

# TIMS committee views future with cautious optimism

The annual report of the cotton industry's Transgenic and Insect Management Strategy Committee (TIMS) suggests that despite burgeoning environmental and economic pressures, the industry remains in control of its destiny.

TIMS chairman, Andrew Parkes, said lower *Heliopsis* pressures and an obviously successful insecticide resistance management strategy (IRMS), gave rise to cautious optimism about the future, but the resistance management of conventional chemistry will still need to be closely monitored over coming seasons.

He praised inputs and commitment from the TIMS Committee and its Technical Panels, citing roles played by Lewis Wilson (Troubleshooting Committee), John Watson (Herbicide Tolerant Crop Tech Panel), Hamish Millar (Northern Australia Resistance Management Tech Panel), Ian Taylor (CRDC Program Manager), and ACGRA executive officer, Greg Kauter.

## MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Andrew said some major achievements of the TIMS Committee last season involved advances in biotechnology relating to new transgenic cotton varieties. These included:

- Requirements for the resistance management plans for the introduction of new traits in cotton in Australia with new technology providers.
- The development and implementation of a Resistance Management Plan for

Bollgard II cotton above the 22° South parallel.

- Reviewing and adapting the "Bollgard II planting window variation request process".
- Assisting to develop and support the 2007-08 Insect Resistance Management Plan for Widestrike cotton.
- Reviewing and adapting the 2007-08 Insect Resistance Management Plan for Bollgard II Cotton, and
- The combined development of a research permit between Monsanto and the TIMS Committee to look at future possible variations of refuge options, including prior agreement on trial layout, protocols and reporting, to ensure better outcomes from trials in terms of a smoother and quicker pathway to market.

"Of particular importance this year the TIMS Committee helped convene 'REFCOM' which looked in depth into the current resistance management plan (RMP) for Bt cotton in an attempt to understand how effective it currently is, and to develop ideas of possible variation for the future.

"The contribution and guidance of Drs Gary Fitt, Rick Roush and Graham Head during this forum were vital ingredients to its success.

"As drought continues to influence management, as new technologies continue to be introduced, and as Bt cotton continues to increase its share of the market, the TIMS Committee and its Technical Panels will have ever increasing demands placed on them."

## HERBICIDE WORK

Andrew also acknowledged the work of the TIMS Herbicide Tolerant Crop Technical Panel and the development of various crop management plans (CMP).

"The past 12 months have seen the sign off and implementation of a CMP for Liberty Link Cotton and Liberty 200 Herbicide and the commercial release of this product. The same has been the case for Roundup Ready Flex above the 22° south parallel.

"The reported glyphosate resistance by banyard grass in the geographic centre of the Australian cotton growing region is a concern to our industry as additional scrutiny may well apply to the Roundup Ready Flex technology. It may also be a signal to some to attempt to apply extra compliance around all CMPs in the future."

## NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Andrew said TIMS Northern Australia Resistance Management Technical Panel had also been active via its involvement in the inaugural meeting of the 'NORCOM Committee' held at Ayr in May 2007.

"NORCOM's initial aim is to facilitate the development of a successful cotton industry in northern Australia through the development and coordination of the required support for northern growers with knowledge and resources."

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

According to Andrew the TIMS Committee has to address a perceived lack of communication to and from the grass roots level of cotton production. "There are a number of tools we can use into the future to enhance the dissemination of information both to and from the committee," he says.

"One of the best avenues is the personal touch. I feel it is extremely important that all ACGRA members on the committee represent and communicate regularly with stakeholders from their regional areas of responsibility.

"Resistance (in whatever form) has been the greatest single challenge that the cotton industry has faced in the past and it may continue to be a challenge into the future."

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The TIMS committee covered a wide range of issues last year.