

Crop rotations

By DALLAS KING



A vital component of any farming system is the inclusion of a rotational phase. Although the majority of cotton valleys have experienced reduced production due to drought there is an opportunity once production returns to more “normal” levels to consider the benefits of rotational

crops and not just drought induced fallows.

Rotations are important to plant disease because they affect the survival and reproduction of plant pathogens and the biology and quality of soil. However disease is only one of several factors to consider when choosing a rotation sequence.

BE AWARE OF

- Some rotation crops can be beneficial in managing cotton diseases.
- Rotation crops are important for Integrated Weed Management.
- The Crop Rotation Finder on the Cotton CRC web site can help with rotation crop decisions.

Rotation crops and fallows are also an important part of the Integrated Weed Management strategy, as well as being beneficial for managing diseases, insects, and soil problems. Rotation crops and fallows give cotton growers the opportunity to use a different range of herbicides, and to use strategic cultivation to manage specific problems.

One of the difficulties with the use of alternative herbicides, however, is that most herbicides are not inactivated on contact with the soil. Consequently, they have residual properties and can be toxic to the following crops. This is equally true of many of the herbicides used in cotton, in fallows and in rotation crops.

One result of this problem in the cotton cropping system is that many of the herbicides that are effective in fallows and rotation crops cannot be used because they are likely to be toxic to the following cotton crop. Weed control has been an issue in many of the rotation crops, and particularly in the broad-leaf rotation crops.

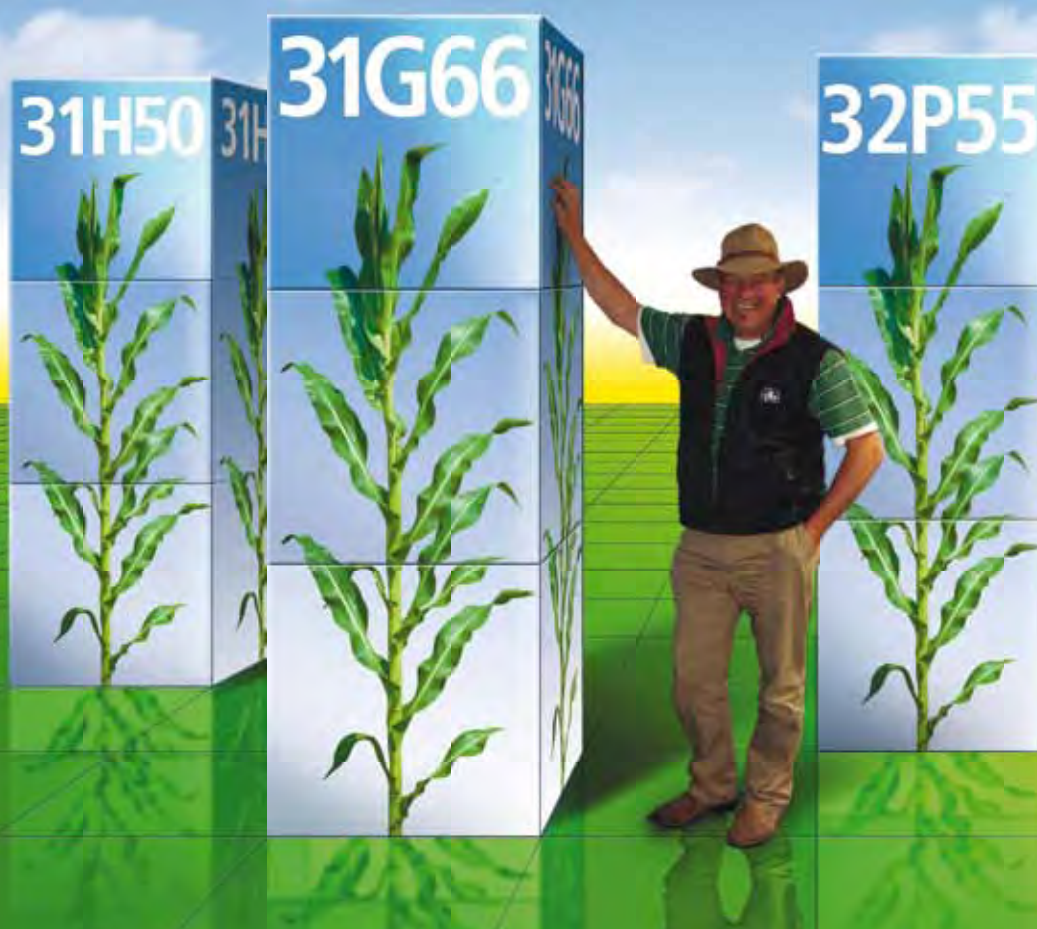
The CRDC and Cotton CRC have recently updated the Cotton Rotation Finder which provides a comprehensive matrix as to the different rotation crops available and their positive and negative impacts. The Cotton Rotation Finder can be found on the Cotton CRC web site.

Further information:

The Cotton Rotation Finder – http://www.cottoncrc.org.au/content/Industry/Tools/Agronomy_Tools/Cotton_Rotation_Finder.aspx



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