



**Australian Government**  
**Cotton Research and  
Development Corporation**

# TRAVEL & CONFERENCE REPORT

## *Part 1 - Summary Details*

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

**CRDC Project Number:** CSE0901

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**Project Title:** Travel Application to Attend ASSAB Conference in  
Auckland, New Zealand, Mary Whitehouse.

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**Project Commencement Date:** 14 April 2009 **Project Completion Date:** 21 April 2009

**Research Program:** 3. Crop Protection

## *Part 2 – Contact Details*

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**Researcher 2** (Name & position of additional researcher or supervisor).

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**Signature of Research Provider Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part 3 – Travel Report**

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(Maximum two pages)

### **1. A brief description of the purpose of the travel.**

The purpose of my visit was to attend the ASSAB (Australasian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour) conference in Auckland New Zealand. At the conference I presented a paper entitled: “The IPM of mirids in Australian cotton: understanding why and when pest managers spray for mirids” which was based on research undertaken in the “Mirid Predation” project (CRC number: 1.10.01). I also talked to other researchers about my current work in the refuge project, particularly mate choice by *Helicoverpa*.

As I am hosting the ASSAB conference in April 2010 in Narrabri, the second purpose of my visit was to prepare for the Narrabri conference through meetings with organisers of the Auckland conference and ASSAB council members. I also advertised the Narrabri conference by giving a short presentation designed to encourage delegates to attend the Conference in Narrabri.

### **2. What were the:**

#### **a) major findings and outcomes**

The conference consisted of high-quality presentations on all aspects of behavioural ecology. I found the talks useful as many reported on findings in navigation, communication and mating behaviour which, while not areas in which I currently work, still provided information relevant to the management of *Helicoverpa* and other pests and beneficials in cotton. Some talks also presented alternative statistical techniques to those which I already use. This enables me to update my statistical tool box.

My own talk on the mirid survey work was well received. It was good to show the ecologically responsible side of the cotton industry to researchers whose main exposure to the cotton industry is the general media which tends to portray the cotton industry in a negative light.

#### **b) other highlights**

I also gave a presentation on the 2010 ASSAB conference to be held in Narrabri next year. This presentation was also well received and generated a lot of interest in the conference, with many people stating that they were planning to come to Narrabri.

### **3. Detail the persons and institutions visited, giving full title, position details, location, duration of visit and purpose of visit to these people/places. (NB:- Please provide full names of institutions, not just acronyms.)**

Dr. Dianne Brunton, Conference host, Institute of Natural Sciences, Massey University, Albany Campus, Auckland, New Zealand.

The aim was to attend the 2009 ASSAB conference to present findings from the mirid predation project, and to canvas support for the 2010 ASSAB conference to be held in Narrabri next year.

### **4. a) Are there any potential areas worth following up as a result of the travel?**

Apart from providing an opportunity to discuss the behavioural ecology of invertebrates in cotton, the conference was a great opportunity to network and establish ties for the conference in Narrabri. In particular, I was able to arrange for people from various institutions in Australia and New Zealand to act as my contacts for the 2010 conference, which means they will distribute within their institution information about the 2010 conference as it comes to hand. I also talked to the 2009 conference host, Dr. Brunton, who gave me useful information about running an ASSAB conference, and will be passing on some of the templates she used for her conference.

**b) Any relevance or possible impact on the Australian Cotton Industry?**

There was a lot of enthusiasm generated at the 2009 conference for the 2010 conference, which will be good for the cotton industry. The 2010 ASSAB Narrabri conference will have a positive impact on the Australian Cotton Industry from 3 perspectives. First, it will showcase high class research underway in the cotton industry; second, it will demonstrate that the Australian cotton industry has a strong emphasis on sustainability and is environmentally responsible; third, the positive portrayal of the cotton industry may encourage some of the researchers, particularly the students, to consider working in cotton. The cotton industry is often concerned that it doesn't attract enough post graduate students. The 2010 ASSAB Narrabri conference could be used as a vehicle to attract students, as well as a means of displacing some of the negative myths in the general community about the cotton industry.

**5. How do you intend to share the knowledge you have gained with other people in the cotton industry?**

I will be presenting my experiences of the 2009 ASSAB conference at the next program meeting at ACRI. At this meeting I will also advertise the 2010 ASSAB Narrabri conference, and indicate to my fellow researchers that this may be an opportunity to recruit students to post graduate work in cotton.