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New pest management training announced for cotton industry

A new training opportunity focused on managing pests in cotton crops has been announced, with cotton growers in New South Wales encouraged to take part.

The Cotton Pest Management course is part of the AgSkilled program's new training offering. This course has been developed and delivered by Tocal College in partnership with CottonInfo.

AgSkilled is a \$15 million, three-year NSW Government-funded, industry-led workforce development strategy. It aims to ensure the state's cotton, grains, production horticulture, viticulture and rice industries have a skilled workforce capable of meeting future challenges.

AgSkilled project officer Claudia Vicary said the new course will greatly benefit cotton farmers as they grow their crop this summer.

"The cotton pest management course is an interactive, thought-provoking training opportunity for cotton industry personnel in New South Wales who want to better understand cotton crops and cotton pest management," Ms Vicary said.

"The course is a two-day, interactive classroom and field session training initiative and will be presented by leading researchers and industry experts.

"The training is aligned and delivered against vocational education and training requirements, and growers will complete assessment tasks to achieve a statement of attainment, which contributes to a nationally-recognised qualification."

The training course will cover cotton physiology, insect pests and beneficials that affect cotton, insect sampling and plant monitoring, pest control decisions and options, influences on successful cotton pest management in high yielding cotton, emergency disease and plant pest response, and pest control techniques.

Ms Vicary said the course will be held in locations across New South Wales in early 2021.

"We encourage growers, farm hands, supervisors and managers who are regularly involved with the hands-on aspect of cotton crop monitoring or management to register," she said.

"The training will run in the new year: in Narrabri on 13th - 14th January, Leeton on 19th - 20th January, and Dubbo on 10th - 11th February 2021."

Registrations will close before Christmas for the Narrabri and January courses. To secure a position, growers should contact their local Tocal Skills Training coordinator:

- Jayne Wood (Northern NSW) - jayne.wood@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Kellie Goring (Southern NSW) - kellie.goring@dpi.nsw.gov.au

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