

# Cotton *my*BMP extension in Central Queensland

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The Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) is supporting the delivery of the Cotton *my*BMP program, and providing significant funding assistance to CQ cotton growers for water quality improvements adopted under *my*BMP. Between June 2011 and 2012, 54 growers attended Grower *my*BMP workshops run by Blue Dog Agribusiness at Theodore (2), the Comet River, and West Emerald Irrigation Area (EIA), and 14 service industry members attended *my*BMP Adviser workshops held in Theodore and Emerald. Further workshops are planned in Biloela, Mackenzie River and Emerald this year. The workshops featured:

- **Integration of *my*BMP, NRM and cotton agronomy extension activities:** Workshops were delivered by a partnership of DAFF, Cotton Australia, agronomists and catchment group staff. Coordination reduced the impost on grower time, and provided greater depth and interest to *my*BMP practices.
- **Community engagement approach:** Grower groups were local and generally small in scale with common interests and issues. A level of familiarity and trust encouraged networking, open discussion and cooperation on area-wide issues.
- **Hands-on computer workshops:** using up to 20 laptops with wireless internet base stations (loaned from the FBA & DAFF Grains BMP program), workshops went to the growers - whether on properties or in pubs. Growers completed modules together and gained confidence in using the system.



Workshop content introduced growers to the online system, and was grounded in local agronomic and industry issues to ensure its relevance to each group. Each group was invited to choose their next workshop topic and suggest guest presenters of interest.



*my*BMP training for advisers aimed to provide growers with ongoing access to information and support, and avoid future reliance on funded delivery.

Figure 1: Growers' self-assessment of computer skills & knowledge (All CQ participants)

