



Australian Government
**Cotton Research and
Development Corporation**

TRAVEL & CONFERENCE REPORT

Part 1 - Summary Details

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

CRDC Project Number:

Project Title: Field to Fabric Course

Project Commencement Date: 21/7/09 **Project Completion Date:** 23/7/09

Research Program:

Part 2 – Contact Details

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Part 3 – Travel Report

(Maximum two pages)

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

The course offered an opportunity to see the cotton industry as a ‘whole’ and explore production from field level through to the final product post field. Every step of the process was discussed in detail and all processes post ginning could be viewed first-hand. The CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Campus has all of the equipment and expertise required to manufacture cotton on one site allowing it to be viewed easily and quickly without overseas travel.

2. What were the:

a) major findings and outcomes

- science of in crop fibre management – understanding how the fibre forms and determines its micron, length and strength, variation between varieties and within varieties, links between particular characteristics, environmental impacts, nutrition and more
- implication for in crop fibre management - importance of moisture availability at critical times, management of environmental factors and other stressors, variety selection
- processes post field – understanding the various stages including ginning, classing and the complexity of the spinning mill
- implications of processes post field – particularly the damage done to the fibre at the gin with fibre breakages and neps. Other processes also alter the fibre and also the economics of the fibre.
- understanding of qualities the mills require – there is a significant difference between the growers’ understandings and the requirements of the spinners. This is largely stemmed from the classes providing penalties for lint qualities that are insignificant to the spinning mills.
- marketing and major issues surrounding this for Australia and our presence in the global market.

b) other highlights

- wool museum – similarities and differences to cotton. Learning from the wool industry’s experiences and challenges
- industry contacts – range of people from all levels of the industry chain

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.)

The three day course was held at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Materials, Science and Engineering Campus in Belmont Victoria. The course was run by Rene van der Sluiji (Textile Technologist) with assistance from other members of CSIRO staff; Martin Prins, Stuart Gordon, Michael Bange, David King, Dale Carroll, Ian Russel as well as Geoff Dunlope, Moree, Greg Parle, Auscott and Phil Ryan, Queensland Cotton. All tours were conducted on site. There was also an organised visit to the Australian Wool Museum in Geelong.

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

It became very clear there is discrepancy between sectors of the industry with regard to quality parameters and requirements. I would like to better understand this and see the industry move towards a uniform understanding and support each other to build a stronger label.

It is also clear Australian Cotton faces some major global marketing challenges in the future as underdeveloped countries catch up with technology and production quality and quantity. Furthermore the 'green' Ecolables are putting further pressure on the perception of Australian Cotton. Australia has many valuable 'green' attributes including water use efficiency, pesticide management (IMP) and no use of child labour. These, and many more, must be made common knowledge national and internationally among consumers.

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

Developing strategies to manage the above issues would help the Australian Cotton Industry on a global level by securing market place on the basis of consistent quality and environmentally friendly production (Ecolables).

I believe all sectors of the chain need to work together to streamline the process and establish quality requirements and guidelines for Australian Cotton. I see this as necessary in enabling the whole production process to be as consistent, profitable and fair as possible. Encouragement for the cotton grower to manage his/her crop with a strong emphasis on quality rather than solely (or largely) on yield is essential in maintaining Australia's reputation for quality cotton. Streamlining the process by re-assess various processes (such as ginning) and providing growers with improved specifications from spinning mills would be beneficial in the Australian Cotton Label.

I recognise the previous attempts made by the industry and Australian Cotton's current work in re-inventing BMP as a marketing tool. Unfortunately the reduced financial capacity of the industry appears to be a major constraint, particularly in marketing.

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

I have begun already discussing the information with Steve Madden Agriculture Clients and sharing the learned knowledge with other consultants and agronomists and members of the CCA (Crop Consultants Australia). I have been discussing the marketing issue, implications of ginning cotton (advising growers to monitor their cotton at the gin to help the ginner process it in the best possible way for each module) and discussing the variation in requirements between the gins and the mills.