

## Cotton CRC given green light for on-farm storages project

By Graham Harris, Cotton Catchment Communities CRC

The Cotton Catchment Communities CRC will receive funding from the National Water Commission's 'Raising National Water Standards' Program for the project 'Measurement to improve the water efficiency of on-farm storages in the cotton industry'.

The aim of the project is to measure and monitor the evaporation and seepage losses from at least 135 on-farm storages

across all valleys in the Australian cotton industry. This will be done through commercial consultants who will tender to undertake these measurements using the latest measurement equipment now available in Australia.

This will provide information on the extent of losses occurring from storages. Where losses are significant it is expected that growers will undertake amelioration

strategies to minimise these losses — the success of these amelioration strategies will also be assessed in this project.

This project will enable the industry to test and promote the use of cost-effective tools for the measurement of losses and the cost-benefit of amelioration strategies to minimise any significant losses that exist. It will identify the characteristics of efficient and inefficient storages, and build capacity and skills within the industry for the effective measurement and amelioration of storage losses.

The project will enable the cotton industry to further develop and promote best management practices for the management of water storages, further increasing whole farm water use efficiency.

The initial idea for the project came from the Central Downs Irrigators Limited who undertook a very successful storage management project with Total Agricultural Services and FSA Consulting on the Darling Downs in 2004-05 (funded through Condamine Alliance).

This three year project will shortly be seeking the services of a project manager and the interest of consultants and growers from all valleys to participate. More detail will be provided to anyone interested in the Hands-On Research Sessions at the 14th Australian Cotton Conference on August 14.



Rod Davis setting up a sensor to measure storage losses.



Storage Compaction Field Day in August 2006.