1. Introduction:

The production of cotton in Australia relies heavily on the use of broad spectrum insecticides to control two key pests, *Helicoverpa punctigera* and *Helicoverpa armigera*. The possible loss of two of these insecticides, synthetic pyrethroids and endosulfan, because of resistance in *H. armigera* and environmental concerns respectively, has rekindled the search for ways of utilising alternative sources of pest mortality, including native predators of *Helicoverpa* spp.

Room (1979) showed that many of the predatory arthropods normally found in Australian cotton fields and other crops and surrounding uncultivated land will feed on *Helicoverpa* eggs and larvae under laboratory conditions. It is therefore an appealing possibility that endemic predators could contribute substantially to the maintenance of *Helicoverpa* to below economic thresholds if pest management practices were modified to conserve them. With the current use of insecticides for producing cotton this potential is not normally realised because sprays aimed at *Helicoverpa* and other pests also kill the predators.