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Award for young cotton innovator! (2 March 2016)



Yvonne Chang, a cotton research assistant with CSIRO in Narrabri, has been awarded a prestigious ABARES Science and Innovation Award for Young People in Agriculture by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, in Canberra overnight.

Yvonne was selected as the recipient of the award, which is proudly supported by the

Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC), for her novel approach to the issue of soil organic carbon. Yvonne's project will look at the use of melanised root-associated fungi to increase long-lived soil organic carbon.

As part of the Award, Yvonne will receive a CRDC grant to undertake this research project.

"The award will allow me to undertake a glasshouse or field project to examine the effect of this fungi on soil organic carbon under irrigated cotton," Yvonne said.

"If the result is a significant increase in soil organic carbon, then this could help to address the long-standing issue of declining carbon in soil, and as a result, enable increased production and sustainability for cotton growers.

"Essentially, my project looks at three things: improving the soil, increasing cotton yields and reducing the impact of greenhouse gases."

Yvonne, who grew up in Sydney and studied science at the University of Sydney, says her career in the fields of plant ecology and plant-soil microbe interactions was driven by an interest in understanding how living systems function.

CRDC Executive Director Bruce Finney congratulated Yvonne on winning the Award.

"Yvonne was selected as the recipient of the cotton Science and Innovation Award from a very strong field of young researchers, and we congratulate her on her success," Bruce said.

"Yvonne is already contributing to cotton RD&E: in her current role with CSIRO, she works as part of the team that is looking at nitrogen losses from irrigated cotton.

"Her research project has the potential to make a real, tangible contribution to the field of cotton research, and help growers improve their productivity and sustainability.

"CRDC continues to be a strong supporter of the ABARES Science and Innovation Awards as a pathway to developing future research leaders, like Yvonne."