

Legendary cotton plant breeder dies

The international cotton community was saddened recently to learn of the death of legendary Deltapine cotton plant breeder, Elmer Gilbert. Elmer had a close association with the Australian cotton industry and his work made a great contribution to the development of cotton production in this country.

On a practical level, his great achievements from an Australian point of view were the development of the varieties Deltapine 61 and Deltapine 90. Deltapine 61 was the mainstay of the Australian industry for many years and Deltapine 90 provided the benchmark against which all new varieties had to be tested. Without these two high yielding, high quality varieties, the Australian industry would not have developed the way it did.

But Elmer's involvement with Australia went further than his plant breeding efforts. He spent a lot of time in this country and was always welcoming to Australians visiting the US.

He was also a larger-than-life character whose droll sense of humour and laid-back



Elmer Gilbert.

attitude just about qualified him as an honorary Australian.

Elmer worked with Delta and Pine Land (D&PL) research for more than 40 years before his retirement in 1997. He is survived by his wife, Anna, and three children, Nina, Michael and Stephen.

While attending school in the Mississippi Delta, Elmer spent many hours at D&PL headquarters at Scott, learning about cot-

ton and farming in general from his father who was a farm manager there. In March 1953, he joined the Scott research team led by Early Ewing Sr. He built his expertise and in 1965 set up the D&PL Western research program in Casa Grande, Arizona where he ultimately became director of Western Cotton Seed Research.

After moving to Arizona, Elmer developed several successful cotton seed varieties — most notably Deltapine 61 and Deltapine Acala 90. Deltapine Acala 90 is one of the first varieties that performed well across several areas of the US Cotton Belt, providing D&PL with good market share on a national basis.

In 1986 Elmer transferred to Visalia, California to establish a research program in the San Joaquin Valley. He was responsible for developing DP 6100 Acala and DP 6166 Acala, two successful varieties for this high quality market segment.

In the 1990s, Elmer assisted in expanding D&PL to the Australian market, effectively launching the D&PL international division.

May drumMUSTER opportunity



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drum them out, round them up and run them in.

May is a great time to clear your property of unwanted drums:

- Collection sites will be open throughout New South Wales & Queensland during May to take drums from your summer spraying program.
- Look for collection details on flyers which will either be delivered directly to you or available at your reseller.

And if you are busy picking cotton:

- Make sure your drums are clean and ready to take to your next collection. Most cotton areas have collection sites which will accept drums either on an ongoing basis or at reasonably frequent intervals (e.g. weekly, monthly or bimonthly).