

BMP workshop a success

Nine Namoi valley cotton growers are now well on their way to attaining certification for the Land and Water Management Module. The Land and Water Module is the latest addition to the industry's voluntary BMP program. It encourages growers to document the natural resources on their farm and show that those resources are being used within their capacity. A pilot workshop was held by Cotton Australia and the Cotton CRC in Narrabri last week to help growers start the documentation process. The Namoi CMA and Cotton CRC supplied growers with aerial photographs and other mapping tools enabling them to complete Objective 1 *Develop a Farm Map*. The workshop was also an opportunity for growers to talk through the topics covered in the other objectives – irrigation efficiency and the management of soils, riparian areas and native vegetation – with each other and local technical staff. A similar workshop is underway in Walgett this week and based on the success of the Narrabri workshop, more are planned for the valley over the next few months. Funding will be made available to assist the growers who attended the workshop with the cost of their upcoming audit.



Cotton Australia Grower Service Manager Gus Macrae helping local growers map their infrastructure at the Land and Water Management BMP workshop last week.

To express your interest in participating in a workshop or to find out more information; contact Gus Macrae at Cotton Australia on 6792 6041 or Stacey Spanswick at the Cotton CRC on 6799 2417.

Birds on Cotton Farms Workshop

Do you want to find out more about our local birds and how to encourage your favourite birds to occur on your cotton farm?

Greg Ford from Queensland Murray Darling Committee and Nicci Thompson from Birds Australia, authors of the recently published "Birds on Cotton Farms" guide book will be running a "Birds on Cotton Farms" workshop at Wee Waa on **Tuesday the 1st of August**. The workshop which will include a field trip to a local cotton farm will provide some simple tips and tools for how to identify, monitor and manage birds.

The all day workshop will **start at 9:30 am at the Wee Waa Bowling Club**. Bring along your binoculars, sturdy footwear and a hat.

To register your interest in attending the workshop, contact Stacey Spanswick on 6799 2417. The workshop is being sponsored by Australian Cotton Grower's Research Association, Envirofund, Namoi CMA, Cotton CRC and Lower Namoi Cotton Grower's Association.

Addressing the skills shortage

"Getting recruitment wrong is costly, it wastes time, energy and money. The wrong worker, or a poorly trained worker, can lose valuable stock, damage machinery, misuse chemicals, cause crop losses, or worse still, cause severe injuries to themselves or others." The Farm Recruitment Manual, 2003.

Recent state and national studies have identified direct links between labour/human resource management and farm productivity. Last year a report commissioned by Cotton Australia identified a link between skills shortages on cotton farms and a lack of effective staff attraction and retention strategies. In response, Cotton Australia has developed a training program called *Cotton Advanced*. Three professional development workshops, aimed at improving business management skills, will be offered to cotton growers over the next 12 months. The workshops have been developed in conjunction with the cotton industry and TOCAL Agricultural College to meet industry training needs and standards.

Human Resource Management Workshop



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Science and Training

When: 3 August, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Where: Crossing Theatre, Narrabri
Who: Mike Stephens
How Much: \$99 including GST...includes meals and a workshop manual.
To Register: phone Darren Bayley 1800 025 520

The first of the three workshops will address the skill needs of cotton farmers as they take on the role of human resource manager for their farm business. The workshop cover all aspects of staff management in a modern cotton production enterprise. Topics include:

- Identification of skill requirements
- Preparing job descriptions and interviewing procedures
- The range of employment options including traineeships and school-based new apprenticeships
- Recruitment agencies and the Job Network
- Equal employment opportunity legislation
- Relevant industrial awards
- Employee induction and OH&S
- Contracts of employment and unfair dismissal legislation

The workshop facilitator, Mike Stephens, is internationally recognised in the field of human resource management, having studied farm business management in the UK, New Zealand and France. He is a director of his own company, *Working with People*. The flexible, interactive style of the workshop will allow key questions of the group participants to be addressed. This pilot workshop has been made possible through funding from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).