

SECTION 2
THE FUTURE

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Future cotton leaders ready to face a changing industry

As a way of addressing the latest challenges facing the cotton industry, the 2009 – 2010 Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program was recently launched in Goondiwindi. An initiative of Cotton Australia in partnership with the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC), the program seeks to identify potential industry leaders, hone their skills, and help them apply their experience through developing a project goal. The overall aim of the program is to inspire confidence in these future cotton leaders, and help them establish an important role in the industry, equipping them to take their ideas and visions to the next level.

Speaking at the launch, Cotton Australia Chair Joanne Grainger provided participants with an insight into some of the changes that are rapidly occurring in the cotton industry. “Industry issues – both production based and regulatory – are now more diverse; are emerging at a faster rate; and are more difficult to predict. People in the industry need to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to this changing industry structure. Cotton Australia and the CRDC recognise this need and have reflected it in their strategic plans, with a key focus on capacity building,” Joanne said.

Joanne also sees the vibrancy of the Australian cotton industry reflected in the Future Cotton Leaders Program participants. “The cotton industry faces many challenges as it moves forward, and it will require visionary leadership to guide its path. The

program is an investment in the future of Australian cotton and ensures that the next generation of leaders will be confident, skilled industry members,” she said.

A participant in this year’s program, Narrabri grower Matthew Norrie, believes that the industry is continuing to face environmental and political challenges. “It is essential that we, as an industry, have a good understanding of the current issues that could change the way we produce, process and market our cotton sustainably. The project I will be working on as part of the Future Cotton Leaders Program is aimed at getting young cotton industry stakeholders involved with the important issues. Our industry needs to have as much knowledge and representation as possible, and keen participants who are willing to take on leadership roles when needed in the future,” he said.

Throughout the program, the 10 participants learn public speaking skills, effective project management, and gain an insight into leadership through regular interaction with key industry members.

The program launch also included an announcement by Joanne, and CRDC Executive Director Bruce Finney, of a new addition to the Future Cotton Leaders Program – a travel bursary of up to \$1000 awarded to each participant to support them undertaking study tours relevant to their projects.

For further information on the Future Cotton Leaders Program, or any of its participants, please contact Jo Eady on (03) 9787 8458.



2009 Future Cotton Leaders Program participants with Cotton Australia Chair Joanne Grainger, Program Facilitator Jo Eady and CRDC Executive Director Bruce Finney.

