



# MURRAY CONNOR

*Australian Food  
& Fibre Moree, NSW*



Murray Connor's involvement in the cotton industry began a decade ago, starting with Australian Food & Fibre (AFF) in 2008 as a casual irrigator, whilst completing a double degree in Agriculture and Business at the University of New England. This was his first exposure to the cotton industry and he became intrigued with every aspect of cotton production, coming back every university break to help with ground preparation, planting, irrigation and harvesting.

Joining AFF fulltime after graduating in 2010, Murray became their first trainee manager under the guidance and tutorage of company CEO, Joe Robinson and has since been exposed to a wide range of challenges in several different valleys and climates. He has progressed his career with AFF and now manages a 2,000 hectare irrigation farm west of Moree, as well as the AFF broadacre portfolio consisting of more than 20,000 hectares across seven properties around the Moree district.

During his time in the industry, Murray has developed a deep passion for agriculture. In particular engaging the next generation and playing an integral role in setting up a trainee management pathway for AFF to bring through the next generation of farm managers. He has become a leader in strategic farm management, achieving high levels of production and efficiencies. He has a proven ability to manage and inspire staff and peers to drive continual development and improvement, and to adapt to change in an ever-evolving industry.

Murray is a big picture thinker with his eye firmly on the future. He's clear about what the challenges and opportunities are and has a strategic vision for addressing these.



'To me the cotton industry is an incredibly engaging and progressive industry that I feel extremely privileged to be a part of,' Murray said. 'The part about the industry that most excites me is the AgTech world, precision agronomy and digital ag. It's moving so fast and it's something I am really interested in and have really taken on.'

Heavily involved in the Gwydir Valley Cotton Grower Association (CGA), Murray explains that this has enabled him to develop a greater understanding of the industry and all of the issues at the forefront of it.



'I think in the face of the adversity suffered in the last year, particularly in recent months with water issues, it's been the ability of the industry to come together and work as a collaborative voice and provide the facts and figures to show people what we really do that has been so inspiring,' said Murray.

'Our collective commitment and engagement to helping change and improve public perception and increase our social licence to operate is a really important element of what we're doing now and into the future.'

Murray recently undertook the Australian Cotton Leaders course and the Rabobank Executive Development Program, both of which further fuelled his interest in agronomical resistance, public perception and social license.

Last year he was also awarded the 2018 Gwydir Valley Young Achiever award by his local CGA.

In 2014 Murray joined the Gwydir Valley CGA committee and became the Cotton Australia Grower Representative for the Gwydir Valley. Through this he explained, 'I developed a greater network with growers in the local area and was able to learn about any research gaps that existed from a perspective outside of the company I was working for.'

'The Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) research forums have allowed me to form a greater network across the industry.'

I have been able to derive a great deal of satisfaction from being able to deliver and promote research priorities on behalf of the cotton industry in the Gwydir Valley.'

In 2017, Murray became Chair of the Gwydir Valley CGA and has been working towards creating a CGA that provides value to growers through greater means of communication. He has established several social media accounts and is currently in the process of developing an up-to-date valley website after securing funding and sponsorship.

Through working with the Young Aggies Group, Murray is hoping to encourage a greater level of engagement from the younger generation that are starting to return to agriculture, or to family farms in the valley.

Murray is a young man carving out an impressive and influential future in the Australian cotton industry. This, coupled with his industry involvement, commitment to innovation and the desire to implement positive change were the reasons Murray was selected as the Gwydir Valley Young Achiever of the Year for 2018.

