



TRAVEL REPORT

Summary Details

CRDC Project Number:	NTCGA 1126		
Project Title:	Northern Grower Travel to Emerald		
Project Commencement Date:	05/05/2024	Project Completion Date:	30/06/2025
Researcher:	Simone Cameron		
Organisation:	Northern Territory Cotton Growers Association		

Recognition of support: The Research Provider Northern Territory Cotton Growers Association acknowledges the financial assistance of the Cotton Research and Development Corporation in order to undertake this project.

Final Report

Project Summary:

There was a strong interest in the Northern CGA visiting the Emerald region in Queensland to look at farming systems with a focus on understanding the principles of *grown on cotton*, the potential opportunities it may enable across the north and the requirements and challenges this would present for our northern farming systems. The expectation isn't that the Emerald system can be copy and paste into the north, but that this trip will provide foundations for Northern farming systems discussions.

The key outcomes of the Emerald trip were:

- Growers visited a 5 regional farms with a focus on "Grown On" cotton
- A number of farms were visited; each had a slightly different management approach to grown on cotton. Growers, their consultants & other industry members were very generous in sharing their knowledge on grown on cotton
- Different approaches to grown on cotton included planned, growing on as a result of early season fruit loss and skip row configurations
- It was very evident that there is still a lot to learn about this approach, particularly in terms of nutrient mining and canopy management, and there is no one method fits all
- The trip was extremely valuable and a lot of interest in grown on cotton was generated. It is expected that some growers will trial the approach in the 2024-25 season
- Grown on has the potential to benefit cotton production in the NT however research needs to be done to determine whether it is a viable option and will work in with our complex climate

Outcomes & Impact for Industry:

There are many key learnings required to continue the momentum of farming systems across northern Australia, in particular cotton. In the NT cotton production has only been seen as a commercial prospect since 2018. The industry has many successful and well-developed systems across other valleys that could be utilised and adopted to practice in the north. Peer to peer learnings known to be the most likely to encourage practice change and development.

Project Outputs:

A 2-day Emerald Regional Tour

Day 1 - Regional property visits: Argoon, Currumundi, Deepfields and Denlo Park with a CSD presentation during lunch

Day 2 - Farming Systems meeting with presentations on CQ systems from Paul Grundy, RMP Review Processes with Kristen Knight, grower's perspectives with Nigel Burnett and discussion Q & A time to wrap up. Visit to CQ Smart Farm - Swarm Farm Robotics & WAND System

M&E Outcomes: Number of outcomes achieved - 9

People Connections:

Cotton Australia - Regional Manager, Robyn Lehmann Chair & Local Grower, Nigel Burnett

CRDC - Susan Maas

Bayer - Kristen Knight & Ben Turner

QDAF/CottonInfo - Paul Grundy

CSD - Angus Marshall + 3 Qld Reps

NT Farmers - Hannah Leu

QC - Rick Jones & Darrel Strahley

CGS - Jamie Street

Elders - Ayla Christophers

TAGS Dirranbandi - Greg Nicol

Muir - Matt Dennis

Growers (NT) Bruce Connolly & Andrew Parkes

Grower CQ 5 x properties visited

M&E People: Number of connections achieved - 30

Learnings:

Forging partnerships between cotton growers from the north to Central Queensland is creating knowledge and support networks.

"It was very evident that there is still a lot to learn about this approach, particularly in terms of nutrient mining and canopy management, and there is no one method fits all." NT grower

"Our growing conditions could be considered similar in many ways and it was great to be able to compare and analyse these similarities and differences" NT grower

"Grown on has the potential to benefit cotton production in the NT however research needs to be done to determine whether it is a viable option and will work in with our complex climate" NT Grower

"To see how the plant responds to agronomical practices was a valuable insight." NT Agronomist

"Growers, their consultants and other industry members were very generous in sharing their knowledge on grown on cotton" Angus Marshall, CSD

"It was a fantastic re-connection of the growers from both regions again and we've arranged for the next Teams catch up to be more towards September/October when the season in the North draws to an end." Regional Manager CH

"An opportunity to share ideas and historical learnings is always encouraged and welcomed" CottonInfo

M&E Learnings: Number of learnings and planned actions from the project – 31