



# Foreword

By **KEN FLOWER**



Welcome to the expanded and improved second edition of *The Australian Cotton Production Manual*.

There have been upgrades made to most sections and there are four very important new sections added:

- **Reducing pesticide use – actively managing native vegetation**
- **Alternative irrigation systems**
- **Spray applications**
- **Whole farm water balance**

This publication serves as a key document to reference current cotton production practices, and as such, is a most important resource for all cotton producers, especially those entering the industry for the first time, or returning to it.

The Australian cotton industry has undergone major challenges over the past decade brought about by the reduction in availability of water due to drought, government restrictions and water buy backs. With a cotton area previous peak of 511,000 hectares planted in 2000 through to a low of 68,000 hectares in 2007, the whole industry from grower to research, development and extension (RD&E) has had to do more with less. Then the 2010/11 season saw the biggest cotton plant yet of some 600,000 hectares planted, with over 200,000 hectares being dryland cotton. This season has been arguably the most challenging weather we have experienced with several severe floods and heavy rainfalls in all production areas. Despite these challenges, the industry has shown its resilience by remaining best in class while adapting to the highly variable seasons and resource levels confronting it.

Cotton prices are high and look like remaining strong, and the storages have supplies for the coming seasons so the pressure is on now to sustain high production. We must remember that at these times of high opportunity there can still be risks associated with cotton production. These risks come in the form of: financial, pests, weeds, diseases and climatic. This manual is aimed at providing some of the knowledge to assess, plan and reduce these production risks with the benefit of experience, research and extension.

Also as we ramp up cotton production after some smaller seasons, we are increasing our capability and our human capacity and it is in these times of introducing new people and new assets where risks can be higher. So I would recommend the cotton industry's *myBMP* web based management system to help identify your practices

across 11 different modules. This system not only helps with a checklist across your operation but has valuable information and resources in each module. Visit [www.mybmp.com](http://www.mybmp.com) for more information.

The *myBMP* web manual helps growers make well informed decisions through providing the latest information, based on best management practices.

The Australian cotton industry is well known for its innovative approach to production, which has resulted in the industry being world leaders in terms of yields, quality, production costs per kilogram, and being among the most ecologically sustainable cotton produced anywhere in the world. These outstanding results have been achieved through:

- Quality and commitment of cotton researchers.
- A high and sustained investment in research.
- Industry wide input to research direction.
- A high quality group of professional cotton consultants.
- An open, sharing culture leading to fast adoption of best practices as they evolve.
- High level of cotton specific training of personnel.
- Supportive secondary industries and suppliers.
- Australia's open market maintaining our competitiveness.

This publication is one of a series of key products proudly brought to you by the cotton industry's 'Development and Delivery Team'.

This team is responsible for delivering a high quality Research Adoption Program to the cotton industry to encourage the early and maximum uptake of new research and innovation, leading to higher economic performance with a reduced ecological footprint.

The quality of the content in this publication is testament to the excellent body of research and researchers we have in the industry.

You will see from the authors and credits the impressive range of researchers and organisations which combine to produce this document. In addition to industry resources, Greenmount Press and the sponsors have played a vital role in helping achieve the quality and timeliness of this publication at the lowest possible cost to the people on the ground. I look forward to this collaboration continuing for future publications.

Thanks again to the Researchers, the Development and Delivery Team, to Tracey Leven for her thorough review, and Helen Dugdale who has led the whole publication. It is now available for an anticipated strong and re-building cotton industry over the coming seasons.

*Ken Flower*

**General Manager Research Implementation and *myBMP***