



## COTTON LEADS™ FURTHER INFORMATION

### What is Cotton LEADS™?

Cotton LEADS™ is a commitment to the supply and use of responsibly-produced cotton through national and international efforts. It is a partnership between the Australian and US cotton industries.

Cotton LEADS™ is founded by an alliance of industry organisations in Australia and the United States of America. The program is based on a commitment to core principles and national-level capabilities to effect change and continual improvement in cotton production.

A committee, consisting of three members from Australia, three members from the United States, and two members from partnering industry organisations, oversees the activities and use of funds for the Cotton LEADS™ program.

### What are the principles of Cotton LEADS™?

Cotton LEADS™ is open to producing countries that meet five core principles:

1. **COMMITMENT** to the social, environmental, economic and regulatory factors required to produce world-class cotton.
2. **RECOGNITION** that sustainable and responsible cotton production requires continual improvement, investment, R&D and the sharing of best practices information among growers and industry.
3. **UNDERSTANDING** that leading change in responsible and sustainable cotton practices will have the most positive impact when implemented in collaboration among farm, regional, national and international programs.
4. **BELIEF** in the benefit of working cooperatively with similar programs that seek to advance responsible and sustainable cotton production in an effort to keep global cotton competitive in world fibre markets.
5. **CONFIDENCE** in a cotton identification system that ensures traceability from farm to manufacturer.

### The Cotton LEADS™ Commitment to Cotton

We, the signatories and founding members of the Cotton LEADS™ program, recognise the need to advance the supply and use of responsibly-produced cotton through national and international efforts. We commit to the five core principles of Cotton LEADS™ as the foundation for an effective program that fosters the ability of supply chain entities to meet the world's demand for responsibly-produced cotton.

*(Commitment signed by Cotton Australia and Cotton Incorporated)*

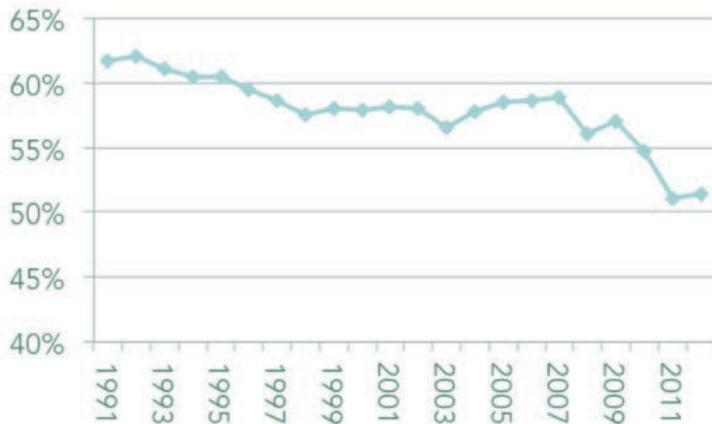
### Who's involved?

The Founding Industry Organisations for Cotton LEADS™ are:

- Cotton Australia (Australia)
- Cotton Research and Development Corporation (Australia)
- Australian Cotton Shippers Association (Australia)
- National Cotton Council (USA)
- Cotton Council International (USA)
- Cotton Incorporated (USA)

## Why is the Australian Cotton industry involved?

1. Synthetics continue to take an increasing share of the world fibre market.



*Cotton's Share of World Staple Fibre (Source: Cotton Incorporated)*

In 2012/13, global cotton demand averaged approximately 5.5 Million Bales BELOW expectations based on price and economic conditions – this is largely unexplained. Could it be partly due to sustainability perceptions relating to cotton?

2. The world is increasingly demanding fibres produced responsibly and sustainably.

Brand owners and corporate retailers with ambitious Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) targets are increasingly demanding that products are produced with high environmental and social standards, right through the supply chain. This trend has been driven by consumers and interest groups with a multitude of sustainability standards and measures.

Cotton LEADS™ offers the global supply chain a solution to increase supply of responsibly-produced cottons by including those produced by countries that demonstrate responsible production practices.

3. We can leverage over 20 years of continuously measured and improved social, workplace and environmental credentials.

The Australian cotton industry has a terrific story to tell. For over 20 years, a collaboration between researchers and growers has measured and continuously improved our environmental performance. We are understandably proud of these efforts and believe that they deserve to be recognised by the global fibre market. Cotton LEADS™ provides a unique opportunity to tell our story and position Australian cotton to meet the world's demand for responsibly-produced cotton.

## Can other cotton producing countries join?

Yes, however cottons currently in the program are produced in Australia and the United States of America. Cotton LEADS™ represents a commitment to cotton that is leading the way in responsible production practices. Part of that leadership is a commitment among Cotton LEADS™ partners to share information and best practices that can contribute to an overall improvement in the global conditions for producing cotton. Cotton LEADS™ is committed to working with national and international organisations that have similar principles and objectives.

## How will Cotton LEADS™ create opportunities for Australian cotton?

1. Educate global markets about Australia's strengths in responsible cotton production.
2. Promote natural fibres over synthetics to shore up global demand for cotton.
3. Maintain a positive future for Australia's market access.
4. Work with and draw on the expertise and resources of the US cotton industry to tell the story of Australian cotton to a global market that's looking to meet ambitious corporate social responsibility (CSR) targets.

## When does it start?

The program launched on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013, with a joint program of media activities coordinated by Cotton Australia and Cotton Incorporated in the US.

## Which cottons are included under Cotton LEADS™?

Cotton LEADS™ includes all types of cotton grown in the USA and Australia. It includes upland and pima varieties and cotton grown under practices such as organic, conventional and myBMP systems.

## How does myBMP fit into Cotton LEADS™?

All cotton grown in the USA and Australia is included in the Cotton LEADS™ program. myBMP is the industry's flagship environmental program and is the main vehicle for transferring research and development into tools for growers to achieve best practice and maximise efficiency on the farm. All growers are strongly urged to participate to help Australia maintain, document and demonstrate its positive environmental track record.

## How will Cotton LEADS™ actually work?

The Cotton LEADS™ program will be promoted to the global marketplace by Cotton Incorporated (USA) and Cotton Australia (Australia). A full strategy is being developed to include meetings and briefings with global brand owners, displays at international trade fairs and international speaking engagements. The aim is to drive demand for cotton produced by the Australian and the US cotton industries. Brands and retailers will sign up to the program, become partners, and start sourcing Cotton LEADS™ cotton through their supply chains.

## What is the Cotton LEADS™ Partners Program?

It is anticipated that some brand owners and retailers will be interested in further supporting responsible cotton production practices by funding individual programs and activities. These could be based anywhere in the world and might include researcher or grower exchanges, information forums, research at field level or specific sustainability programs. The Cotton LEADS™ partners will facilitate the Cotton LEADS™ Partners Program to match sponsorship dollars with sustainability projects around the world.

## Where can I go for more information?

[www.cottonleads.org](http://www.cottonleads.org) (website live on 16 October 2013)

Phone Cotton Australia on (02) 9669 5222

