



# UNCGA & AgVance Weekly Newsletter

August 14th, 2014



Yet another busy few weeks in the Upper Namoi and surrounds. This week the newsletter is arriving in your inboxes a little early as I am on leave both Friday and next Monday (skiing the slopes in Queenstown!). However, I will be back on deck early Tuesday morning for a big few days at Ag Quip. If you are visiting Ag Quip next week please drop in for a chat at the CSD/CottonInfo site E36.

As many winter crops desperately need a drink, hopefully the weekend forecasts ring true and we get a decent downpour to kick things into gear. Many also looking to the sky to lock in upcoming summer crop plants as well as pre applied fert going down. So fingers crossed.

## GRDC Weed Webinars

A while ago I reported on three weed webinars hosted by the GRDC. I've heard of a few requests for recordings and they are now available on the GRDC website.

[Click here for link to webinars](#)

## Energy Saver Scheme

Cotton Australia, NSWIC and NSW Office of the Environment and Heritage are running a pilot Energy Saver Scheme program. This program will provide 7 to 10 subsidised on-farm energy efficiency audits (up to \$25,000 of funding) on potential energy savings from **on-farm water delivery systems**.

Cotton Australia are calling for expressions of interest from growers who might like to take part in the program.

Eligibility criteria includes;

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- Based in NSW.
- Annual electricity consumption of above 160MWh.
- Electricity bill greater than \$100,000 a year (electricity must be used for groundwater pumps, river pumps, farm supply pumps or pressurised on-farm irrigation equipment).
- Not involved in previous energy efficiency work on farm.

If you are interested in this project, or would like more information please contact either myself or Paul Sloman (CA) on 0448 094 883 or [pauls@cotton.org.au](mailto:pauls@cotton.org.au).

## An opportunity

Farmers in cotton growing regions currently have the opportunity to nominate a not-for-profit organisation to receive a \$5000 grant.

All you need to do is log onto the website below and fill out a simple nomination. Questions include basic contact information and two 100 word or less statements;

- How do you think the grant would help them?
- How will your community benefit?

<http://aussiecottonfarmers.wd.com.au/>

## Trip to Matt Swansbra—Wee Waa

I mentioned in the last newsletter an impromptu visit to Matt Swansbra's property near Wee Waa that was planned for 11th August. However, this date has been changed to the 2nd of September. Matt is an innovate farmer growing irrigated cotton.

If you are interested please get in touch ASAP.

Sarah Clift

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## Nitrogen in-crop (GRDC Update Summary)

*"Yield is king"*

In cases when we aren't chasing protein is early application of N the safest and most reliable option??

Traditional applications before or around sowing suggest so.

### Advantages for in-crop N

- Better predictability of finding yield potential
- Crop to indicate N requirement
- Risk management
- Increase NUE (nitrogen use efficiency)
- Decrease GHG emissions

### Disadvantages for in-crop N

- Potential losses of top dressed N
- Efficiency of N uptake – lack of rainfall, timing of rainfall
- Labour and time requirement

### Key factors

- N budgeting (soil and fert)
- N demand (yield/protein)
- Generally simple models (spreadsheets – do they have limitations? Based on assumptions)
- Seasonal conditions – has yield potential changed?
- Timing – targeting yield or protein, likely rainfall

N application up to mid stem extension will focus on yield outcomes (Gunnedah timing around 1<sup>st</sup> August – 15<sup>th</sup> September).

Later applications of N occurring once grain has set is now working on protein.

### Other key factors

- Product choice
- Urea vs liquid fert
- Evenness of application with liquids providing an advantage

- Between GS 30-37 little evidence of significant differences.
- Variety choice
- Return on investment

## Nitrogen volatilisation; factors affecting how much is lost and how much is left over time. (GRDC Update Summary)

### Background

Nitrogen fertiliser can be lost from the system in many different ways including;

- **Ammonia volatilisation**—a chemical process that occurs at the soil surface when ammonium from urea is converted to ammonia gas at high pH.
- **Nitrate leaching**—physical process that occurs with drainage of water through the profile.
- **Nitrate denitrification**—a biological process that occurs within the soil profile wherever there is sufficient available nitrate, labile carbon substrate, and low oxygen conditions (minimal in dryland cropping soils).

