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Australian cotton industry supports project to protect biodiversity in Australia's cotton landscapes

Cotton Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) are supporting a partnership between iconic Australian brands Country Road and Landcare Australia to improve biodiversity on cotton farms in the Namoi Valley of NSW.

Funded by a corporate contribution and funds raised via the sale of its famous Verified Australian Cotton Heritage Sweats, Country Road will contribute a minimum \$600,000 to the partnership over three years, with funds raised going to Landcare Australia to support biodiversity restoration projects.

Landcare Australia CEO, Dr Shane Norrish, says "Landcare Australia is very proud to launch this partnership with Country Road and the Australian cotton industry to develop projects focused on biodiversity conservation with cotton farmers. The projects will help to restore local ecosystems and contribute to the sustainable management and productivity of the landscape.

"The partnership is a powerful example of how Landcare Australia brings together organisations to work on projects that will have a meaningful impact for farmers, the environment and the local community. We are very pleased to be working with Country Road, the Australian cotton industry and cotton growers on biodiversity projects that will protect habitat for a range of native plants and animals, including threatened species."

The partnership will draw on a Cotton Research and Development (CRDC) report that mapped biodiversity in Australian cotton landscapes, identified threatened and endangered species and recommended ways to protect them. This was achieved with support from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program Smart Farming Partnership Initiative Round 1.

The initial project will be implemented by the Kahl family in the Namoi Valley, NSW - a region significantly affected by biodiversity loss and in need of restoration. Third generation cotton farmers, the Kahl family will participate in the program by revegetating a river system that flows through their property and excluding stock to increase habitat and shelter for native animals, reduce erosion and improve water quality.

Farmers in the area will be engaged in future rounds of funding, and all farmers and industry representatives can actively help by purchasing a Country Road Verified Australian Cotton Heritage Sweat online.

According to Cotton Australia, biodiversity is an important area of sustainability work for the industry and will be a focus in coming years following the release of industry wide sustainability targets.



“This is an incredibly exciting opportunity and the first time a corporate partner has come on board to directly support our biodiversity work on farm. We hope the funds from Country Road, and the support of Landcare Australia will help further engage our growers in biodiversity activities,” Cotton Australia CEO, Adam Kay said.

“We know from the research that our farms provide critical habitat for Australia’s native plants and animals, and when managed well these areas also bring benefits to the farm by providing natural pest control, improving soil health and storing and sequestering carbon.

The Australian cotton industry is also adding to the launch project in other ways.

“This includes a five-hectare research trial by the University of New England to investigate which revegetation methods have the greatest survival rates on floodplain soils as well as the initial biodiversity mapping work which helps identify target areas for biodiversity enhancement works,” CRDC natural resource R&D Manager, Ms Stacey Vogel said.

“Cotton industry research shows that while there have been some great steps forward, more needs to be done to protect and improve biodiversity on cotton farms and adjacent landscapes.

“We hope this partnership with Landcare Australia and Country Road will help focus industry efforts, accelerate our biodiversity work and provide a lasting legacy for our farmers, their communities and the natural environment,” she said.

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Learn about the project at www.countryroad.com.au/editorials-the-biodiversity-project/ and www.countryroad.com.au/our-world/land/the-biodiversity-project-with-landcare-australia/.

Purchase a Country Road Verified Australian Cotton Heritage Sweat online: [womens](#), [mens](#), [childrens](#).

Cotton Australia is the peak body for Australia’s cotton growers.
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