



BRUCE PYKE

# COTTON COTTON COTTON RESEARCH ROUNDUP



BRUCE FINNEY

## COTTONING ON TO COTTONMAP

The launch and uptake of CottonMap is testament to the effectiveness of collaboration between research and development corporations, industry and agribusiness in solving cross-industry issues.

The foresight and leadership of Cotton Australia to attract strong support from CRDC, GRDC, Nufarm and leading agribusinesses for the CottonMap website is industry's best bet to draw attention to sensitive crops and to mitigate damage from Group I phenoxy based herbicides. The program has already enjoyed huge support from most resellers and consultants. Within weeks of the launch of CottonMap, the Gwydir and Mungindi regions were fully mapped. By early December, more than 120,000 hectares of cotton fields were mapped in the system.

CottonMap, [www.cottonmap.com.au](http://www.cottonmap.com.au), is an all-new online mapping system that precisely locates cotton fields. Armed with a visual representation of the cotton plantings, farmers, advisors, chemical suppliers industry are jointly shouldering the responsibility of eliminating off target-pesticides that directly impact on the livelihoods of producers.

**For CottonMap to be a fully effective tool, all of this season's cotton fields are earmarked to be mapped (with about 25 per cent to go by late November). Contact Tracey Farrell, CRDC 02 6792 4088, or Cotton Australia**

## NEW PUSH ON PICKING SAFETY

In an effort to reduce the risk of injury during picking, CRDC has re-developed the popular Harvest Safety DVD in time for the 2010 pick. The DVD is being produced by CRDC with substantial support from John Deere. The production dramatises the importance of a strong culture of safety in machinery operations and is ideal for all growers and contractors to brief their staff engaged in all aspects of cotton picking.

The production covers how to minimise injury risk and how crew can remain constantly alert to potential dangers. Overseeing the production from CRDC was Helen Dugdale, who said that while seasonal labour was vital, the use of unskilled and seasonal staff without experience in machinery operation represents a significant risk for the enterprise.

"During harvest, cotton fields have many dangers. Every year, many operators are injured and occasionally someone is killed," Helen said.

"Because employers have an obligation to provide a safe workplace and to train their employees, everyone working in the harvest operation needs to follow recommended procedures. These are detailed in an accessible form in the DVD."

"The DVD will be made available in time for the 2010 picking season. Copies of the DVD will be available to producers



**The harvest safety DVD has been re-developed.**

and contractors though John Deere and Case IH dealers, the Cotton Pickers Association and CRDC. CRDC greatly appreciates the involvement of the machinery companies in supporting this key safety initiative," Helen said.

**Contact Helen Dugdale at CRDC.  
Helen.dugdale@crdc.com.au**

## EASIER TO GET ON BOARD

Through the Productivity Placement Program (PPP), individuals implementing cotton Best Management Practice (BMP) can have their skills and knowledge assessed and formally acknowledged with a recognised vocational qualification.

The Australian cotton industry is recognised for its leadership in recognition of skills that are the result of a lifetime of learning on the job. Farmers practicing BMP on their farm demonstrate high-level skill, and those skills can be formally recognised by awarding of diplomas. Skills recognition and a lifetime of learning are key focus areas for the industry's National Training Coordinator Mark Hickman.

He said the NSW government has agreed to support directly the cotton industry's new BMP Farm Manager Award and has reduced the usual cost of assessment by 80 per cent from \$2550 per person to \$500.

Assessment involves a farm visit from an assessor from Tocal College (NSW) or AACC (Australian Agricultural College Corporation, Qld) including an informal discussion and farm tour allowing the applicant to draw on both current and lifelong learning.

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A limited amount of preparation and follow up is required and there are no written knowledge tests or exams. The assessment process is known as recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment.

Growers, managers and workers actively involved in the day-to-day and strategic management of cotton farm operations may be eligible to undertake the assessment. If the farm has been audited and awarded BMP status, individuals can be assessed and personally may obtain the Certified BMP Farm Manager Award in addition to a Diploma in Agriculture (specialising in cotton production).

