

Cotton Grower of the Year farm walk

By Brooke Summers

The 2004 Grower of the Year — “Buddah” Narromine — will showcase its cotton operations during a special farm walk on Thursday, February 17.

Hosts Tom McKeon, General Manager, and Shane Bodiam, Assistant Manager/Agronomist, will feature in two of the four major presentations scheduled during the farm walk.

They will outline the farming systems, soil, nutrient, tillage, pest, disease, irrigation, management and marketing techniques that have increased yields and financial performance in recent years.

The push for higher yields and the need to provide nutrients to sustain those yields has led to the introduction of a unique three-year on-farm monitoring system to take the guesswork out of nutrient management.

‘Buddah Pty Ltd’ operates three properties with a total area of 5474 hectares managed by the group. The management team has had to combat soils with poor

water holding capacity, infiltration problems and variable availability of nutrients.

The group is heavily involved in industry Best Management Practice, and some of

its strategies include reduced tillage, planting direct into wheat stubble and reliance on Roundup Ready technology.

Other keynote speakers participating in



The Buddah team: (L to R): Tom McKeon, general manager, Shane Bodiam, assistant manager/agronomist, Stephen Masling, farm overseer, and Ray Anthony, orchard manager.

the Farm Walk are ACGRA and Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year Dr David Nehl (2003) and Dr Peter Gregg (2004).

David is a research scientist with NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Cotton CRC. His major focus is soil microbiology, plant pathology and diseases such as Fusarium and black root rot.

Peter, from the University of New England and the Cotton CRC, has researched major pests and insects of cotton, resulting in the development of more environmentally-friendly biological control alternatives to commercial insecticides.

The day will commence at 10.00 am sharp by bus from the Narromine Aero Club (morning tea at 9.30 am), with lunch at the Buddah homestead at 1.00 pm, and will return to the Aero Club at 4.00 pm for refreshments after the Buddah and district tour.

The farm walk is open to all cotton industry participants, but notification of attendance is essential for transport and catering arrangements. RSVP to Alison Woods at CSD phone 02 6795 0000, Fax 02 6795 4966 or email awoods@csd.net.au.

Further details: Adam Kay 02 6795 0000 or 0428 950 003 or Craig McDonald 0428 950 015.



The Buddah cotton crop in mid-January.