



*If you are participating in the presentations this year, please provide a written report and a copy of your final report presentation by 31 October.
If not, please provide a written report by 30 September.*

Part 1 - Summary Details

Please use your TAB key to complete Parts 1 & 2.

CRDC Project Number: 10-11CRDC00040

Project Title: 15th Australian Cotton Conference

Project Commencement Date: 10/08/2010 **Project Completion Date:** 12/08/2010

CRDC Program: - Please Select One -

Part 2 – Contact Details

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Part 3 – Final Report Guide (due 31 October)

(The points below are to be used as a guideline when completing your final report.)

Background

1. Outline the background to the project.

The 15th Australian Cotton Conference – Fashioning the Future was the cotton industry’s 15th conference held over a 30 year span.

The Australian cotton industry has experienced a vast array of change over this 30 year period. As the cotton industry has developed, so too has the Australian Cotton Conference. What began primarily as on-farm, cotton growing-centred research sharing of knowledge, Conference has now extended to all sectors of industry from research to processing and in more recent times it has been inclusive of post farm gate mechanisms so that our complete supply chain process from “dirt to shirt” is examined.

A conference planning meeting held in December 2009 determined that Conference is the main industry forum and an important focal point for R&D knowledge sharing. As such, Conference promotes a collective sense of industry identity, direction, connectivity, and purpose.

For 2010, a Conference Committee was formed from Cotton Australia members, Australian Cotton Shippers Association members and representatives from other industry organisations (including CRDC) to oversee the conference program and activities that contributed to a successful conference. The Committee, guided by the Board and Executive of both organisations, was responsible for implementing program initiatives.

The 2010 Conference program provided the following platforms to showcase CRDC funded R&D and extension activities:

1. Plenary session/s with relevant topic content that were devised to provide a platform for CRDC to present information about its strategies, research and development and extension. CRDC was proactively engaged in the development of the conference program.
2. Plenary session/s with relevant topic content that provided a vehicle to present and hold discussion about those activities within the plan – specifically Value Chain, Farming Systems and Human Capacity.
3. Hands On sessions – small group sessions providing interactive discussions and practical demonstrations in small groups addressing current cotton research projects. 14 topics were repeated in three sessions enabling participants an opportunity for one-on-one, in-depth sessions with researchers on specific issues.
4. Posters – individual research projects and extension team activities were provided with an opportunity to present a poster to Conference. This year 60 R&D posters were on display.



5. Conference proceedings – the conference proceedings are viewed within industry as an historical record, especially for scientific research papers. Conference proceedings attract a large number of scientific research papers and have been made available to conference delegates (and the industry at large) via the conference website.
6. Trade Show – This year there were 49 exhibitors on 62 sites at the trade show and CRDC had a high profile site near the Trade Hall entrance.

Objectives

2. List the project objectives and the extent to which these have been achieved.

The Australian Cotton Conference is a platform that fulfils many functions for industry and our aim in 2010 was to:

- Increase industry knowledge relating to R&D and extension activities and how to implement those activities at a local level.
- Provide a platform to share information, discuss and debate issues confronting the Australian cotton industry (and agriculture in general). Specifically opportunities to discuss the industry's Vision 2029, water sharing, farming systems, energy resources, human capacity; improved productivity and sustainable production systems.
- Post farm gate activities, specifically understanding qualities of Australian cotton and opportunities to better evaluate markets for Australian produced fibre.
- Provide an opportunity for all sectors of industry to come together to foster and grow a culture for learning and innovation. Conference provided an opportunity for connectivity and a vision for the long term sustainability of our industry.

Methods

3. Detail the methodology and justify the methodology used. Include any discoveries in methods that may benefit other related research.

The 15th Australian Cotton Conference - Fashioning the Future was held August 10 – 12, 2010 at the Gold Convention & Exhibition Centre at Broadbeach, Queensland. The Conference program covered:

- **The way forward** - global issues shaping the future of cotton; Australian cotton industry vision 2029; challenges ahead for the Murray Darling Basin Plan.
- **Water sharing** – groundwater; water scarcity; priority issues and response to the Murray Darling Basin plan.
- **Farm hygiene** - mealybug; sucking pests; aphids; and cotton pathology.
- **Farming systems** - energy use; soil carbon; and cotton yield drivers.
- **Launch** of myBMP and Cotton Production & Cotton Pest Management guides



