



the **cotton thread**

Border Rivers, St George and Dirranbandi

June 2021



Cotton Growers from Central Qld visited the Balonne recently, touring Cubbie Station and inspecting bankless irrigation systems.

Season Update

Picking in the Balonne and MacIntyre regions is limping towards the finish line with a combination of late plant/restart cotton and intermittent wet weather drawing out the process. The latter is also hampering the movement of round bales off-farm to the ginning facilities.

Quality and out turn in both regions is running within base grade/normal range for the majority of cotton.

Labour challenges have impacted all rural businesses and the processors have also had their share of this in trying to pull together a workforce to operate their gins.



Yields in the Balonne have been good with some growers indicating their best result ever across the whole farm. It is expected that the late crops will yield below the outstanding results seen so far but may present some surprising outcomes when assessed on a b/ML basis. Dams in both regions remain at good levels compared to recent years and bode well for next season.

The recent [CottonInfo Moisture Manager](#) shows models are favouring slightly above median rainfall in the coming months.



Source	Temp Forecast	Precipitation outlook				
		Emerald	Sth Q'ld	N-NSW	C-NSW	S-NSW
ACCESS-S 	Warmer nights	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS
UK Met 	Normal	Above normal JAS	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal JAS
IRI NMME 	Normal	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS
ECMWF 	Cooler	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS	Above normal JAS
CMCC 	Warmer	Above normal JAS	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal JAS
JMA 	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal JAS

CSD New Appointments

Congratulations to Chris Teague on his appointment to the role within CSD of Data and Digital manager. Many will know Chris from his role as Extension and Development agronomist for CSD covering the Balonne and MacIntyre regions. His new role will lead the CSD agronomy software initiative.

Congratulations also to Angus Marshall who will succeed Chris Teague in the E&D role for the Balonne and MacIntyre regions. Angus has been part of the CSD E&D team covering Northern NSW prior to this appointment.



Chris Teague



Angus Marshall

Trends in Phosphorus Availability

CottonInfo REO for the Macquarie, Amanda Thomas, recently caught up with their local soils expert Dr Pat Hulme to discuss some trends in the Macquarie valley relating to the immobile nutrient “Phosphorus (P)”. These trends are potentially evident in other production areas.

Dr Pat was asked to share his thoughts on the impact that extended drought and big cereal crops could have had on P levels in soils, considering that stubble burning was more prevalent this season due to crop residue quantities and grain removal was greater than normal.

“There have been reports of measured soil P being lower now than it was a year or so ago. This is likely due to a combination of phosphorus tie up in plants and soil nutrient export. A phosphorus management plan could consist of a phosphorus budget supported by strategic soil tests. The phosphorus budget would have inflows of P fertilizer and outflows of grain, lint and forage that has been exported from a field. Use soil tests to check this budget. Soil test strategies could be to, either sample selected fields before each cotton crop, or to rotate through fields and sample a proportion each year.” ***Trends in nutrient levels can be detected more accurately if samples are taken from a similar part of the field at a similar time on each occasion.***

“Remember that each soil test addresses a specific question. Colwell P measures readily available P in neutral to alkaline soil. BSES P measures both available P and slowly available P. P Buffer Index is an indication of the amount of fertilizer P required to raise Colwell P by 1 unit.” (See links below and paper attached for further information)

Cottoninfo's Dr Oliver Knox was also approached to explain the relationship and differences between measuring the Colwell P and BSES P, here is what he had to say.

"P is a bugger of an element. **Largely immobile**, meaning *if* you must put it back you need to add it pre-crop and mix it into the soil if possible (i.e spreading). Trials have shown there is also the issue with P levels in Colwell tests remaining similar over decades **despite not fertilising fields, and removing P in harvested material**, which **seems to imply we are mining the BSES pool and assuming it is feeding the available Colwell pool**. The trouble here is that it can suddenly fall over, and this is possibly what you're seeing in the Macquarie".

