



Australian Government

Cotton Research and
Development Corporation

FINAL REPORT 2013/2014

Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number: CGA 1308 **CGA Lower Namoi/ Walgett**

Project Title: **Future Industry Leaders Excursion**

Project Commencement Date: 19/7/2013 **Project Completion Date:** 31/10/2014

Part 2 – Contact Details

Administrator: Geoff Hunter- Namoi RDO and Matt Norrie- Grower

Organisation: **Lower Namoi CGA**

Postal Address:

Ph: 0458 142 777 **Fax:** **E-mail:** geoff.hunter@cottoninfo.net.au

Part 3 – Final Report

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

Background

Discussions with a number of growers, workers and agronomists found that many of them knew very little about ACRI and what went on there and how research projects were actually decided. Many of these people were a younger generation who were not about when issues surrounding resistance was widespread and ACRI was paramount in keeping ahead of arising complications. It was soon evident that this group needed to be engaged so that they could have a better understanding of the research being done now and in the future.

Trip One - This trip was focussed on the research aspects of the industry and included speakers and presentations in the Narrabri area followed by a rugby match.

Trip Two - Due to the success of the first trip and coming in under budget a second trip was organised for the southern area around Hillston and Griffith. This trip focussed on networking opportunities as well as irrigation layouts and diversification.

Trip Three - The third and final trip went to Croppa Creek, Bongeen and Dalby. The the aim initially was to visit John Cameron who was Grower of the year last year and we took the opportunity to visit 2 other farms to look at different farming systems and farm machinery.

Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to empower Young Future Leaders and engage more growers and Consultants in sharing information and participating in research.

Specifically we wanted to educate participants in;
What research is being undertaken
How research projects are chosen
Awareness and understanding of the organisations in the industry
What is involved in the ginning process
How planting seed is produced
Greater involvement in Industry decisions making
Build better relationships and networks
Begin to develop research questions

Methods

This project was developed using a grower based group who provided input into the design and provided contacts for invitations.

Trip One itinerary was:

- met at "Lammamoor" Merah North to look at an 8 row picker on 30 inch rows
- travelled by bus to ACRI where we spoke with Lewis Wilson, Mike Bange and Warwick Stiller and looked through some of the facilities.
- travelled to Auscott cotton Gin for a tour through a fully operational facility
- travelled to CSD seed processing facility for a tour of this operation
- Dinner with cotton identities James Kahl, Rob Dugdale, Paula Jones and Ian Taylor.
- Breakfast with Adam Kay (Skype), Paula Jones and Mike Logan talking about CRDC research funding process and how to get involved
- across to the Rugby grounds where Narrabri played the Pirates.
- We organised a bus and accommodation in Narrabri so everyone could stay and get to know each other. Researchers at ACRI worked with us to develop presentations which were short but very relevant to this age bracket. Throughout the development of the project we constantly sought feedback from likely participants as to where to go and what topics to address. An invitation to a rugby game between Narrabri and the Pirates was added as a 'sweetener' to attend.

Trip Two - Trip to Griffith and Hillston looking at Bankless irrigation and different farming systems.

- Auscott Warren to look at 60 inch cotton
- Dinner with local contacts in Griffith
- Hire of bus and travel to Dallas Stott to look at an automated Bankless system
- Whitton Gin tour and discussion with Roger Commins

- Lunch at Colleambolly with CEO of the irrigation scheme and visit a local farm
- Matt Stott with Bankless irrigation, popcorn, almonds, citrus, sheep and many more crops
- Hillston with the Storrier Bros looking at Overhead irrigation and compost
- Travel home

Trip Three was to Darling Downs and over night in Toowoomba

- Nick Champion at Croppa Creek, strip tiller and deep fertiliser placement
- John Cameron and what it takes to be Grower of the Year
- Dinner in Toowoomba with representatives from Cotton Australia, Monsanto, CSD and CRDC
- Jamie Grant's property near Dalby looking at different equipment and farming systems
- Travel home

Outcomes

We now have a good group of growers and agronomists who knew very little about how research is decided upon and funded. There is now a core group who will now have input into the process and also know some of the main leaders in the cotton industry.

When asked to rate their level of understanding on topics before the tour and after the tour, the averages were:

Trip One

Topic	Understanding Before (out of 5)	Understanding After (out of 5)
What research is being undertaken	1.9	4.125
How research projects are chosen	1.5	4.2
Number of industry people you know	2.25	4.13
Awareness and understanding of the organisations in the industry	2.17	4
What is involved in the ginning process	2.73	4.5
How planting seed is produced	2.27	4.3
TOTAL Averages	2.14	4.22

Therefore we can say there was an average increase in understanding of 2.08 out of 5 or 42% increase in the average understanding levels across all topics.

The 2 later trips have contributed to the network, with only one grower attending 2 trips and so we have engaged approximately 60 new people which can only be positive for engagement and ultimately a greater role from them in industry matters.

Trip Two

Topic	Understanding Before (out of 5)	Understanding After (out of 5)
Bankless irrigation systems	1.9	3.7
Pressurised irrigation systems	1.8	3.8
Importance of planning when changing	3.7	4.7

irrigation systems		
Likelihood of implementing the designs	2.4	3.8
TOTAL Averages	2.45	3.8

Therefore each expected learning outcome saw a good growth in participants' understanding (from 2.45 average to 3.8). the likelihood of practice change generated by this trip reflected this number as well.

Trip Three

This trip was more about getting participants to start to brainstorm possible ideas and projects which they feel could benefit from greater research. Ideas were collated throughout the drive and written down. Discussions were held in Toowoomba over dinner and it generated a lot of worthwhile comments in vehicles along the way. In summary the following research priorities were agreed on:

- Farming systems- row configuration, hormone to control growth, Pix, strip tillers
- Planting- disc vs tyne, water injection, granular and liquid fertiliser, deep placement
- Nutrition- deep P and K
- Ratoon and Volunteer control
- Varieties- RRF varieties with a better quality and yield package

This is invaluable information for informing future research projects.

Budget Items

Narrabri Tour

Catering Friday	\$1,508.51
Catering Saturday	\$675
Accommodation Friday and Saturday	\$1,345
Bus hire	\$1,122
TOTAL	\$4, 650.51

Griffith Trip

Catering Tuesday	\$1,194
Catering Wednesday	\$535
Accommodation Tuesday and Wednesday	\$2,173
Bus hire	\$306.93
TOTAL	\$4,208.93

Dalby Trip

Catering Wednesday	\$638
Catering Wednesday Night	\$1960
Accommodation Wednesday	\$2761
TOTAL	\$5,359

Total Cost for all trips \$14, 218.44

1. Conclusion

Three trips have generated a great deal of enthusiasm and momentum to continue with this concept. The major conclusion is that the 35 - 50 demographic has largely been forgotten in regards to encouraging and participating in leadership opportunities. It is also apparent that this is the ideal age where growers start to feel a need to contribute and the stage of life where children are not so young allows time to do this. Out of these 3 trips we have engaged around 60 growers and consultants to have a better understanding of the role that research plays in their industry and how the system works and the value it provides to them. We have people who are now connected between Dalby in the North down to Caroonna and Griffith in the south. The concept is sound and we need to build on it further.

Extension Opportunities

This is an ideal method of extension. I have 60 new contacts who will be part of my monthly Newsletter. This group has already conveyed to me a number of research areas they would like more information on. I have already had a great deal of success with extension as I know these people so much better and so their participation in what we do has improved also. We can build on this momentum by developing the next stage of what I see as a training/ professional development pathway.