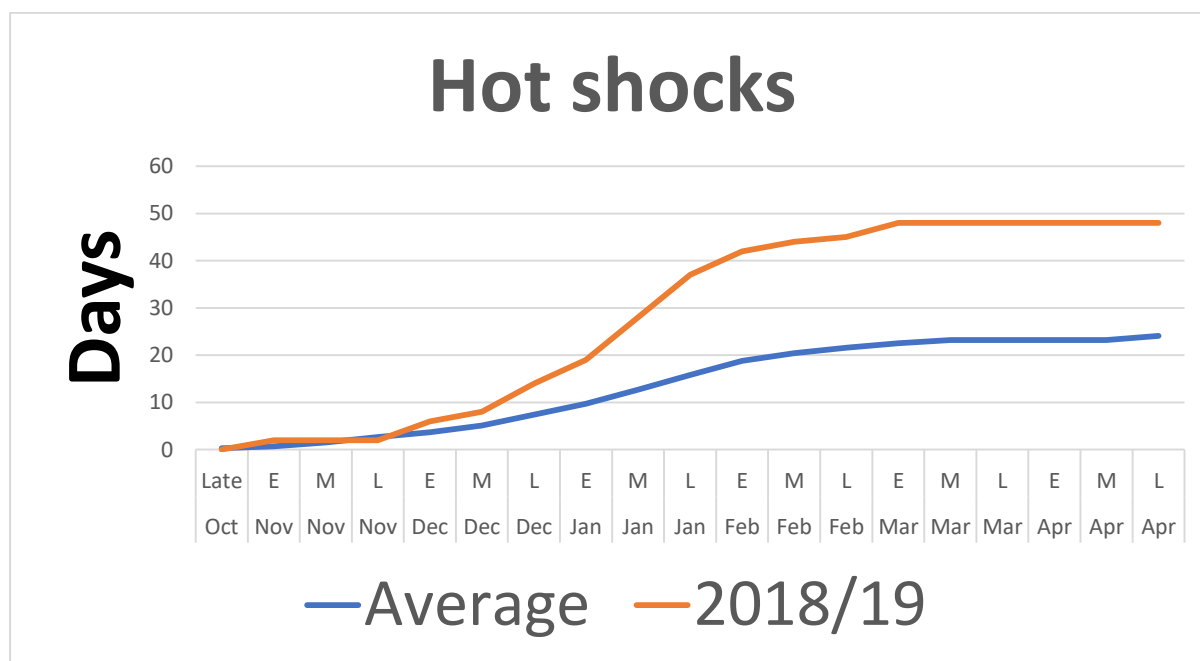
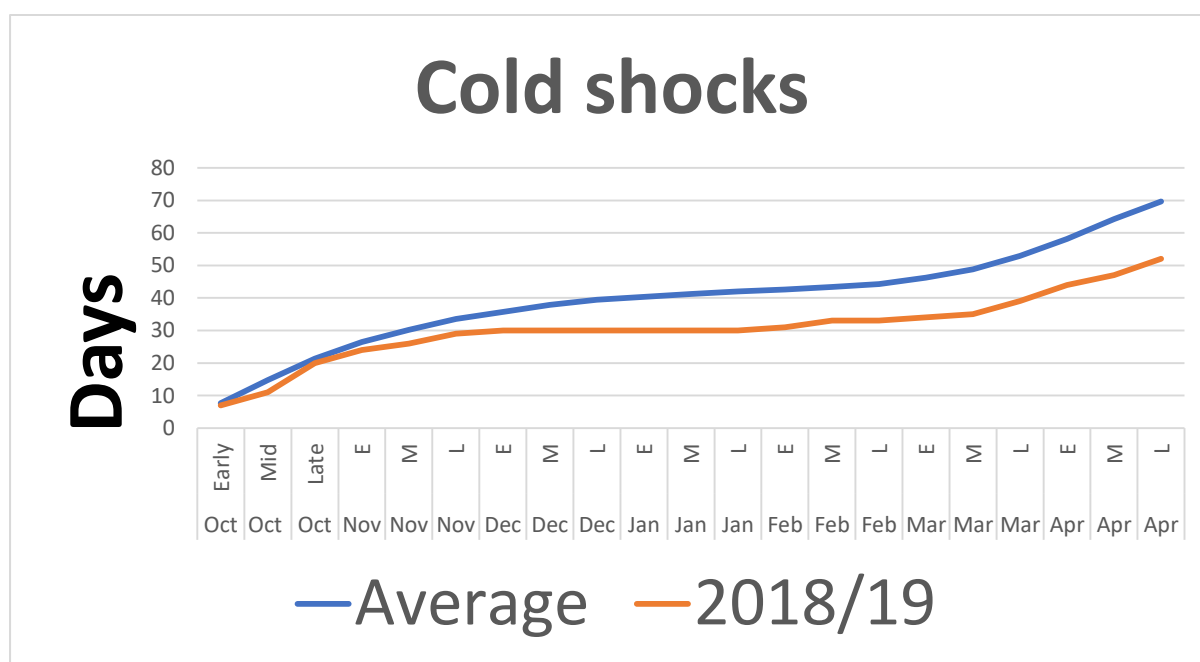


