

# CropSmart: A new management tool for cotton growers

By Tony Heckendorf, Queensland Cotton

**C**ropSmart is a comprehensive new service being offered by Queensland Cotton that produces a planning tool for cotton growers. CropSmart collects information about crop management, analyses it and provides a customised report allowing growers to see what has worked best in the area. This means that growers can make better decisions to improve yield, quality and cost efficiency.

A grower using CropSmart has access to a suite of CropSmart products that include CropScore, CropMetrics and CropSelect.

### CropScore

In broad terms, CropScore provides a framework for benchmarking a grower's crop management, analysing the results and measuring them against peer group performance. The results are captured in a customised



report that provides growers with a snapshot view of their business.

The information used for this service is based on



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*" The benefits of using a BEELINE system are significant, from eliminating driver error, to allowing inter row planting, accurately offsetting from previous year's plant line to more efficient ripping, land planning and listinging."*

individual farm records, standardised reporting and geographic information systems (GIS), linking influential data including water, nutrition, varieties, timing, climate and mapping, to a relevant point on the land. This allows decisions to be studied for interaction with other data including climate, soil type, nutrition or crop inputs.

CropScore is designed specifically for cotton enterprise ranking through the use of standardised language to overcome localised terminology which is known to vary from grower to grower, region to region, and state to state. By standardising the way individual growers describe elements of their production process we can ensure a significant increase in the accuracy of the information we provide. In other words, we can be sure we are comparing 'apples with apples'.

### CropMetrics

Having captured the data to produce CropScore, a grower now has access to CropMetrics. This uses a series of information resources to evaluate the impact of decisions made against outcomes achieved.

CropMetrics takes the key variables from CropScore and breaks down the data into useful and relevant information reports, graphs and tables to allow growers to get to the heart of the key management decisions driving profitability.

Typical CropMetrics reports examine the combinations of important inputs such as nutrition, variety, irrigation and GM traits to identify what combinations of inputs created the highest yield and profitability.


### CropSelect

Having ranked and reviewed the farm operation management practices and outcomes, the information gathered needs to be applied to the next cropping phase. CropSelect produces customised reports allowing growers to make varietal selection plans for the next crop.

Selecting cotton varieties for the next season is one of the key planning decisions a grower has to make. CropSelect enables growers to evaluate varieties prior to selection by analysing the fibre quality, yield and profit performance of the varieties within their region. Reports are also derived from an industry-wide fibre quality data warehouse that ranks variety performance on the basis of fibre length, strength, micronaire, colour grade, leaf score, uniformity and the premium or discount received per bale.

The CropSelect data can then be combined with information on growing and management conditions under which the fibre quality outcomes were achieved to give a clearer understanding of why varieties produced these fibre quality outcomes.






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