

# Historic merger creates new Cotton Australia

By Adam Kay, Chair Cotton Australia

Cotton Australia and the Australian Cotton Growers Research Association (ACGRA) officially joined forces in Narrabri on November 28 in an effort to better provide advice and direction on research, policy and best practice on behalf of Australia's cotton growers. This merger ushers in an exciting new period for the cotton growing industry.

Members of the newly merged Cotton Australia organisation approved a new

constitution and established a new company at an extraordinary general meeting. Joining the existing eight Cotton Australia Directors will be former members of the ACGRA Executive: Bob Dall'Alba, Andrew Parkes, Cleave Rogan and Ben Stephens. Current Cotton Australia Director, Joanne Grainger, remains Chair of the new Cotton Australia entity.

Following months of industry consultation it became clear that both the ACGRA

and Cotton Australia had the full support of our members to merge both organisations and reform cotton grower representation in Australia. Merging the two bodies has many advantages including better linking R&D to policy development, avoiding duplication and taking advantage of the many synergies between the two bodies.

I also welcome the four new appointments to the Cotton Australia Board and acknowledge the great experience they will bring to the new organisation. This truly is a step in the right direction and we believe the new company will be better able to service growers and represent their interests.

Although the cotton industry has been well served under the previous structure for almost 40 years, now was the time for change. We understand the need for a more effective and efficient grower based representative structure, empowered to determine and drive the industry's strategic direction, retaining our strong focus on R&D, promoting the value of the industry, reporting on the industry's environmental credibility and implementing policy objectives in consultation with stakeholders.

The first item on the agenda for the new Cotton Australia will be the development of a strategic plan with all members being canvassed for input.

For more information please contact Adam Kay on 02 9669 5222.

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Cotton Australia Chair Joanne Grainger, with three of the four new Cotton Australia directors (L-R) Andrew Parkes, Cleave Rogan and Ben Stephens (Bob Dall'Alba not present).



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### COTTON AUSTRALIA CONTINUES FIGHT AGAINST 2,4-D DRIFT

Cotton Australia has been on the front foot in recent months in its fight against phenoxy herbicide drift.

Here are some of the key activities Cotton Australia has undertaken over the past month, all reminding farmers of their responsibilities in applying phenoxy herbicides correctly:

- Wrote and recorded a series of radio ads to be broadcast throughout most cotton growing regions throughout the season;
- Devised a series of print advertisements and editorials to be run in regional media;
- Wrote and placed two press releases, the first a reminder to farmers about their responsibilities and the second, a localised release targeting those regions which have experienced recent rain reminding them that this is the time to be most aware of the negative impact phenoxy herbicide misuse can have on neighbouring farms; and,
- Produced the "Phenoxy Herbicide Spray Drift" background briefing, the

second in Cotton Australia's series of Background Briefings. This briefing includes an overview of the phenoxy herbicide spray drift issue, and a step by step guide detailing what you should do if an unfortunate incident should occur on your farm.

Growers need to be aware that if an incident occurs that it is in your and the industry's best interests that this is reported immediately to Cotton Australia. The background briefing is available on Cotton Australia's website and has been posted to all growers.

For more information please contact Adam Kay on 02 9669 5222.

### THE NEED TO ADHERE TO PLANTING WINDOWS

Late rain created interest for additional cotton plantings, but all Bollgard II planting windows have now closed. It is of the utmost importance to the industry and growers that the Resistance Management Plan (RMP) is fully complied with. The following are key factors for adhering to these planting windows:

- The RMP is based on two basic principles:
  - (1) Minimising the exposure of *Helicoverpa spp.* to the Bt proteins Cry1Ac and Cry2Ab; and,

(2) Providing a population of susceptible individuals that can mate with any resistant individuals, diluting any potential resistance. The Planting Window condition falls within (1) above and is a key component of the RMP.

- A planting window restricts the period in which planting can occur, thereby limiting the number of generations of *Helicoverpa spp.* that are exposed to Bt proteins. Resistance evolves incrementally, generation by generation. So reducing the number of generations of *Helicoverpa* exposed to Bollgard II each year will mean that the technology will last for additional years.
- Data from last season demonstrates a significant increase in the frequency of resistance alleles to Cry2Ab compared to previous seasons for *Helicoverpa armigera*. Since the introduction of Bollgard II the frequency of Cry2Ab resistance alleles in *Helicoverpa punctigera* has also increased. In the 2008-09 season it is even more critical to strictly abide by RMP obligations.

For more information please contact Greg Kauter on 02 9669 5222.



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