

## Cotton Australia spray drift campaign

Each season, Cotton Australia runs a campaign to help protect Australia's cotton crops from the effects of spray drift that includes educating users of Group I herbicides such as 2,4-D.

The campaign is multi-faceted, and key components include:

- **CottonMap awareness and support**
  - Cotton Australia leads the promotion of CottonMap and supports users with mapping fields each season.
  - Each season, an average of 96% of the planted area is mapped.
  - CottonMap is a joint collaboration between Cotton Australia, CRDC, GRDC and Nufarm.
- **Media campaign**
  - Scheduled press releases distributed at multiple points throughout the season (planting, reminders, and updates) in every cotton production area. Cotton Australia spokespeople respond to media interview requests to increase awareness.
  - Responsive press releases distributed following weather events/damage in specific areas.
- **Radio ads**
  - Cotton Australia runs more than 1200 radio ads targeting all farmers in cotton production areas, warning of spray drift risks once cotton is planted and providing best practice tips.
- **Summer Weed Control Best Practice Guide**
  - Cotton Australia supported the creation of a new guide developed by Mary O'Brien Rural Enterprises Pty Ltd to increase awareness amongst farmers and spray applicators about surface temperature inversions. To date, the guide is supported and has been shared by GrainGrowers and Pulse Australia.
- **Resellers and agronomists**
  - Cotton Australia's Regional Managers visit more than 100 resellers and chemical distributors to provide point-of-sale posters and spray drift reminders.
  - Cotton Australia also meets with agronomists, contractors and applicators to drive best practice.
- **Briefing regulators**
  - Cotton Australia liaises with state regulators on communications/media activities, audits and investigations: Biosecurity Queensland and the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).
  - Cotton Australia briefs the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) on Group I related spray impacts on cotton.
- **Raising awareness with other farming sectors**
  - Cotton Australia collaborates with other industries (including the grains and pulses sectors) to prevent spray drift occurrences and raise awareness of best practice.

- **Supporting cotton growers and responding to spray drift incidents**
  - Cotton Australia runs regular CottonMap reminders in e-newsletters such as Cotton Matters, myBMP Matters and via the CottonMap website throughout the entire season.
  - Cotton Australia's Regional Managers encourage growers to follow best practice and also support growers impacted by adverse incidents.
  - Cotton Australia collects reports from impacted growers to identify the key contributing factors to off-target damage, and subsequently prioritise investment in policy and RDE initiatives.
- **myBMP**
  - The myBMP (Best Management Practices) Pesticide Management module provides guidance to growers on the storage, handling and correct application of pesticides to reduce any potential negative impacts to growers, cotton businesses, neighbouring farmers and the environment: <http://cottonaustralia.com.au/cotton-growers/resources/crop-protection>
  - Cotton Australia's Regional Managers provide assistance to growers undertaking myBMP.
- **Research and development**
  - Cotton Australia's Grower Advisory Panels have previously supported spray drift projects as part of the CRDC's investment portfolio. Cotton growers are able to raise priority areas for RDE investment through their Cotton Growers' Association Member Representatives.
  - Research to identify and model surface temperature inversion events continues to be supported by the Grower Advisory Panels to develop an inversion alert tool for growers. This research is currently assessing the drift-risk for various atmospheric inversion scenarios.
  - Research supported by the Grower Advisory Panels is scheduled to commence in mid-2018 to identify motivational factors for improved spray application on farms.
- **Workshops**
  - Cotton Australia is one of a number of organisations supporting the NSW AgSkilled advanced chemical spray application training.
  - Cotton Australia also supports spray workshops conducted by other groups.
- **Policy**
  - Cotton Australia consults with Cotton Growers' Associations biannually around key policy objectives including spray drift management through each CGA's appointed Member Representatives.
  - Cotton Australia provides feedback to policy makers regarding the certification, application and record-keeping requirements of chemical users to ensure long-term improvements for responsible use of Group I herbicides.
  - Discussions are currently underway with the State Regulatory authorities and chemical registrants around initiatives to improve on-target efficiency for herbicides.
  - The APVMA consults with Cotton Australia during reviews of chemical label conditions, registrations and chemical application requirements.

All of Cotton Australia's efforts are aimed at raising awareness of the potential damage Group I herbicides can do to cotton and promoting practices that all farmers can implement to avoid drift. We are hopeful that our efforts will reduce adverse incidents and damage year-on-year.