Analytical Services (CAS) are responsible for inoculum testing across a wide range of farms in the industry. They will work closely with growers to collect data and diagnose in-field disease issues. The disease monitoring capabilities by CAS are essential in determining the effectiveness of disease management practices on farm.

Project Goals

- To identify which practices can assist with on farm disease management
- Provide the catalyst for further industry research
- Provide the mechanism to test and validate findings from research
- To assess the value and cost of alternative practices across different farming production systems and environments
- Provide a regionally specific platform for research outcomes in relation to disease management
- Closely link with other industry research investment and pass on any management practices identified that may be a catalyst for further investigation

Initiative Outline

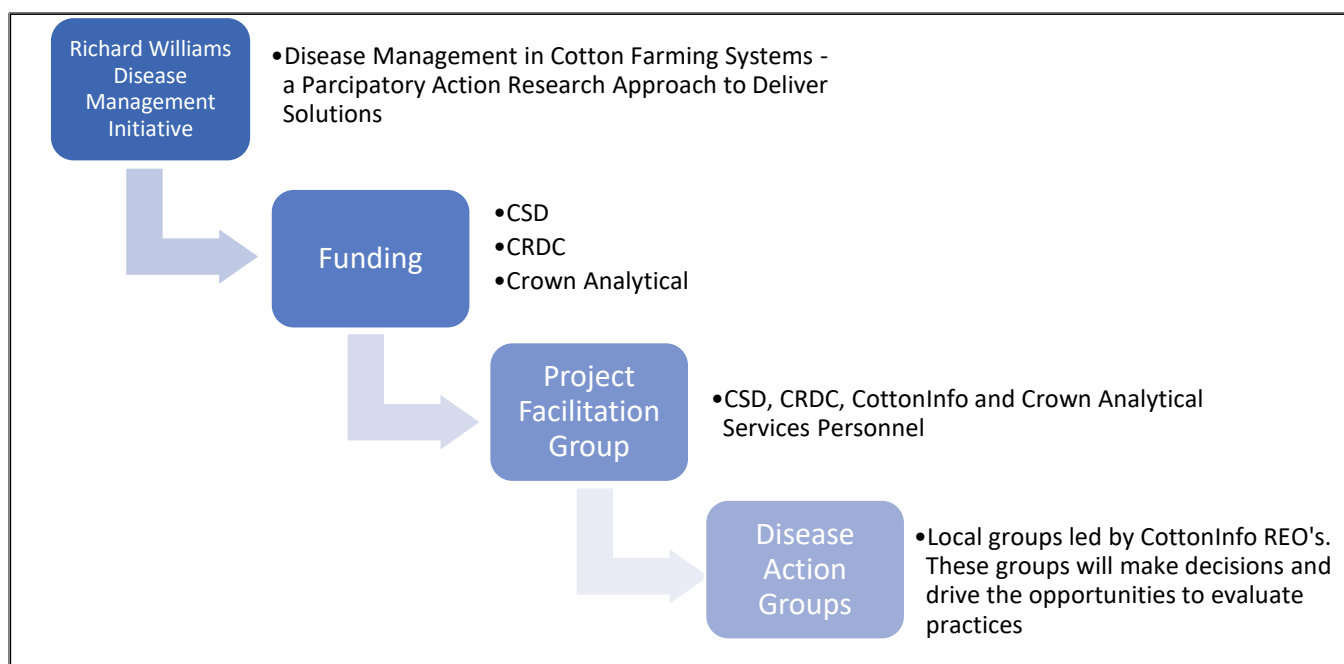


Figure 1. Outline of the initiative

What is the Project Facilitation Group?

The Project Facilitation Group has been formed to oversee the investment and deliver funding on key milestones. This group will consist of CSD, CRDC, CottonInfo and CAS personnel who will assist with facilitation of projects on farm and gathering data from growers.

What is a Disease Action Group and who is involved?

Across many cotton areas, growers, consultants, and other industry personnel have agreed to be part of Disease Action Groups to bring together those proactively involved in combatting disease in their local area. As part of the Disease Management Initiative, we aim to utilise these groups on a local level as a way of reaching out and supporting the work that already occurs on farm and be the catalyst to involve others.

The CottonInfo Regional Extension Officers are the 'local leads' of these Disease Action Groups to assist in the facilitation of meetings and tasks. The REO's will feed information in and out of the group, access and involve researchers where required, as well as assist in keeping on farm trials scientifically valid and on track. We will also be seeking a 'grower lead' for each group to act as a champion and spokesperson for the area, and feedback on this is welcomed.

Members of the CSD Extension and Development team will also provide support to the Disease Action Groups through their skillset and local knowledge. (A complete list of local representatives can be found in Table 1.).

