

Cotton Shippers' mission to China

The Australian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA) organised a cotton industry delegation to China earlier this year. This is the latest in a series of market development missions by ACSA to key Australian cotton markets in recent years.

Presentations were given and seminars held in Jinan (Shandong province), Shanghai (Jiangsu province) and Guangzhou (Guangdong province). The delegation also met a wide range of economic, trade and cotton industry officials in Beijing.

Each seminar involved a welcome introduction by the regional trade commissioners followed by presentations by ACSA members — plus Peter Cottle representing Cotton Australia and Dr Stuart Gordon from CSIRO Textile and Fibre Research.

The seminar topics were:

- Background on the current situation in Australia;
- A report on cotton quality;
- Post-harvest fibre research by Stuart Gordon;
- Breeding for fibre quality;
- Cotton yield, quality and the environment — a grower's perspective (Peter Cottle); and,
- Trading issues.

Over 250 people attended the three presentations including textile (technical and management) industry personnel, government officials and press. Television and print media gave the group extensive coverage in all four centres — including TV interviews reaching over 80 million Chinese.

In Beijing, Australia's acting ambassador (Lydia Morton) hosted a dinner in conjunction with Austrade with key industry and government people.

China is the fifth largest importer of Australian cotton behind Indonesia, Japan, Thailand and South Korea. Yarn output for 2002 increased by



Some of the Australian delegation which enjoyed a successful trip to China.

15 per cent to eight million tonnes.

Total cotton consumption also increased by 15 per cent. China accounts for more than 20 per cent of world production and nearly 30 per cent of world consumption. It has 30 million cotton farmers and 10 million textile workers.

China's accession to the WTO from 2001 has helped this huge growth. This growth is expected to continue for the medium to long term given China's cheap labour and production costs.

During the trip, the ACSA delegation expressed concerns directly with the appropriate organisation on the imposition of arbitrary levels of short fibre length and nep content on cotton imports.

The ACSA delegation consisted of:

- Auscott (George Gallacher and David Anthony);
- Colly Cotton (Roger Tomkins);
- Cargill Cotton (Ray Wall);
- Dunavant (Andrew McGown and Don Campbell);
- Ecom (Craig Muller);
- Goenka (Michael Ford);
- Namoi Cotton (Jim Prendergast);
- Queensland cotton (Cliff White);
- Paul Reinhart (Tony Geitz);
- Volcot (Peter Strang);
- Walters Cotton (Dorcen Walters);
- Weil Bros (Mark Sowerby and Hilton Lobb);
- Cotton Australia (Peter Cottle); and,
- CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology (Dr Stuart Gordon).