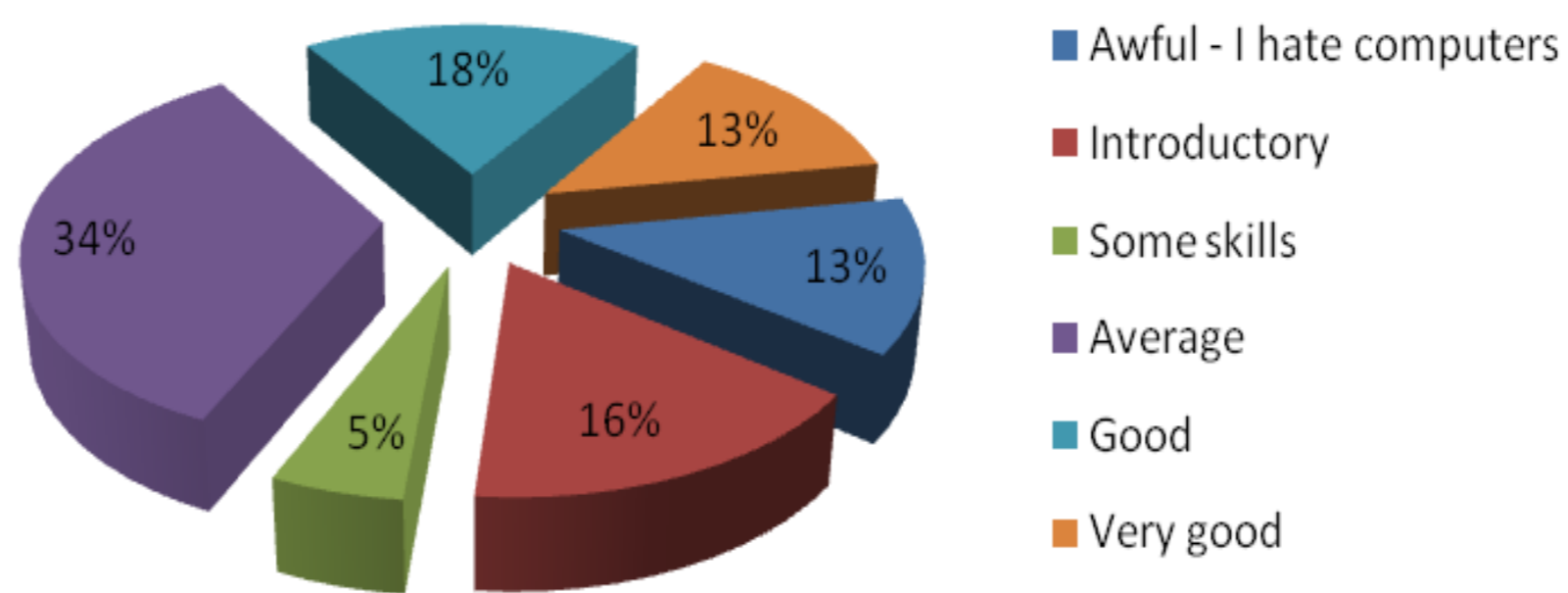
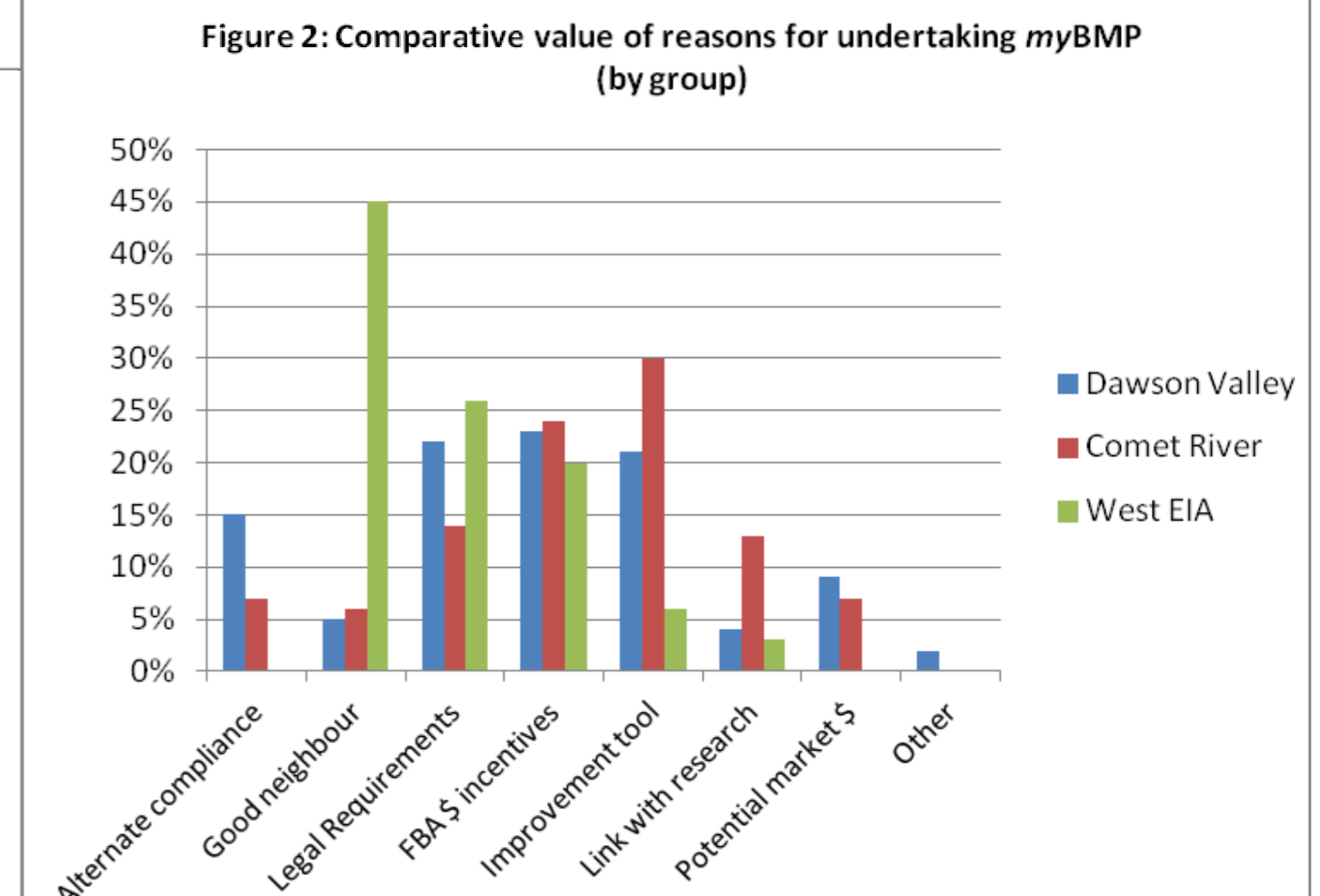


Figure 1: Working in small groups with many helpers supported growers with different computing skills; around one third of growers participating defined their skills poorer than average, and one third as average.

Figure 2: In each workshop evaluation, growers were asked to select their 3 most important reasons for undertaking Cotton *my*BMP. The results indicate that growers' motivation to participate can be impacted by local concerns, and that economic incentives are an effective tool for encouraging change.



16<sup>th</sup> **australian COTTON conference**

Growing Better all the Time



FBA funding for projects developed through *my*BMP on-farm assessments is provided via the Australian Government's Reef Rescue Caring for Our Country initiative.