

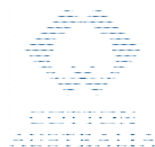


BMP
COTTON
BEST MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES



Strategic Plan for BMP Review

January 2008



Australian Government
Cotton Research and
Development Corporation



Foreword

It is increasingly recognised that the future of the Australian Cotton Industry is inextricably linked to parameters of 'permissible practice' as defined by the broader community. The Australian Cotton Industry's Best Management Practices (BMP) Program is a proactive initiative designed to help maintain this 'social licence' to farm.

By establishing a structured, auditable process for cotton growers to demonstrate on-ground practice change leading to improved environmental and farm performance outcomes, the BMP Program has been extremely successful in addressing community and regulatory concerns over the past decade.

With new issues and challenges arising, the industry is currently going through a process to review the current BMP Program to ensure it meets current grower and industry needs. A new strategic plan for the BMP Program has been developed and will be rolled out under the management of Louise Adcock with the guidance of the ACIC BMP Steering Committee. The latter is comprised of Bob Bell, Glenn Fresser, Leith Bouilly, Joe Robinson, Adam Kay and Stuart Higgins.

In setting the new strategic direction for the BMP Program, the committee is taking account of existing resources including extensive past and present stakeholder feedback. The committee will value this feedback, acting inclusively and decisively to create a high-impact future direction for the Program.

By adopting and embracing this new BMP Program, cotton growers will develop greater resilience to face the inevitable changes ahead of them. They will assess and document the variables in growing their crops. They will be better equipped to make production decisions based on knowledge. They will have improved capacity to weigh up conflicting issues. For this it is anticipated they will be recognised and respected by the broader community for meeting or exceeding industry and community expectations.

Stuart Higgins

Chairman
ACIC BMP Committee

Vision

The Cotton BMP Program is enhancing our social license to farm

We recognise that our social licence is granted by the wider community when growers collectively demonstrate that they are

- efficient
- innovative and professional
- responsible environmental stewards
- producing quality cotton

Mission

The purpose of the BMP Program is to support and assist growers by

- Providing practical processes and practices to implement legislative requirements
- Providing information and tools for cotton-based farming systems to improve production practices that minimise costs and maximise profitability, and
- Building resilience through providing the best available information to inform risk and change management

Our Principles

The framework for the BMP Program is underpinned by the following principles:

Leadership: We strive to be proactive, innovative, responsive and committed

Independent: We achieve by promoting sound science, credible and rigorous performance data

Quality Relationships: We work in strong partnerships through collaboration and communication with key stakeholders and other interested parties

Credibility: We demonstrate our performance through tangible actions

Grower based: We are grower-based to ensure the program is practical, relevant and adds value to the business of cotton production

Industry Driven: We are driven by industry self regulation

Goal 1:
Cotton growers value the improvement of farm performance through the adoption of Best Management Practices

Key Strategies

- ◆ Ensure the BMP Program is relevant and practical, up to date, and adds value to growers' businesses
- ◆ Deliver latest research, development, technology and knowledge through the BMP program

Short Term Actions

- ◆ Identify future focus areas and review current content
- ◆ Broaden the scope of the current BMP Program to enable its uptake across integrated farming systems which grow multiple commodities
- ◆ Identify a range of practical tools, training, education and processes to encourage improvement in farm practices
- ◆ Evaluate options for an electronic system that assists in improving management of the identified range of knowledge, tools and opportunities for growers
- ◆ Evaluate options for an electronic BMP system that reports performance and provides feedback to growers
- ◆ Develop a staged Program for adoption and tiered recognition
- ◆ Investigate initiatives to encourage greater alignment of industry research, development and extension to implementation efforts
- ◆ Instigate cost benefit analysis of the BMP's role in accelerating the adoption of improvement practices on farm

Outcome

Growers are meeting their statutory obligations; farm performance improvements; improvements demonstrated



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Goal 2:

BMP participants have developed and adopted farm management plans and strategies that minimise the risks to their farm businesses, the community in which they operate and the industry generally

Key Strategies

- ◆ Provide a basis for new growers to understand and meet their responsibilities
- ◆ Provide a mechanism that increases growers capacity to assess risk of farm practices
- ◆ Provide a planning framework to identify the risks relevant to their business and community
- ◆ Provide a knowledge and information management system that assists growers to develop strategies to address identified risks
- ◆ Provide support for growers to implement their identified strategies and plans
- ◆ Provide growers and all participants in the supply chain with a basis for implementing quality assurance

Short Term Actions

- ◆ Incorporate quantitative benchmarks to assess and measure improvements of farm practices
- ◆ Incorporate agreed common indicators as a mechanism to measure Natural Resource Management (NRM) outcomes
- ◆ Incorporate production outcomes in the NRM elements of the revised Program

Outcome

Growers are more profitable, more resilient and better stewards of their resources



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Goal 3:

Increase awareness, understanding and support among stakeholders and communities by demonstrating outcomes and benefits of the Australian cotton industry

Key Strategies

- ◆ Refine the mechanism for verifying adoption of current recommended BMP
- ◆ Identify linkages with other cotton and rural industry data collection activities
- ◆ Identify how BMP can contribute to reporting industry performance to a variety of audiences as required over time

Short Term Actions

- ◆ Revise the current mechanism with a view to streamlining the current assessment process
- ◆ Work with industry organisations to identify the capacity of BMP to collect relevant information
- ◆ Ensure the information being collected by BMP can be used to communicate meaningfully with external stakeholders.
- ◆ Investigate the synergies of common indicators as a mechanism to measure NRM outcomes
- ◆ Examine alternative Program names

Outcome

An Australian Cotton Industry that is respected and valued by the broader community



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Goal 4:
The BMP Program is a collaborative initiative which is owned by its industry stakeholders

Key Strategies

- ◆ Increase collaboration and demonstrate the Program's value to each industry organisation
- ◆ Ensure an ongoing commitment from all stakeholders to the strategic health of the Program, for the betterment of the industry

Short Term Actions

- ◆ Develop a framework to align the delivery of BMP with the goals and priorities industry organisations
- ◆ Identify opportunities to add value to the industry's research, development and extension efforts
- ◆ Evaluate options to resource the Program long term

Outcome

Industry and regional organisations working effectively together towards a single vision for BMP



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