

Cotton Trade Show wrap-up

If the 2007 National Australian Cotton Trade Show was a litmus test of the health of the cotton industry, then the doctor's advice would probably be to take a "cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down." But at least there would have been a doctor in attendance, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association. In conjunction with the Cotton Trade Show, their dinner and other fundraising activities allowed the funding of three new medical undergraduate scholarships this year.

There was a 20 per cent decline in exhibitor numbers at the Cotton Trade Show this year — hardly surprising considering the small crop and the irrigation and price prospects for next season. In fact, the number of indoor exhibitors was only down slightly on the previous year and the 'big tent' was just as imposing as ever. The biggest decline was in the larger outdoor machinery exhibitors who face a major cost challenge just to get their equipment onto the site. Interestingly, a couple of the machinery companies who did attend reported bustling trade and a busy couple of days.

The organisers used some reverse psychology and

declined to take any weather insurance for the first time ever. This seemed to work with between five and 20 mm of rain received in the Gwydir and surrounding valleys on the eve of the Trade Show.

This rain was a boost to the winter crop prospects in northern NSW and got some cotton growers "off their tractors" to attend the first day of the Trade Show at least.

The numbers of growers/industry personnel through the gates on the Wednesday was 543 — slightly down on the first day attendance in 2006, but not by much. Unfortunately, this momentum couldn't be maintained (and wheat planting resumed after the rain) and the Thursday attendance was a very disappointing 270. This brought the total attendance to 813, a decline of over 20 per cent from 2006 and almost 50 per cent lower than the peak attendance in 2001. In fact, a graph of attendance at the Cotton Trade Show matches almost exactly a graph of Australian cotton production since 1998.

The following pages showcase some of the new products and technology at the tenth National Australian Cotton Trade Show



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