

MEDIA RELEASE

ANNUAL LOWER NAMOI COTTON FIELD DAY

Insect pests and their beneficial predators will feature prominently at the Lower Namoi Cotton Growers Association Field Day being jointly held at ACRI Narrabri and Auscott's "Togo" enterprise on Thursday, March 2.

Visitors will also witness lateral move irrigation, fallow weed control initiatives, and research on the impact of row spacing on fibre quality.

The field day program, which starts at ACRI around 12.30pm and concludes with an evening BBQ, will feature keynote presentations from researchers involved in several Cotton CRC and CRDC programs and projects.

Mary Whitehouse, CSIRO entomologist based at ACRI will outline the results of recent studies into the behaviour of beneficial predators such as large spiders that will attack mirids.

Rob Mensah, NSW DPI Principal Research Scientist will provide details of trials on the efficacy of a range of fungal insecticides on green mirids. Two of the fungi are approaching commercial release.

Brian Duggan (CSIRO) based at ACRI will highlight cotton's ability to compensate from simulated mirid damage when it occurs early-, mid- or late-season. The results so far indicated that current thresholds may be conservative, as high populations of mirids and high levels of damage have not lead to consistent reductions in yield.

Ben Stephens and Tom Breen from Auscott will reveal that they have achieved an increase of 1 bale /ha for cotton under lateral move irrigation, compared to neighbouring furrow irrigated fields (same varieties). The yield increase was attributed mainly to reduced waterlogging.

NSW DPI weeds research agronomist, Andrew Storrie, will provide an update on the findings from several research projects in other industries looking at fleabane control and identify where these findings may be adapted by the cotton industry. Greg Giblett, an agronomy consultant will also demonstrate a weed detector sprayer.

CSIRO researchers, Rose Roche and Mike Bange, will reports on recent research into the development of ultra narrow row cotton production, looking more recently at 35 cm (15") spacings, rather than 25 cm spacings.

Further information: Tracey Farrell, NSW DPI 02 6799 1548 or 0427 260 344
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Picture: One of the most common lynx spiders in the Namoi Valley, *Oxyopes molaris*, feasting on a mirid.