

Cotton industry recognises its high achievers

SECTION 1 OVERVIEW

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The cotton industry recognised five of its highest achievers at the gala 2008 Australian Cotton Industry Awards dinner held on the Gold Coast in August.

Over 600 people gathered at the Awards Dinner to celebrate the industry's finest researchers, growers and young achievers. The event showcased the incredible talent in one of Australia's leading agricultural industries.

The winners were announced by committed corporate sponsors — AgriRisk, Monsanto, Cotton Seed Distributors and Incitec Pivot.

Chair of Cotton Australia, Joanne Grainger, said that the awards have continued to grow from strength to strength.

"The number and quality of the nominees for this year's Awards demonstrates the depth of talent in our industry. Their knowledge, innovation, excellent

farming practices and strong personal commitment to our industry is outstanding. I give my heartfelt congratulations to all nominees, finalists and winners of the 2008 Cotton Industry Awards," Joanne said.

...16▷



2008 Australian Cotton Industry Awards winners: (left to right) Glenn Fresser, Andrew Parkes, Hamish Millar, René van der Sluijs (represented by colleague Stuart Gordon on the night), and Andrew Watson.

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2008 Australian cotton industry awards winners

2008 Cotton Industry Young Achiever of the Year Award

Hamish Millar
"Tandawanna" Emerald, Queensland

Hamish manages irrigated and rain-grown crops in a family partnership that has been operating for



Young Achiever Hamish Millar.

25 years. As well as his work on the farm, Hamish is highly respected throughout the cotton industry and devotes much of his time to serving terms on various industry organisations.

He is the immediate past Chair of the Australian Cotton Growers Research Association and currently chairs NORCOM which is responsible for cotton industry development in northern Australia. Hamish holds key leadership roles as a Director at Cotton Australia and the Australian Cotton Industry Council and is the Cotton Industry Nominated Representative for Plant Health Australia Ltd.

Hamish believes that research and extension has underpinned the cotton industry's progress and prosperity over the past 30 years and will be crucial to the future success of the industry.

2008 CSD ACGRA Researcher of the Year Award

René van der Sluijs
CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology/Cotton Catchment Communities CRC

Before moving to Australia in 2003, René already had a long history of service to the cotton industry in Africa.

After joining the CSIRO, René devoted himself to learning about the needs of the Australian cotton industry. He is regarded as the "go-to" person for the post-harvest sector and as a technical expert on the characteristics and benefits of Australian cotton.

One of René's key contributions to the indus-

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Researcher of the Year, René van der Sluijs.

try was his organisation of the “Cotton Field to Fabric” course that focuses on the impact of fibre quality on textile processing. He believes that this understanding is crucial in meeting the customer’s needs as Australia strives to maintain its position as a preferred supplier of high quality cotton to the international market.

René has also been a significant contributor to the development of Best Management Practices in the ginning and classing sectors.

2008 Monsanto Grower of the Year Award

Andrew Watson
“Brigadoon” Boggabri, NSW

Andrew is the second generation operating and managing his family’s long term farming enterprise across several properties near Boggabri.

The enterprise is conducted as an irrigated and dryland cotton and grain farming system combined with irrigated pasture-based grazing adjacent to the Namoi River. The focus is on profitable farming within the constraints of responsible environmental management.

... 18 ▷



2008 Monsanto Cotton Grower of the Year, Andrew Watson.

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Andrew is well known for his excellent farm management practices, and especially for the extensive bush regeneration he has undertaken on his properties. He has fenced off river banks from stock, planted native trees and shrubs to create vegetation corridors, and has committed several areas of his farm as permanent heritage trust sites. Andrew believes that the cotton industry must adopt the mentality of farming in harmony with nature, and view it as a beneficial extension to established farming practices.

Andrew has high hopes for the future of the Australian cotton industry and would like to see it continue to gain wide acceptance as one of the best managed agricultural industries in the world.

2008 AgriRisk Innovative Grower of the Year Award

**Andrew Parkes
“Keytah” Moree, NSW**

Andrew Parkes has progressed through a variety of innovations over the past 10 years on his farm “Keytah” to enhance production and reduce costs so as to develop a more profitable and sustainable farming system.

Andrew’s fresh ideas on improving farm management strategies, such as applying liquefied gin trash and feedlot manure on crops, have proven to be very beneficial for his farm’s sustainability and productivity.

These innovations have seen the property’s cotton production increase from an average of below seven bales per hectare to above 12.5, while reducing the crop water requirement. Complimenting this development, water use efficiency (WUE) has increased by 60 per cent through improvements to irrigation systems and the reduction of cotton row spacing. This has led to significant yield increases, with many fields under this system now starting to push the 15 bale per hectare barrier.



Incitec Pivot Service to Industry Award winner, Glenn Fresser.


2008 Incitec Pivot Service to Industry Award

**Glenn Fresser
Mayfield Farming Company, Dalby,
Queensland**

Glenn Fresser has owned and operated his successful cotton and grains production business on the Darling Downs since 1981.

Glenn has a passion for water use efficiency, both in dryland and irrigated farming, and has been able to demonstrate the high yields possible using less water, producing yields of close to two bales per megalitre. Glenn is also dedicated to improving soil health and his farm has been part of many ground breaking research trials which have been of great benefit to the cotton industry.

Glenn has a strong understanding of farmers’ needs and a genuine interest in ensuring the cotton industry continues to be sustainable, profitable and progressive. His farming approach is underpinned by a respect for the natural environment, and an interest in adopting new technology and farming systems, as demonstrated by his selection as a finalist in this year’s AgriRisk Innovative Grower of the Year category.

Glenn has always been a leader in the cotton industry, holding prominent positions across many different industry bodies including his role as past Chairman of the ACGRA, and currently as a director of the CRDC and cotton industry representative to Queensland’s Minister for Primary Industries. 



AgriRisk Innovative Grower of the Year, Andrew Parkes.