

SECTION 1
OVERVIEW

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Proposed industry restructure

The Australian Cotton Growers Research Association (ACGRA) and Cotton Australia have initiated discussions to reform cotton grower representation in Australia. The current industry structure, developed almost 40 years ago, has supported the incredible outcome of a viable and sustainable cotton industry in Australia and a widely acknowledged industry 'R&D' culture. Both organisations now provide a solid platform for the next generation of the industry.

ACGRA provides a stakeholder leadership role in industry R&D prioritisation and advice. As the industry stakeholder, it provides direct industry

engagement for growers to this significant investment. Traditionally the role of policy and advocacy undertaken by Cotton Australia has been separated from R&D direction. A merger of the two organisations could build on the strengths of both organisations while overcoming some of the current weaknesses.

Both ACGRA and Cotton Australia believe now is the time for this review.

The reasons behind the proposal

The two leadership teams believe the key opportunities for Australian growers through the potential merger are to:

- Better integrate and energise cotton growers' efforts to advance productivity and sustainability in the face of emerging challenges. Better linkage is required to a collaborative R&D and policy development framework.
- Create and capture synergies from current grower resources and capacity across the 'continuum' of functions.
- Clearly communicate the industry's place in the agro-eco system to its communities, governments and the nation.

One of the key reasons for merging the two organisations is to reduce duplication of effort.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Executive of ACGRA and the Board of Cotton Australia acknowledge that any proposal for change must clearly identify the positive outcomes for Australian cotton growers. Change will only be implemented where it is widely supported by industry as a positive and proactive response to meet industry's future needs.

Growers will have plenty of opportunity to have their say at forums over the next few months. Then, if growers and industry are comfortable with the proposed restructuring of grower representation, an Extraordinary General Meeting will be held later in 2008 — probably in November.

For further details contact Cotton Australia Chair Joanne Grainger or ACGRA Chair Ben Stephens or go to www.cottonaustralia.com.au

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