

Cotton Research Roundup

By Bruce Pyke and Ralph Schulze, CRDC

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

The Corporation is currently accepting applications for research and development funding for the coming financial year. The CRDC funds a comprehensive and integrated research program aiming to deliver sustainability, profitability and social benefits for the industry. Applicants must demonstrate their proposed project would be relevant to and benefit the Australian cotton industry. If the project involves research or study, applicants should have a strong knowledge of the subject area.

All applications are reviewed by the Australian Cotton Growers' Research Association and CRDC research program staff, with recommendations made to the Corporation board. The board will meet in Narrabri during March to discuss the projects and set the research program and budget for the 2002–03 financial year.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek industry input into the focus of proposed research and development activities. The Corporation's research program team is available to provide advice to applicants.

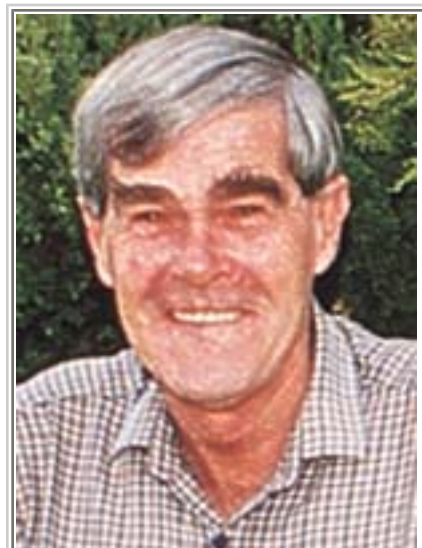
For more information contact 02 6792 4088, email research@crdc.com.au or go to our website for application forms, www.crdc.com.au.

FARMING SYSTEMS FORUM

The CRDC and the Cotton CRC hosted the annual Farming Systems Forum at the Australian Cotton Research Institute, Narrabri during December. More than 70 people, including researchers, growers and consultants attended the forum. The workshop focused on soil health — the



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factors that affect it, ways to measure it and how to improve it. Special guest speaker was Dr Margaret Roper, a soil microbiologist with CSIRO based in Perth.

In summing up the workshop CRDC director Adam Kay said researchers were doing excellent work in the chemical, physical and biological disciplines of traditional soil research, although more work was needed in the biological area. He said there should be increased linkages between the disciplines and collaboration to ensure an integrated approach to soil management. Benchmarks for biological soil health would need to be developed in order to allow farmers to measure the overall health of their soils.

RESISTANCE REVIEW

The CRDC invests close to \$1 million annually on research to monitor pesticide resistance in a range of cotton pests (heliiothis, mites, aphids and silver leaf whitefly) and research to understand the mechanisms of resistance. This research underpins the industry's resistance management strategies for conventional pesticides and Ingard cotton.

At times the Corporation reviews parts of its research portfolio to ensure its investments are achieving their goals and to address any gaps. During February the CRDC's resistance monitoring and mechanism research projects will be reviewed. The review will seek input from growers, consultants, the chemical industry and other industries (such as grains) regarding the structure and functioning of the resistance management strategies.

The core review panel includes Dr Ian Denholm (Rothamstead UK), Prof. Tim Dennehy (University of Arizona) and Dr Vic Edge (consultant to CRDC). They will be supported at times during the review by Dr Neil Forrester (CRDC director), Bruce Pyke (research and extension manager, CRDC) and a representative from ACGRA. The review panel will report back to the CRDC board and this information will be used to make any necessary changes to this area of research.



CRDC will review its pesticide resistance research projects in February.

FUSARIUM WILT BIOCONTROL EXAMINED

Later in this issue there is an article by CRDC research program coordinator for diseases and weeds, Sonia Tingay, examining the history and progress of the CRDC-funded research into potential biocontrol of cotton diseases. Biocontrol is an alternative to unreliable traditional chemical disease control that also offers potential environmental benefits.

Small and large scale trials of a range of biocontrol options were undertaken on the Darling Downs during the 2000–01 cotton season. But a number of factors resulted in the results being inconsistent between trials and therefore inconclusive. It is hoped trials currently underway will provide more definitive answers and allow growers to effectively use biocontrol tools.

FUSARIUM RESEARCH REVIEW

Next month the Corporation will be undertaking a major review of the Australian cotton industry's efforts to control Fusarium wilt. The CRDC has commissioned Dr Pat Colyer, a plant pathologist from Louisiana State University to conduct the review.

Dr Colyer will start in Narrabri to look at developments on the ground such as plant breeding and farm hygiene strategies before heading north. On February 18 there will be a day of review in Brisbane for Fusarium wilt research projects involving biotechnology. This will be followed on February 19 by a workshop on industry efforts for Fusarium control, future research directions, and an overview of biotechnology projects currently underway.

People who are interested in attending the workshop in Brisbane on February 19 should contact Sonia Tingay on phone 02 6792 4088, fax 02 6792 4400 or email sonia@crdc.com.au.

STAFF CHANGES

The Corporation bids farewell to our program manager Angela Wiseman. Angela has been with the CRDC since mid–2000. She is leaving

Narrabri to take up a position with the Primary Industries Bank of Australia (PIBA) in Tamworth.

Joining the CRDC to take on the program manager role is Ruth Farwell. Ruth previously worked in the psychology department at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba. We wish both Ruth and Angela well in their new roles.