The best solution is to have an adequate replacement strategy to think about returning the P you are taking off.

There is also the issue that the critical value for P is not as fixed as it is for other nutrients. The P buffering index (PBI) has a role in this as well, as in how easy it is to rebuild available P levels. The [MLA Phosphorus Tool](#) offers some good P capital and maintenance application advice based on soil PBI. (This is very easy and practical, and you can just input your soil test results into the spreadsheet, it is largely aimed at stocking but you can input your results and use the calculations).

The [Soil Quality website](#) has a broad range of fact sheets and calculators along with test results for a range of soils across the Australian landscape. This site can provide an insight into [PBI](#) and some values for soils in a number of regions, useful to obtain an estimate of your PBI for input into the above MLA P tool.

The PBI provides an indication of the likelihood of applied fertiliser P being tied up. The higher the number the more likely the fertiliser P will be tied up: <140 = low; 140-280=moderate; >280=high. Most of the cotton soils are in the low to moderate PBI which increases P placement and timing options. (Source Cotton Production Manual 2021)

The [Cotton Production Manual](#) has some good info around P and removal rates on page 45. Keep an eye out on the next [CottonInfo E news update](#) or subscribe on the link as CottonInfo's Jon Baird explains how to get your P into the right spot at the right time.

A recent CottonInfo Blog focused on [Pre-season Nutrient Planning](#), and contains a range of useful considerations and tips on P and other nutrients.

COTTON COLLECTIVE ON IN TOWOOMBA

25th & 26th OF AUGUST 2021

The 2021 Australian Cotton Trade Show will be held in conjunction with Cotton Australia's Cotton Collective and Industry Awards in Toowoomba – August 25-26.

Finalists have been announced in 2021 Australian Cotton Industry Awards, and are all high achievers who have attained significant success in adapting their farming operations to be as efficient and sustainable as possible. Thank you to everyone who nominated for the awards, and best wishes to the finalists for the next stage in the awards process. The finalists in the 2021 Australian Cotton Industry Awards are:

Bayer Grower of the Year and AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year

- Howard Rother, Rother Farming, Cecil Plains, QLD
- Ian Carter, Connamara Partnership, Quirindi, NSW
- Thomas Popp, RMI Pty Ltd, Goondiwindi, QLD
- Tony Quigley, Quigley Farms, Trangie, NSW
- Ashley Geldard, Columboola Cotton, Miles, QLD

ADAMA Chris Lehmann Trust Young Cotton Achiever of the Year

- James Kanaley, Kanaley Agricultural Consulting, Griffith, NSW
- Emma Ayliffe, Summit Ag, Lake Cargelligo, NSW
- Angus Dalgliesh, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Dalby, QLD

Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year

- Oliver Knox, University of New England, Armidale, NSW
- Iain Wilson, CSIRO, Canberra, ACT
- Mick Bange, CSIRO (formerly), Narrabri, NSW

Research priorities for CRDC investment

CRDC representatives have been visiting regions with the aim of gathering ideas for future research focus from industry members. These ideas have covered topics such as:

- Irrigation management
- Limited water decision making
- Evaporation mitigation
- Defoliation package for the south
- Management for early retention
- Minimising micronaire discounts
- Soil health – how to promote
- Disease management – Reoccurring Wilt information
- Yield decline

- Chemical solutions for BRR
- Managing soil variability
- Further development of SLW App
- Nutrition management – role of micronutrients, biologicals, N inhibitors, P&K rate and placement, N decisions (and in-field testing)
- Water x crop area planning aid
- Defoliation options and process – access to overseas registered products

It is important that growers and industry stakeholders are able to bring forward research topics to help the direction of the industry as a whole and to make individual businesses more productive.

So here is your chance to have your say. Cotton Australia are conducting a short survey where you can put forward three research topics.

To complete the survey, click [here](#).

Note: CRDC no longer invests in plant breeding or varieties. This is done through Cotton Breeding Australia. Please keep this in mind when thinking about research priorities for CRDC.

