



UPPER NAMOI
Cotton Growers



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Cotton growers unite to share weather data with community and mitigate spray drift

Cotton growers in the Upper Namoi Valley of NSW are making important weather data publicly available to mitigate the risk of off-target spray drift.

Cotton grower and Upper Namoi Cotton Growers' Association (Upper Namoi CGA) President Nick Beer said reducing the risk of spray drift was a priority across all of agriculture to ensure the safety of communities and environments.

"The Upper Namoi CGA is investing more than \$26,000 to tackle the issue head-on by bringing the data from 13 private weather stations located on cotton farms in the region online, for the benefit of the public and environment," Mr Beer said.

"Everyone in the community will be able to access the information produced by the weather stations through a free app '**Goanna Telemetry**', which has been developed by Australian ag-tech company Goanna Ag."

Mr Beer said the local cotton industry want the project to benefit the whole community.

"This is about farmers doing their bit to protect environmental systems, wildlife, bees, their neighbour's crops, plants and stock," Mr Beer said.

"We will be distributing stickers to be placed in tractor cabs, spray rigs and vehicles reminding people to check the app for any relevant data when planning spraying activities."

Farmers, beekeepers, graziers, spray operators and contractors are encouraged to download the Goanna Telemetry app from either the Apple or Google Play stores, to access the free weather station information.

Cotton Australia Regional Manager Alec Macintosh congratulated the Upper Namoi CGA for proactively working to mitigate the risk of spray drift and support their community.

"To see all the landholders who have weather stations on their properties make the data publicly available is a positive step forward for our community. The cotton growers involved have also agreed to cover the ongoing upkeep and maintenance costs for each weather station, to ensure they provide as much use to the community as possible," Mr Macintosh said.

"This is a great example of cotton growers working collaboratively with the community to understand, navigate and assist each other through the challenges faced when planning spraying activities."



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Quirindi agronomist Ben Leys hoped the release of the technology and opening it up to the public will improve all aspects of spray application.

“Off-target chemical drift of any kind is not acceptable, no matter the product being used or industry it is being used in,” Mr Leys said.

“One of the hardest things to predict and overcome is temperature inversions, especially in summer when spraying windows can be limited due to hot weather. Any tool that helps with this will be invaluable to the whole community.”

Breeza farmer Dave Tudgey has a weather stations on his property *Tudgey Farms*, and he said all the growers involved in the project are committed to mitigating the risk of spray drift incidents.

“The inversion network gives everyone a valley wide view of what conditions are doing and what to expect as your progress through the day while conducting your spray operations – this is an invaluable tool for everybody to have at their disposal,” Mr Tudgey said.

Landholders who are interested in being involved in the program are invited to register their details at www.goannaag.com.au and reference ‘Upper Namoi Cotton Growers Weather Network.’

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Image: Jock and Dave Tudgey from Tudgey Farms, Breeza, inspecting a weather station.

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