- **Irrigation** - modernisation funding; evaporation losses; deep drainage; bankless channel irrigation and future systems.
- **Trading** - economic outlook; world cotton outlook; integrity in world trade; opportunities for long staple and branded cottons.
- **Branding of Australian cotton** - positioning; connecting the supply chain from production to retail; the market for sustainable cotton; brandowner experiences.
- **Transgenic farming** - Bollgard resistance; pest and weed management; habitat function; agricultural chemistry; farm worker health; volunteers; herbicide resistance.
- **Branding Australian Cotton Value Chain Forum** – CRDC Value Chain & Premium Cotton Initiative; strategies to shorten the supply chain; textile market trends; advancing research; quality, environmental, social and traceability aspects of Australian cotton; Australian cotton brand launch.
- **Sustainability** - comparison between Australia and other countries; sustaining the family farm; new picking systems.
- **Cotton Workforce** - community participation; governance; myBMP; mining; future human capacity; indigenous workforce; education; farm family health.
- **Raingrown Cotton & Limited Irrigation** - practicalities; row configurations; varieties.
- Native vegetation; nutrient redistribution.
- **Hands-On sessions:**
 - Employment responsibilities & opportunities
 - Women in cotton
 - IPM enforcers
 - Getting the most out of people
 - Seepage & remediation
 - Alternative irrigation systems
 - Prosperous communities
 - Dietary needs of cotton
 - Yields and quality co-existing
 - Internet tools
 - Disease controversies
 - Herbicide resistance
 - Coal seam gas
 - Cotton mapping
- REFCOM Workshop
- Value Chain workshop

Results

4. Detail and discuss the results for each objective including the statistical analysis of results.

CRDC Involvement

Whilst our initial FRP stated that CRDC would be provided with an opportunity to update to its strategic plan at Conference, it was later mutually agreed that CRDC's direct involvement would be by way of:



- Continuing foundation sponsorship, representing 30 years of Conference and support to industry.
- Launch of Vision 2029 by ACIC
- A presentation to Conference on “Delivering Research – An Industry-Wide Approach” - detailing the launch of myBMP and the launch of two publications – Cotton Production and Cotton Pres Management Guide.
- A presentation to Conference on “Sustainability & the Future – How Does Australia Measure up Internationally”.
- **Branding Australian Cotton Value Chain Forum.** The Premium Cotton Initiative was showcased with two sessions covering branding of Australian cotton; supply chain; quality; environmental and social aspects of Australian cotton.
- **Value Chain Research Investment Forum.** Industry collaborators met to discuss and report on industry value chain investment with the following areas being covered:- PCI strategic objectives; spinning mill surveys; agronomic management; Cottonspec commercialisation; Cottonscan/Siromat development; breeding and biotechnology; ginning efficiency and BMP post farm gate practices.
- CRDC participated in the Trade Hall component of conference with a high profile stand.

R&D Extension Activities

CRDC was provided the opportunity to participate in scoping of presentation topics and suggestion of appropriate topics and speakers. Two additional Conference sessions were added to the Conference program to increase the R&D content. In 2010, about 100 people gave presentations at the conference

Hands-On Research

Fourteen Hands-On sessions (each held three times) were held at Conference on Day 3. Hands-on sessions have now been held for the past four conference. The core strategy of Hands-on research is that delegates learn by doing rather than watching a Powerpoint presentation. It is hoped that the Hands-on sessions allowed greater interaction as well as showcasing additional topics that could not be accommodated within plenary sessions.

It is estimated that more than 200 delegates attended the Hands-on sessions with an additional 70 delegates attending the REFCOM session and 20 delegates at CRDC’s Value Chain R&D session (held concurrently).



Conference Material

Conference proceedings are viewed within industry as an historical record, especially for scientific research papers. Conference proceedings attract a large number of scientific research papers and have been made available to conference delegates (and the industry at large) via the conference website.

Research Posters

Poster numbers were dramatically increased. Around 60 posters, prepared by industry researchers and post-graduate students were displayed at Conference.

Research & Presentation Papers

Most presenters made available either their Powerpoint presentation or a formal paper (in some cases both). A small number of researchers also took advantage of providing a Paper even though they did not have an opportunity to present at Conference. The Powerpoint presentations have been provided to CRDC.

Videoring of Speakers & Sessions

Each presenter and each session was recorded. Whilst the Australian Cotton Conference website cannot accommodate the viewing of this footage, a copy has been provided to CRDC. This footage will also be made available to any delegate or industry participant upon request.

Outcomes

5. Describe how the project's outputs will contribute to the planned outcomes identified in the project application. Describe the planned outcomes achieved to date.

CRDC Strategic Plan Update

Whilst CRDC determined that it would not provide this update to conference as initially detailed within the FRP, content of plenary sessions covered a wide variety of CRDC and industry's strategies including adding value to industry through premium products in transformed supply chains; productive farming systems with improved environmental performance and securing the future of the industry and its capability through fostering the development of people resources.



Hands-On Research

Hands-on research sessions allowed for a larger number of industry researchers and extension personnel to be involved in the conference program. It demonstrated the outcomes of a range of research to the entire industry. Again topics suggested in the FRP were refined according to presenter availability and issues of the day.