CRDC is funded through an R&D levy, which all growers pay (the levy equates to \$2.25 for each 227 kilogram bale of cotton; or \$4.06 per tonne of exported seed cotton), with the Government matching the funds dollar-for-dollar.

Over the past 29 years, over \$340 million has been invested in cotton RD&E by growers and the Government – and it has been estimated that the return on investment for growers is \$7 in benefits for every \$1 invested.

CottonInfo Blog

[Pre-Season Nutrient Planning](#)

A recent CottonInfo Blog focused on [Pre-season Nutrient Planning](#), and contains a range of useful considerations and tips on the key nutrients, application and timing.

[Using drones for revegetation on local cotton farms](#)

This blog reports on a field day held near Boggabri where a range of techniques for revegetation around cotton landscapes were demonstrated and discussed. The use of drones for this purpose was one of the more novel methods on display.

[2021 sustainability focus - June: careful pesticide use | CottonInfo](#)

One of the Australian cotton industry's key sustainability targets is related to pesticide use. The draft target is to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides by 5% every 5 years, a

challenge given the significant reductions made over the past couple of decades. For more information, follow the link in the above title.

CSD Update

THE AMBASSADOR ADVOCATE

The recent publication of **THE AMBASSADOR ADVOCATE** focuses on the end of season segment picking of ambassador crops. The fruiting dynamics and distribution of the limited release new line Sicot 606B3F is compared to popular lines Sicot 746B3F and 748B3F.

The above “The Ambassador Advocate” is a hyperlink however only members of CSD will be able to access the publications.

2021 COTTON SEED DISTRIBUTORS GROWER INFORMATION GUIDE

The **2021 COTTON SEED DISTRIBUTORS GROWER INFORMATION GUIDE** was released at the end of May. This annual publication is the growers guide to key dates, varieties, seed treatments, the order process, prices, industry programs and other information.

CSD members can access this information from the CSD website [here](#).

CRDC news

News from CRDC includes:

- The Winter edition of the [Spotlight](#) magazine is out.
- Participants in the Australian Rural Leaders program announced.
- Using drones for re-vegetation
- Nuffield scholarships applications for 2022 now open

For more details on these, click [here](#).

COTTON AUSTRALIA CORNER

[Cotton Matters](#) – key points

- CA general meeting plus Research Priority Forum with CRDC held in Brisbane
- Digital Cotton Education kit launched
- Circular Cotton Project launched in Goondiwindi with a trial of textile waste returned to paddock with grower Sam Coulton
- Cotton Open House held in Brisbane with the industry welcoming stakeholders and critics alike for a process of engagement and reflection

- Finalists announced for the 2021 Australian Cotton Industry Awards
- Survey open for Cotton Australia and GRDC Ag skills and training needs analysis
- NSW schools students, who were winners of the Australian Natural Fibres Hackathon, taken on a gin and farm tours.
- Latest global cotton figures released by ICAC
- Minor changes to Qld Drought declaration areas
- Registrations open for the NSW Generating Regionally Outstanding Women project. The project focuses on the professional development of women in the NSW cotton industry

News from Cotton Australia is largely covered in the Cotton Matters topics above.

- For further information click [here](#).

What's On:

23/24 June:	Crop Consultants Australia seminar, Narrabri
12 July:	CSD Cotton Management Tour (CMT), Goondiwindi, O'Shea's Royal Hotel, 5pm
14 July:	CSD CMT St George, Golf Club, 10am
14 July:	CSD CMT Dirranbandi, Dirranbandi Hotel Motel, 5pm
15 July:	CSD CMT Mungindi, Two Mile Hotel, 10am.
16 July:	Focus on Food and Fibre Conference, St George, Golf Club.
25/26 Aug:	Cotton Collective, Toowoomba, Showgrounds
9 Sep:	CCA workshop, Goondiwindi, Gateway To Training

Andrew McKay

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