

## **Cotton Production in Southern NSW**

- Cotton is a natural fibre produced by a leafy green perennial shrub that is a member of the Hibiscus family
- Cotton is the most widely produced natural fibre in the world making up 44 % of the textile market (wool 3 % and synthetics 51%)
- Cotton seed is a by product used to produce high protein stockfeed and cotton seed oil. It makes up to 15 % of returns to growers
- A round module equals around 4.2 ginned bales. A ginned bale is 500 lb or 227 kg of cotton lint
- Australia grows 3 % of the world's cotton. Australia is the third largest exporter of cotton globally and the second largest exporter of cotton seed
- Depending on water availability 200,000 ha to 400,000 ha of cotton is grown in Australia under irrigation
- Cotton is also grown as a dryland crop in Northern NSW and Queensland and the area can vary from 5,000 ha to 120,000 ha
- In the last five years cotton yields have averaged 10.72 bales/ha in Southern NSW
- The 2010, 2012 and 2013 Southern NSW crops were the highest yielding in the industry
- Due to low rainfall in summer cotton is fully irrigated in the south with water use ranging from 8 to 10 ML/ha for surface irrigated crops.
- Cotton quality is measured by colour, micronaire, length and strength. The majority of southern NSW cotton is at base grade or better
- The 2016 crop in southern NSW makes up about 25% of the Australian crop with around 50,000 ha of 200,000 ha
- Cotton in southern NSW is planted late September to mid October and picked in late April to May
- Growers budget on yields of 10 bales/ha with many achieving 11 to 13 bales/ha farm averages. Individual fields have reached up to 16 bales/ha
- Cotton can be forward sold up to three years in advance
- Nearly all of the cotton grown is transgenic cotton having Roundup Ready and Bollgard II traits. This has resulted in a 90 % reduction in herbicides and insecticides applied to cotton
- The industry will transition to Bollgard III in the 2016/17 season
- Yields have increased by 1 bale/ha every ten years due to plant breeding and management
- Cost of production is around \$3,500/ha and current gross returns are around \$6,000/ha based on 10 bales at \$500/bale and seed price of \$340/t. Cotton consistently has the highest return for water applied of all summer crops

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