



## Balonne Beacon (St George)

Thursday 26/11/2009

Page: 3  
Section: General News  
Region: St George QLD, AU  
Circulation: 1456  
Type: Regional  
Size: 175.83 sq.cms.



**slice**  
slicemedia.com

press clip

# Campaign to stop drift

**Cotton Australia has launched an extensive campaign to prevent a repeat of the nationwide \$9.2 million in lost production from herbicide drift in the 2008-09 season.**

Cotton Australia's NSW regional manager James Houlahan said approximately 16,000 hectares, or 11 percent of the national crop was adversely affected by chemical drift last season, particularly 2,4D from the Phenoxy group of herbicides.

"This is unacceptable, particularly given that this damage is entirely preventable and particularly also that this damage occurred in spite of a major media and awareness campaign by Cotton Australia to alert people to the potential of spray drift," he said.

According to James Houlahan, a key strategy for Cotton Australia this season will centre on a web-based map, clearly identifying all areas of planted cotton.

"It's a web-based, online program which allows growers or their consultants to map their cotton fields, providing an up-to-date picture of where cotton crops are being grown in all valleys across the industry.

"Cotton growers and consultants can log on to the website [www.cottonmap.com.au](http://www.cottonmap.com.au) and those who are familiar with Google Earth will find that the process of navigating around the site is quite simple.

"On the website there is an option to either type in your farms address or with the use of a dropdown menu growers can be directed to their valley and zoom into their farm and specific cotton fields. There is an easy to use mapping tool that allows growers to plot where the perimeters of their actual cotton fields are.

"We really encourage growers to go on

and map their fields on this website, because when we do the major launch to other agricultural industries, chemical resellers and applicators we'd like to be confident that we've got all, or at least the vast majority of fields identified.

"We see this as a really important education, awareness and management tool to try and avoid drift onto sensitive crops like cotton," he said.

The Cotton Australia homepage also features direct links to tools including a neighbour notification template which helps growers communicate to their neighbours about the fact that they are growing cotton this year and the need to take extra care with the use of Phenoxy products.

James Houlahan said Cotton Australia was also working closely with herbicide manufacturers and the national pesticide regulator, the APVMA, in a bid to get more clear directions for use of the Phenoxy products.

"What we are also seeking from the APVMA is mandatory neighbour notification for users of the higher risk phenoxy products such as 2,4D. If there was better communication between users of these chemicals and their neighbours then a lot of these problems could be avoided," he said.

On Monday, 9,500 hectares of cotton had been planted in St George and 2,800 hectares in Dirranbandi. The planting window for Bollgard cotton closed yesterday.

"The current water storage situation will not be adequate for the area planted in St George through this season," said Queensland Cotton manager Mitch Anderson.

He said growers will be leaving areas out of their irrigation schedule during the first watering.