### Urea losses (based on field trials in NW NSW cracking clay soils 2011-13);

- 11% N loss through ammonia volatilisation on fallow
- 5% N loss when applied to tillering wheat crops.

### Ammonium sulphate losses;

- Losses from ammonium sulphate were less except when the soil contained >2% calcium carbonate (lime).
- Losses from ammonium sulphate applied to fallow soils averaged >20% where soil contained >10% calcium carbonate (lime).

### Take home messages

Ammonia volatilisation loss was principally affected by;

- Presence of a crop
- Fertiliser type
- Average wind speed at ground level
- Losses are greater in fallow than in crop situations

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Rabobank



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In urea plots N loss was influenced by;

- Presence of crop
- Soil texture – sandier = greater loss
- Soil moisture content at spreading (wetter soil = greater loss).

### Gluten Free Weet-Bix



After the past summer season fiasco with the sorghum staining it made me wonder what other products sorghum is being used for rather than just feed.

So I stumbled across gluten free Weet-Bix. Made from 96% wholegrain sorghum the taste of the cereal is different, however edible unlike a lot of other gluten free products (largely depended on your topping of choice of course!).

What does this mean for sorghum production in Australia/Liverpool Plains? Should be an interesting one to follow. First step presumably would be to discover the Sanitarium sorghum source and ask some questions....

Or perhaps suggest a name change—Sorg-Bix?? Not as catchy..

### Network Corner

#### **Marcus Oldham students available for work.**

James Oldacre is looking for work until roughly the end of the year. He has both cattle and tractor experience.

Raelene Parker is looking for a work placement in the area from 15th of September until 21st of November (10 weeks).

Please contact either or both directly if you are

looking for a hand over this time period.

James—0402 182 194

Raelene—0427 246 871

### Dates for the Diary

**AgQuip 2014**  
**August 19,20,21st**  
**Gunnedah**

Drop in and say hello at CSD/CottonInfo Site E36

**Dryland meeting and dinner**  
**Wednesday 20th August 5pm**  
**Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club**  
**PLEASE RSVP ASAP to myself or**  
**[bford@csd.net.au](mailto:bford@csd.net.au) or on CSD website**

**Nutrient Forum for Advisors**  
**26th August 9am –4pm**  
**Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club**

**Two sessions register for one or both.**

**Please RSVP by 22nd August (state morning, afternoon or both) to Jo Weier 0427 231 701 or**  
**[jo.weier@daff.qld.gov.au](mailto:jo.weier@daff.qld.gov.au)**

**Rabobank**  
**Grains Lunch Function**  
**28th August 10.30am—2.00pm**  
**Quirang Country Gardens, Gunnedah**

This grains function will look at  
'The post-ethanol Era: What is the next demand stock' (Neil Townsend, Director, CWB Market Research)  
'Thoughts from the Young Farmers Master Class in the Netherlands' (Kate Davidson)

**RSVP by Thursday 21st August to Michaela on 02 5711 1028 or [Michaela.Coxhead@rabobank.com](mailto:Michaela.Coxhead@rabobank.com)**



*Thank you to the AgVance Farming Bronze Sponsors.*



**Sarah Clift**



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**Trip to Matt Swansbra  
2nd September  
Wee Waa**

Matt is an innovative irrigated cotton grower.

If you are interested in this trip please get in touch ASAP. Organised in association with Geoff Hunter (CottonInfo) and Carol Sanson (CGS).

**AgVance AGM  
3rd of September  
Details to follow.**

**UNCGA Charity Bowls Day & AGM  
11th September 10am  
Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club**

**\$35 per person booking essential  
Contact Julie Glover**

As mentioned before, I am on leave until Tuesday next week. If you need to speak to me during this period would be best to flick me an email and I will answer them when I return.

Hope to see some of you at Ag Quip (remember site E36!).

Stay safe,

Sarah

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