



Introduction

By **MIKE BANGE, CSIRO**



The cotton fibre is unique in generating a host of products that sustain and make life more comfortable and atheistically appealing. Australian cotton is viewed worldwide as an excellent fibre. It is generally purchased with the intention of producing high quality combed, ring-spun

yarns for use in the woven and knitted apparel sector in the Asia-Pacific region. China is also becoming an increasingly significant market. Australian cotton is often purchased for a premium as it meets many of the spinner's requirements on the basis of quality and consistency. It has the specific fibre qualities required to spin high-quality yarn and produce desirable high value textile products.

Cotton fabrics dating back to 3000BC are proof of the long history of the cultivation of cotton and its importance as one of the most popular natural textiles around the world. Two cotton species are grown in Australia, *Gossypium barbadense* and *Gossypium hirsutum*. The cottons are called New World cottons and originated in Central America. *Gossypium hirsutum* (called Upland) represents more than 90% of Australia's and the world's cotton production as it is most productive and has suitable fibre properties for modern textile production. *G. barbadense* cottons have a number of names – Pima, Egyptian, Peruvian, Sea Island, and so on.

These cottons have very good fibre properties demanding a significant price premium from spinners for manufacture of fine garments. It has lower yield and narrower climate requirements – requiring specific management. In Australia, Pima production has been limited to western NSW locations such as Bourke, Hillston and Tandou.

The First Fleet brought cotton with them to Australia in 1788, however the first plantings in the Sydney area



Cotton flower.

were disappointing, due to the unfavourable climate. Early production was then confined almost entirely to Queensland, with the first commercial crops grown at Moreton Bay Queensland in 1840.

Australia's 'modern' cotton industry as we have come to know it today, was started in the early 1960s, largely in the Namoi Valley of NSW. From these modest beginnings, the industry has expanded the growing region as far south as Hay and Griffith in NSW to Emerald in Queensland, with small plantings further north in the Burdekin Region and the Ord River area in Western Australia.

The Australian cotton industry is one of the nation's biggest rural export earners and is vital for the prosperity of many regional communities.

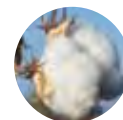
Growers considering cotton farming for the first time should first have the capital resources required to grow the crop and be committed to a high level of managerial expertise and best management practice.

This publication serves to give growers, new and old alike, key information to help successfully and sustainably grow high yielding and high quality cotton, and provide advice on where to obtain more detailed information and tools when necessary. There is an abundance of reference material and resources available to current and prospective growers, which can be found, downloaded or ordered from the list below.

In addition to these resources, the industry has also invested heavily in the development of industry best

BE AWARE OF

- Suitable climatic summer cropping conditions.
- Inputs in terms of costs – per hectare (\$... dryland/\$... irrigated) and water availability (if irrigated), machinery start up costs.
- Cash flow budget is essential.
- Services of a reliable and experienced consultant/agronomist.
- Availability of suitable machinery, either purchased, contracted or shared.



management practices. 'myBMP' is a key tool growers can use to help them achieve best practice in growing cotton sustainably and responsibly. It can also be used to help direct growers to the latest information from the industry and the cotton research community on specific issues relating to cotton farming as a whole.

Go to the *myBMP* website – www.mybmp.com.au for more details and to register.

To receive the latest industry information and publications, add your details to the Cotton Industry Mailing list by contacting Dave Larsen at the Cotton CRC – david.larsen@industry.nsw.gov.au or 02 6799 1534.

IMPORTANT INDUSTRY CONTACTS

Cotton Australia (CA)

Ph: 02 9669 5222 – www.cottonaustralia.org.au

Cotton Research & Development Corp (CRDC)

Ph: 02 6792 4088 – www.crdc.com.au

Cotton Catchment Communities CRC (CCCCRC)

Ph: 02 6792 2446 – www.cottoncrc.org.au

Crop Consultants Australia (CCA)

Ph: 0429 925 459 – www.cropconsultants.com.au

CSIRO (ACRI Narrabri)

Ph: 02 6799 1500 – www.csiro.au

NSW Department of Industry & Investment (I&I)

ACRI Narrabri

Ph: 02 6799 1500 – www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Qld. Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI)

Ph: 07 3001 6359 – www.deedi.gov.au

Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD)

Ph: 02 6795 0000 – www.csd.net.au



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