Disease Action Groups

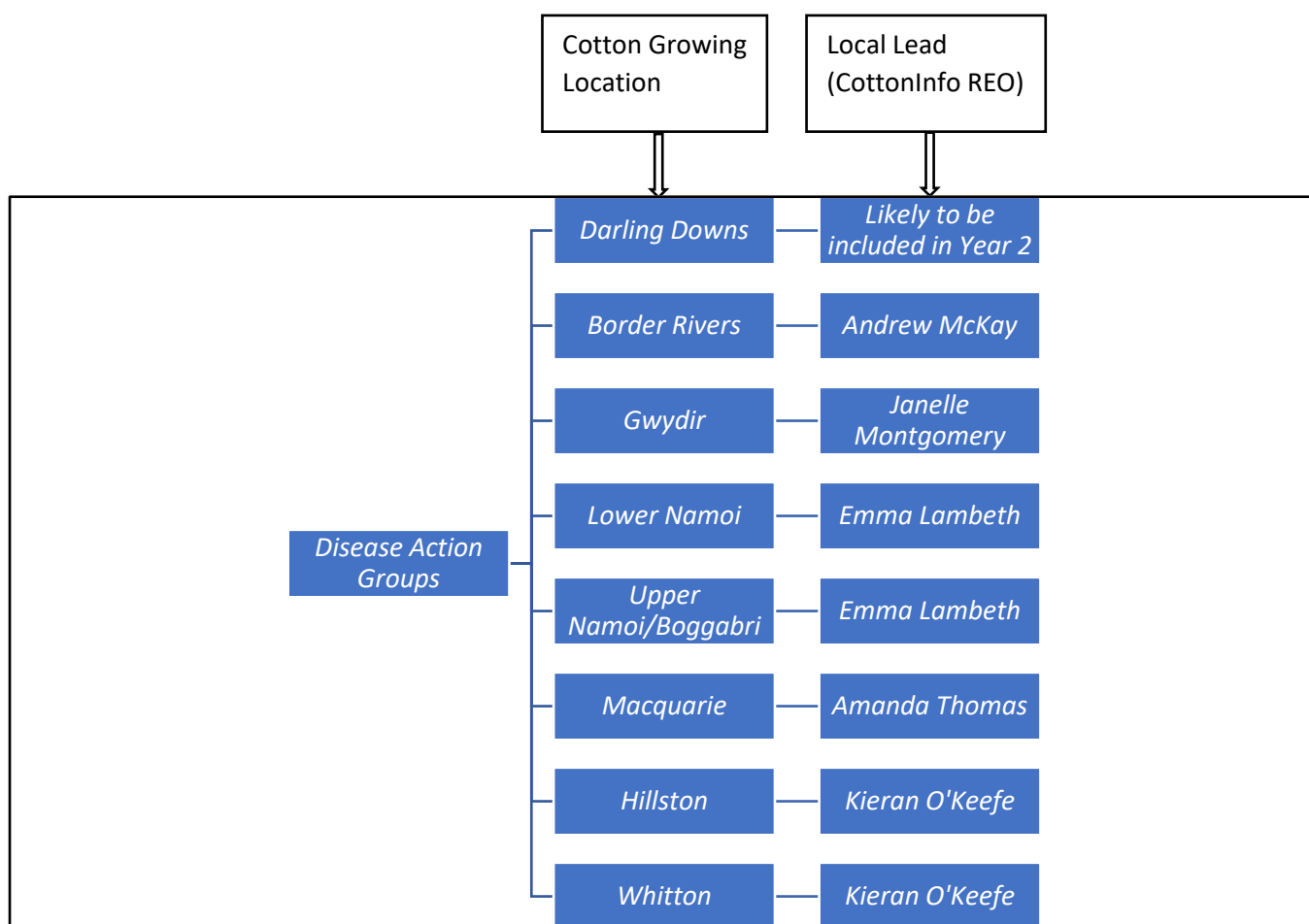


Figure 2. Disease Action Groups

Important note: these areas are not exclusive; we can only hope the initiative grows in interest and funding over the next few years and that we can expand to other cotton growing areas.

Grower Commitments & Data Governance

The participation and commitment of growers is essential to success of this initiative. There will be instances where farm access is required, for example CAS undertaking testing or CottonInfo and CSD showcasing trial sites. Gathering historical data will also be crucial to accurately assess on farm trials and growers will be asked to produce this information related to their fields/crops. For example, yield data, NDVI imagery or rotation history. This information will be collated and analysed anonymously and used to promote positive management practices to the industry. Over the life of this project third party advisors may be sought out to assist in analysing and overlaying spatial data from grower fields.

To ensure the confidentiality of collected data, growers will be required to sign an agreement upon commencement of this project via CSD's Trials Agreement. This will protect both participants and CSD; and ensure that confidentiality and anonymity are recognised and held in high priority.

Table 1. Local representatives

Location	Representative	Contact Information
<i>Darling Downs</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Border Rivers	Andrew McKay (CottonInfo)	0407 992 495 andrew.mckay@cottoninfo.net.au
	Angus Marshall (CSD)	0428 950 054 amarshall@csd.net.au
Gwydir	Janelle Montgomery (CottonInfo)	0428 640 990 janelle.montgomery@cottoninfo.net.au
	Stuart McFadyen (CSD)	0428 950 005 stuartm@csd.net.au
Namoi	Emma Lambeth (CottonInfo)	0455 525 155 emma.lambeth@cottoninfo.net.au
	Bob Ford (CSD)	0428 950 015 bford@csd.net.au
Macquarie	Amanda Thomas (CottonInfo)	0417 226 411 amanda.thomas@cottoninfo.net.au
	Craig McDonald (CSD)	0484 513 566 cmcdonald@csd.net.au
Southern	Kieran O’Keeffe (CottonInfo)	0427 207 406 kieran.okeeffe@cottoninfo.net.au
	Jorian Millyard (CSD)	0428 950 009 jmillyard@csd.net.au

Table 2. Important Contacts

Company	Representative	Contact Information
Cotton Seed Distributors	Dr Michael Bange	0428 991 540 mbange@csd.net.au
Crown Analytical Services	Rob Long	0428 971 751 rob@crownanalytical.com.au
	Jenny Brooks	0437 996 678 lab@crownanalytical.com.au
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	Elsie Hudson	0456 914 637 elsie.hudson@crdc.com.au