



## User-friendly Ozcot

Ozcot is a computer simulation model pivotal to providing information for changes in farming systems, crop compensation and fibre quality research — and is currently the core of HydroLOGIC. The team has recently re-developed a user friendly Ozcot not only for research purposes but as a tool that can be used across the industry. Ozcot has been delivered to industry development officers who are now trained in its use and application.

## Future plans

The number of registered CottonLOGIC users has steadily increased from 200 in 1995 to over 1100 presently. A recent survey (August 2002) showed that CottonLOGIC had been used across 51 per cent (207,000 hectares) of the total area of cotton grown in Australia in the 2001–02 cotton season. Given the current substantial use of the software, it is vitally important to make careful plans for the future development of CottonLOGIC.

We aim to maintain and develop decision support software to ensure that it remains useful, up-to-date and compatible with the latest computer systems. The main CottonLOGIC software and its structure is considerably dated (nearly 10 years old) and the team has a challenge to ensure it will run with future operating systems.

Major revisions to CottonLOGIC are required in the short term to modernise the software, although resources to undertake the task of re-development are limited, especially given the reduced area of cotton during the drought.

But CSIRO is investing significant resources into future decision support tools and planning for the long term sustainability of their products. One direction that has already been taken is the preservation of some key tools that were once provided in the CottonLOGIC software.

These developments include a streamlined version of NutriLOGIC (nitrogen management software), and an 'easy to use' electronic pest and beneficial guide which is much more comprehensive than CottonLOGIC's insect pictures — both delivered on the internet. Also in development is a new tool to support Bollgard II management, known as the Early Season Diagnosis (ESD). ESD graphically compares cotton fruiting branch numbers with the optimum

rate of development to assist with agronomic management. An example output from ESD is shown in Figure 1.

The team aims to maintain strong links with research and industry and is working on new initiatives to enhance new and existing research material — for example, assisting with upgrading the IPM Guidelines. Linking the CottonLOGIC software with other commercial software packages that focus on farm record keeping is also one possible solution that is currently being explored to allow us to maintain focus on developing decision support from cotton research.

Making decisions about the future of CottonLOGIC has not been easy and requires considerable feedback from industry in order to arrive at the best solutions. Currently, an independent consultant (Peter Van Beek), is evaluating the industry's perceptions regarding the directions and decisions that the Cotton Management Support Systems team is facing.

This information, along with a number of other mechanisms to gain feedback, will assist the team in developing tools that are not only useful but sustainable for the future.

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