

Water Matters...

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Storage maintenance: Prevention is better than a cure

■ By Meg Strang – Sustaining the Basin Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM) NSW DPI

REGULAR maintenance and monitoring will help maximise efficiency and minimise the long term costs associated with on-farm storages.

A new fact sheet and video are now available online offering a guide to best practice maintenance.

Erosion, wave action, wetting and drying cycles can all compromise the integrity of on-farm storages.

“Whether it’s a reduction in wall height, width or batter shape, ultimately it may result in the failure of the storage, so

prevention is better than the cure,” says consultant, Bernie Martin, who features in the You Tube video, ‘On-farm storages: benefits of a maintenance program’ (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGbReMG51_Y)

The Storage Maintenance Fact Sheet on the CottonInfo website (www.cottoninfo.com.au/publications/water-storage-maintenance) sets out detailed advice on the maintenance of the crest, inside and outside batters, the floor and interval borrow pits of your storage.



Failed storage. (PHOTO: STBIFM)

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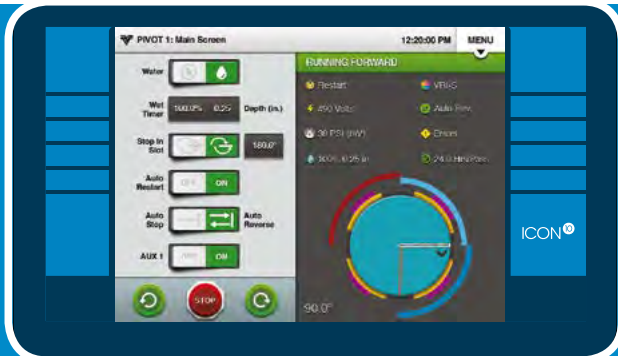
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Dry storage, dead water, vegetation. (PHOTO: P. Taylor)

Regular assessment and routine maintenance such as grading, minor earthworks and the slashing and spraying of vegetation will prevent costly problems from developing down the track.

Best practice advice is that no vegetation should be allowed to grow on storage banks, as root systems disrupt soil compaction and provide a path for water seepage.

Vegetation cover also makes it difficult to detect holes, cracks, and erosion, which means a problem may not be discovered until it's too late for a quick fix.



Regular maintenance and monitoring will help maximise efficiency and minimise the long term costs associated with on-farm storages.

The Storage Maintenance video and an accompanying fact sheet have been produced by the North West NSW Irrigation Australia Limited (NWIAL) Regional Committee in collaboration with Sustaining the Basin Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM), CottonInfo, and North West Local Land Services.

The Australian Government is providing more than \$13 billion for implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and associated activities, with the vast majority (more than \$8 billion) being made available for modernising infrastructure and water efficiency improvements. The Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation Program is funded from this initiative.



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