

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

**Submission to the independent review of South Australia's moratorium on the cultivation of Genetically Modified (GM) food crops**

Cotton Australia is the key representative body for Australia's cotton growing industry and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of cotton growers on this issue.

The cotton industry is an integral part of the Australian economy, worth more than \$2 billion per-annum in export earnings and helping to underpin more than 50 rural communities.

The cotton industry has been growing GM crops since 1996 with over 99% of the industry growing crops containing insecticidal and herbicide tolerant traits. The introduction of GM crops has had significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the cotton industry. The success of GM cotton crops in Australia is underpinned by a strong independent regulatory framework and an industry commitment toward effective stewardship of the technology.

Australian cotton farmers using GM cotton varieties have seen significant economic gains with an average increase in farm income between 1996 – 2015 valued at \$287 per hectare from insecticidal resistant traits and \$37 per hectare for herbicidal tolerant traits (Brooks, 2016).

These economic gains are attributable to large savings in insecticide products and associated application costs. Genetically Modified traits have enabled cotton growers to reduce insecticide use by 93% since 1997. During this period average farm yields have increased by 38%.

The Australian cotton industry has had a recent and rapid expansion into southern NSW and parts of Victoria in the Murrumbidgee and Murray Valley regions. The introduction of GM traits, improved breeding and associated yield increases has driven this expansion. The area of cotton planted in the Murrumbidgee and Murray Valley regions has increased to over 70,000 hectares in 2017, from approximately 3000 hectares in 2010.

A 2014 Cotton Research and Development Corporation and Cotton Seed Distributors commissioned report identified the potential for cotton to be grown in some regions of South Australia. Cotton Australia has received enquiries from farmers within South Australia interested in the potential of GM cotton, however have noted the current bans on genetically modified crops are an impediment to the establishment of cotton within the state.

Cotton Australia welcomes this review to ensure policies for the state's agriculture sector are based on best available evidence and provide farmers in SA with choice and opportunity to benefit from the latest science.



*Advancing Australian Cotton*

Cotton Australia would welcome an opportunity to provide further information on our position on the review into South Australia's moratorium on GM food crops or any further information on cotton production in general. For more information, contact Sally Ceeney, Research Direction and Stewardship Policy Officer on 0459 189 771 or [sallyc@cotton.org.au](mailto:sallyc@cotton.org.au).

Yours sincerely,

Sally Ceeney  
Research Direction and Stewardship Policy Officer  
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**References:**

Brookes G (2016) Adoption and Impact of GM Crops in Australia: 20 years' experience.

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