Eight individuals from Queensland have already received the Diploma in Agriculture (Specialising in Cotton Production) and Certified BMP Farm Manager Award, while one individual in NSW has been a dual award recipient. PPP funding was arranged for the award in Qld in August 2009 and since then a further five individuals from that state have embarked on the process.

Contact Mark Hickman, National Training Coordinator. [mark.hickman@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:mark.hickman@deedi.qld.gov.au)

### FUTURE IN GOOD HANDS

A select group of 10 individuals from NSW, Queensland and Victoria representing different sectors of the cotton industry are being given the chance to improve their leadership skills through the Australian Future Cotton Leaders Program 2009-10.

AFCL is an initiative of Cotton Australia and CRDC, and has been a great success since its inception in 2007, according to organisers and participants.

"The idea of the program is to develop leadership skills and encourage participants to take leadership positions in their respective industry or community by building up their confidence and leadership skills," explains Helen Dugdale of CRDC.

The course runs over one year and those taking part undertake integrated industry leadership projects to put their skills into practice.

Program facilitator Jo Eady said a major reason for the success of the program was because it has been embraced by industry.

"As part of the experience it is imperative for participants to interact closely with industry – that is, individuals, organisations and companies," Jo said.

"We have always had support from current leaders and industry sectors, without which the program couldn't exist.

"And the cotton industry has its fair share of recognised leaders in their fields, from policy and research to production and marketing, who have so much to offer leaders of the future."

This year five men and five women, some of whom are farmers, cotton merchants, two extension officers and one researcher, are part of the program.

### CRDC ANNUAL REPORT TABLED AND ON-LINE

The Annual Report of CRDC was tabled in Parliament in November and is now available on the CRDC website in a new format that allows readers to access it one page at a time without having to download the whole document.

Of special interest in this report are new tables that show the extent of collaborative

investments that CRDC makes with other rural R&D corporations, state and federal government agencies, numerous joint ventures in R&D in fields such as biosecurity, irrigation efficiency and climate change research. The CRDC Annual Report provides a comprehensive summary of the broad range of R&D investments made by CRDC on behalf of industry and Government and how these investments directly contribute to the consistently strong productivity growth by the Australian cotton industry.

### APPLIED COTTON COURSE NOW OPEN

People looking to upgrade their employability and gain current and relevant on-the-job-skills through a proven formal education program can apply to enter the industry's cotton production course at the University of New England.

The course is designed for flexible delivery and consists of four parts that can be undertaken full-time or part-time. The aim of the Cotton Production Course is to provide students with the necessary scientific and practical skills for sustainable cotton production.

The units were designed for those people already in the cotton industry and to those wishing to enter the industry in the future. Students will learn how the cotton crop grows, how to manage the crop and the factors that affect the sustainability of cotton production in Australia.

Contact John Stanley, UNE, [jstanle4@une.edu.au](mailto:jstanle4@une.edu.au)

### INDUSTRY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The development of a collective industry view about the future is continuing to take shape through a project led by the Australian Cotton Industry Council. A range of scenarios for the future have been drafted based on the broader input of industry. This input has been really valuable as it has informed collective thinking about drivers for change, uncertainties, aspirations and the assumptions we make about the future.

Industry now has the beginnings of a shared view as to what our industry future can be. These ideas will be openly shared and comment sought from growers and the broader industry in the near future. The formation of a collective view about the future will be an achievement not seen in any other rural industry in Australia. Importantly it can be the beginning of ongoing discussion and steps to deliver a new future for the cotton industry that is as equally exciting as the past.

Contact Bruce Finney, CRDC 02 6792 4088, or Cotton Australia



AFCL group (back from left): Sinclair Steele, Tracey Farrell, Belinda Duddy, Elissa Wegener, course facilitator Jo Eady, Tobin Cherry, Matthew Norrie, Barb Grey, CRDC Executive Director Bruce Finney. Front: Susan Maas, Anna Power, Cotton Australia Chair Joanne Grainger and Kevin Bagshaw.