Cotton Innovation Network
Meeting Communique - 20 September 2022

The Cotton Innovation Network coordinates the cotton industry's RD&E activity and ensures a collaborative and cohesive approach to achieving our industry's long term goals.

Attendees: A.Greste (Chair), J. Cameron (Deputy Chair), I.Taylor (CRDC), J.Quinn (CSD), A.Kay (Cotton Australia), T.Dadswell (DAWE), A.Bowman (NSW DPI), C.Downs (QLD DAF), P.Grundy (AACS, QLD DAF), F.Pettolino (CSIRO), B.Back (CCA), L.Copeland & Jim Pratley (ACAD). Apologies: R.Jackson (NSW DPI), P.Graham (CSD)
Guests: Surround Australia - Brad Mckusker, Charis DeValence, Brian Lee-Archer. CRDC - Merry Conaty.

Key outcomes:

1. **Information Sharing**
   Members shared industry and organisational information including:
   - Cotton Australia - Very successful Cotton Conference with over 2000 delegates. Engagement with the new federal Agriculture Minister, Senator the Hon Murray Watt identifying workforce, input costs & biosecurity as key areas. Reinforced the negative impact of water buybacks on rural communities. Continued focus on BMP: 81 per cent of bales traded in 2020-21 were BCI.
   - CSD – Board changes: James Kahl retired as Chair and from the Board after 19 years of service. Late picking of 2022 crop has caused delays in seed production. With full water storages, soil profiles & strong cotton prices - production forecasts are strong: 500K ha irrigated, 200K ha dryland. Preliminary data indicates Extend Flex lines are equal or better than current varieties. Extend Flex seed increase and demo blocks will be stewarded. Wet season, large areas of back to back cotton - cause for concern over disease management.
   - CRDC – Continued development of the 2023-28 Strategic RD&E Plan with sustainability credentials to guide it - Paddock, People, Planet. Northern Australia R&D continuing with collaboration & coinvestment from other northern Aust stakeholders and agencies. Investigating increased collaboration with GRDC, particularly common farming systems research. Recognition of the importance and scale of water management research and potential areas for future research including aquifer recharge, storage evaporation mitigation.
   - CSIRO – Dr Michael Robertson appointed as the Director of CSIRO Ag & Food. Myall Vale redevelopment has now been completed, official opening early 2023. Successful Threads & Opportunity Symposium: the report will be launched on World Circular Textiles Day, Oct 8.
   - ACDA – Australian research council being reviewed by the Govt. Strong job market: 900 ag graduates per year v 2-3000 graduate positions available. Metropolitan areas are where the potential students are. Government seeking advice on international ag qualifications.
   - DAFF – Participation in the Fed Government Jobs & Skills Summit. Tripartite agreement signed to attract people to ag. National Biosecurity Strategy was released in August.
   - NSW DPI – Strategic Plan finalised and released, budgets now being prepared. Biosecurity threats impacting activities - Lumpy Skin, FMD and Veroa Mite.
   - QLD DAF – Biosecurity issues also impacting department activities with resources being redirected to managing these threats. CottonInfo YouTube channel is becoming very successful: increasing content/views.
   - CCA – Strong engagement at the Cotton Conference. Focusing on membership growth from students and young career agronomists, business & professional development.
   - AACS – The 2023 AACS conference will be held on 5-7 Sept 2023, planning well underway.

2. **Strategic Discussion:**
   - Surround Australia re industry data:
     - Industry data and digital strategy being developed to guide industry participants
     - Single point data entry, automated data collection, standardized data collection.
     - Data ownership and commercial in confidence data.
     - Broad industry data gathering can lead to better decision making but the focus needs to be on quality, meaningful data not quantity. Understanding the data and the context in which it is used. Identifying what industry wants from the data.
     - Successful AI still requires quality meaningful data to enable benefit from machine learning and AI.

Further Cotton Innovation Network information is available at: www.crdc.com.au/cotton-innovation-network.