



'Community Conversations'

Edition 6, July 2010

Produced by the Cotton Catchment Communities CRC

A historical geography of cotton farming in NSW and QLD: adaptation and adoption

Introduction

The Australian cotton industry is well established and has pioneered much of the development of rural NSW and Queensland. One of the main reasons that this industry has survived and prospered is because of the capacity of growers and communities to adapt to change.

In recent times, cotton farming communities have faced pressures such as: issues of water usage, long dry spells or droughts, fluctuating cotton prices and global economic crises.

Most recently, the buy-back of water licenses by the Australian Federal Government will provide a new set of challenges for cotton growers and communities.



Early Model Picker

What sorts of innovations have been developed and adopted to improve cotton growing or enhance the lives of community members?

These are the sorts of questions we will ask cotton growers, from the small farm to the big corporate concerns, associated local businesses and townsfolk who live in cotton-based communities.

By gathering this information, we aim to document the stories of how farmers and communities adapted to change in the past as well as in the present.

We hope to capture these stories by talking to people from the cotton communities, particularly those who have been involved with cotton for a long time, and across generations.



Early Model Picker

The Project

The Cotton Catchment Communities CRC and the University of NSW have joined forces to learn more about what we have called a '**capacity to adapt**' to change exhibited by cotton communities.

By delving into the past (as well as the present), and exploring how cotton farmers and cotton communities have ensured that cotton would grow in the Australian environment, we hope to learn useful lessons about this '**capacity to adapt**'.

For example:

What did cotton growers and local townships do to survive during the harder times?



Cotton Catchment Communities CRC



Early back view of picker with stompers to push cotton into the basket



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What do we need?

For this project we will need participants. First of all, we will ask people from the cotton communities of NSW and QLD to fill out a short survey, which will be available via a link from the Cotton CRC website or we can post or email the survey.

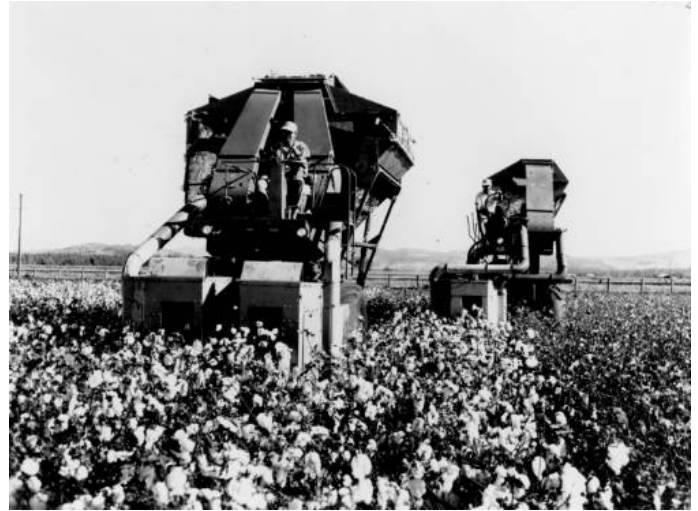
In the next phase, we will invite individuals to participate in interviews – an invitation to participate will be attached to the survey.

We are also looking for interesting memorabilia.

Do you have any scrapbooks of photos or newspaper clippings that might include snippets about cotton growers and communities surviving and adapting?

You may have developed some interesting innovations yourself – or know of someone who has.

Please let us know if you have anything interesting about cotton farming practices, or community innovations be it from the recent or distant past.



Early Model two row pickers in the paddock

Please get in touch

If you would like to participate, or have any questions or concerns about the project please contact one of the team at the University of NSW:

Dr Wendy Shaw, 0415128103 w.shaw@unsw.edu.au,

Dr Danielle Drozdowski : 0409123681 or 02 9385 8283 danielled@unsw.edu.au or

Ms Rebecca Cross ra.cross@yahoo.com 0405707756.

The survey is available online at

<https://www.surveys.unsw.edu.au/survey/155266/aa0442f2/>



Early Cotton Picker with large basket

What will we give back to the cotton growing communities of NSW and QLD?

Ultimately, we hope to produce educational material (a book, and possibly a DVD documentary) on cotton farming in NSW and QLD. Particularly on how farmers have managed through the pioneering, growth and consolidation phases of the cotton industry. How they are adapting to the challenges of the current climatic and business environments.



John Deere 7760 the latest in modern technology for picking cotton



So what interesting lessons do you have about cotton and cotton growing, for the wider community?

For Further Information

Contact Community Officer

Cotton Catchment Communities CRC.

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