## The 2018/2019 cotton season review

In a low water availability year, the cotton area for Southern NSW was reduced to 60,000 ha but was still the most popular summer crop in southern NSW.

Most growers experienced a reasonable start to the season with most crops going in during the first two weeks of October. Cold shocks ( $< 11^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) were below average for the year with hot shocks ( $> 35^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) at record levels. (see graphs).



Average yields combined with exceptional lint and cotton seed prices saw average Gross Margin/ha returns of \$ 3,398/ha. The average GM/ML return reported was \$340/ML but with a big range of \$190 to \$480/ML due to different contracted prices and actual water use.

	<b>Income/ha</b>	<b>Variable costs/ha</b>	<b>Gross margin/ha</b>	<b>GM/ML</b>
<b>2016</b>	\$7,200	\$3895	\$3,305	\$330
<b>2017</b>	\$5,458	\$3,404	\$2,058	\$205
<b>2018</b>	\$6,310	\$3,850	\$2,460	\$246
<b>2019</b>	\$7,260	\$3,863	\$3,398	\$340

Another good benchmark on performance is bales produced/ML of water applied. The top ten crops in the survey are shown in Table 2. The five-year average is 1.4 b/ML but it will vary depending on the season from 1.1 b/ML to 1.6 b/ML.

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Yield (b/ha)</b>	<b>Irrigation system</b>	<b>ML applied #Estimated</b>	<b>Bales/ML</b>
1	15.29	Siphons, 1m hills, 1: 2000	9.2	1.66
2	14	1m beds in bays, rollover	11.8	1.19
3	13.8	1m hills - bankless	14	0.99
4	13.5	Siphons, 1m hills, 1:1200	11	1.23
5	13.5	1m hills	10	1.35
6	13.49	Siphons, 1m hills, nth/sth,	11.9	1.13
7	13.49	Siphons, 1m hills	12.5	1.08
8	13.2	1m hills	12.6	1.05
9	13.1	Siphons, 1.8 m beds, 1:2000	10.48	1.25
10	12.9	1m hills	12.53	1.03
Average	13.63		11.6	<b>1.17</b>

Table 2. Southern NSW survey Top ten crops Bales/ML

Overall yields were below the long term average of 10.8 b/ha and will end up at around 9.5 to 10 b/ha. The heat wave through January had the biggest impact on the crop during the flowering period. As one grower commented "Pretty happy overall, small bolls resulted in lower than expected yield, results were not too bad considering the extreme heat and limited water.

The area of cotton to be planted in southern NSW next season is very difficult to forecast. Most production will go back to groundwater and any upside will depend on early spring inflows into the major dams.

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