Research Posters

Research posters allowed delegates an opportunity to review projects and research findings from current and recently completed research and extension activities. The posters were an important additional pathway for those researchers that could not be included within the general plenary sessions due to time limitations

Conference Proceedings

Another important pathway for reporting project outputs and research outcomes to industry. Conference contributes to CRDC outcomes by:

CRDC Strategic Plan Objective	Conference contribution to CRDC objective
Program 1.1 Develop contemporary knowledge about products, markets and supply chains	Conference included presentations from researchers, international market experts, supply chain buyers/users of cotton. New knowledge and networks were established.
Program 2.1 Build the industry's understanding of climate and natural resource challenges	A number of presentations, papers and posters were given on climate and NRM. For example the Bureau of Metrology provided a presentation on their latest tools for growers. Water, soils and biodiversity were also covered.
Program 2.2 Enhance the capacity of the industry to adopt resilient and adaptive farming systems	A number of presentations, papers and posters were given on farming systems. For example, grower, consultant and researcher presentations on managing limited water, agronomy, yields, irrigation, dryland forum and crop protection.
Program 2.3 Protect industry from biosecurity threats	A plenary session was especially provided in the 2010 program to allow additional discussion on biosecurity related issues such as pests and diseases.
Program 3.2 Improve human resource development and capacity	This was a core goal of the project. Additional plenary sessions were also included on industry related human capacity matters.
Program 3.3 Enhance the capacity to innovate	Another core goal of the project. Through the presentations, hands on research, posters, trade show and social functions.



997 delegates attended Conference (up 11% from 2008). Of those 329 were growers which is an increase of 23% from 2008. 65 plenary sessions were staged; 14 Hands-On Research sessions held and 30 hours of presentation time made available to delegates to share knowledge.

Post-conference, delegates were invited to participate in a survey to rate their conference experience. 192 respondents identified themselves as: Growers (45); post farm-gate supply chain (16); value chain (3) and R&D (37).

The questions posed included overall experience; value for money; relevant plenary sessions; Hands-On Research; speakers/presentations; Trade Hall; networking opportunities and communications. In all areas conference was rated by more than 90% of delegates as good to excellent.

6. Please describe any:-
- a) technical advances achieved (eg commercially significant developments, patents applied for or granted licenses, etc.);
 - b) other information developed from research (eg discoveries in methodology, equipment design, etc.); and
 - c) required changes to the Intellectual Property register.

Not applicable.

Conclusion

7. Provide an assessment of the likely impact of the results and conclusions of the research project for the cotton industry. What are the take home messages?

The 15th Australian Cotton Conference, titled “Fashioning the Future” provided a platform to showcase the Australian cotton industry and enhance the outputs from CRDC funded R&D and extension activities to the industry at large.

The conference provides for the largest gathering of industry participants in any calendar year and delegates were presented with information in various formats during the conference program that demonstrated and extends improvements in outcomes for the industry.

Industry was challenged to share information, discuss, debate and respond to and adopt findings of research and projects around maximising individual and industry profitability and sustainability through the adoption of home-grown R&D.

The Committee of the 15th Australian Cotton Conference aimed to showcase:

- Australia’s place within the world cotton market
- Australian Long Staple varieties



- Cotton's role in meeting the food and fibre security challenge
- Cotton's contributing role in regional and rural Australia
- Human resource management
- Women in the Australian cotton industry
- Young leaders within the Australian cotton industry
- Promoting our commitment to corporate social responsibility
- Marketing our image/profile to others outside of industry
- Environmentally sustainable cotton growing
- Cotton as a positive/forward thinking, challenging and rewarding industry
- Doing more with less water, fertiliser and energy
- Dryland farming
- Australian cotton fibre for new blends and new opportunities
- A culture for learning
- Technology – today and in the future – delivery; stewardship; farming systems
- Delivery of R&D in 2010
- Engaging next generation farmers
- Water use efficiency
- Diversity of cotton farming systems and enterprises
- Economics
- Human capital – how to make the most of it
- MDBA Basin Plan
- Mining issues – pros and cons
- Industry impact/logistics of new picking technology
- Best Management Practices

Extension Opportunities

8. Detail a plan for the activities or other steps that may be taken:
 - (a) to further develop or to exploit the project technology.
 - (b) for the future presentation and dissemination of the project outcomes.
 - (c) for future research.

Not applicable

8. A. List the publications arising from the research project and/or a publication plan.
(NB: Where possible, please provide a copy of any publication/s)

Not applicable

- B. Have you developed any online resources and what is the website address?

www.australiancottonconference.com.au



Part 4 – Final Report Executive Summary

Provide a one page Summary of your research that is not commercial in confidence, and that can be published on the World Wide Web. Explain the main outcomes of the research and provide contact details for more information. It is important that the Executive Summary highlights concisely the key outputs from the project and, when they are adopted, what this will mean to the cotton industry.

See Conclusion