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## Editorial...

David Dowling, Editor



**C**OTTON growers, along with all other farmers, are the keenest students of weather forecasts – from the radar of an approaching storm to today's, tomorrow's, next week's and next year's outlooks. But the emphasis has changed a lot over the past couple of years. Instead of praying for that cloud to come their way and drop a badly needed couple of inches to give some planting moisture, save an irrigation or finish a crop, the more likely call at the moment is "rain, rain, go away."

Thankfully the massive downpours seen on Queensland and NSW coastal areas have not extended, in most cases, to our major cotton growing regions. You have to be lucky sometimes and it seems our cotton belt has hit the sweet spot of good but not excessive rainfall and a coolish summer – conditions which should produce some very good yields, especially for dryland growers.

At the same time, most on-farm and upriver storages are full to overflowing with plenty of water for the next couple of years. So everyone is happy, right? Well spare a thought for the growers in Central Queensland. In a wet La Niña season, Central Queensland would normally expect several inundations and weeks of cloudy weather. But this year, all the wet weather has shifted south and Fairbairn Dam at Emerald remains stubbornly below 25 per cent capacity.

The exceptional cotton prices which have been around since the start of the year have maintained their strength, giving growers with water security the confidence to secure their sales for the next couple of years. The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been more muted in the cotton market than in grain markets, but it is a rising tide for all commodities. Normally, one would expect that these cotton prices would produce a crop planting of record levels later this year, but all alternative crops are also very attractive. Either way, the alternatives for cropping farmers over the next 12 months at least are all good.

With a smile on just about every face, the response to this year's Cotton Conference at the Gold Coast in August should be overwhelming. The industry has not had a chance to get together on this scale since the 2018 Conference. For those new to the industry, it is a perfect opportunity to extend your experience of the industry and for others to catch up with old friends.

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