

# BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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The Best Management Practices (“BMP”) Manual helps cotton growers identify and manage the areas of their farm that carry risks to the environment and human health, particularly those relating to pesticide use. The BMP Manual contains modules covering the following areas:

- Application of pesticides
- Storage and handling of pesticides
- Integrated pest management
- Farm design and management
- Farm hygiene

Modules under development applicable to dryland farming include occupational health and safety, and petrochemical storage and handling.

Each module contains a best management practice booklet that explains what the best practices are for that issue, and why they are important. Legal responsibilities are also noted.

The booklet is followed by self-assessment worksheets that are used to help identify and assess your operations against recommended best practices. Further sources of information are listed that can be used to plan and implement best practices for issues identified during the self-assessment process.

Once you have identified the areas on your farm that require attention through the self-assessment process, action plans are developed, and blank forms are included.

A separate *Introductory Booklet and Guide to Use* is included with the BMP Manual to help you work through it.

## EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

### Pesticide Application

The core best management practice for safe and responsible pesticide use is to develop a pesticide application management plan. This will help ensure that everyone involved in pesticide application has a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and it also helps identify the risks associated with pesticide use so that controls to minimise those risks can be put in place.

A pesticide application management plan will cover areas such as pre-season and in season communications, appropriate weather

### KEY POINTS:

- Find out about the BMP Manual from your local Cotton Australia or Extension officer.
- Contact your neighbours and discuss plans.
- Ensure label compliance when using farm chemicals. This includes weather monitoring and recording of data.

conditions, product and equipment selection and use, and record keeping.

### Pesticide Storage and Handling

This sections deals with the issues relating to pesticide transport, storage and mixing, as well as disposal of used containers and left over pesticides. Practices detailed include the choice of location for a storage facility, the requirements for the storage itself such as ventilation and spill containment, and mixing and loading techniques.

### Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

The BMP Manual contains information on IPM – refer *Insect Management* chapter in this publication

### Farm Hygiene

The main focus of this section is preventing the spread of diseases and weeds (particularly fusarium wilt). It also includes information on how to manage diseases if they are found on your farm. Areas covered include detection and notification, machinery and equipment cleaning and destruction of fusarium wilt affected plants.

## EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC BEST PRACTICES FOR DRYLAND COTTON

Nearly all the information contained in the BMP Manual is relevant for dryland cotton production, although the farm design and management module has sections specific to dryland and irrigated cotton growing. Some of the issues addressed in the dryland section include:

- Minimising run-off and erosion
- Controlling run-off
- Using buffer zones

### WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

The Cotton Australia Grower Services Manager for your region can provide you with a copy of the BMP Manual, and help you work through it. Contact Cotton Australia’s office in Sydney on 02 9360 8500 for more information.

