

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES - 2016 AUSTRALIAN COTTON INDUSTRY AWARDS FINALISTS

Images of the finalists can be downloaded from this link:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/69385640/2016%20Cotton%20Industry%20Awards%20finalists.zip>

Monsanto Grower of the Year *and* AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year

- *Waterloo* – Andrew and Clare Gill (Narromine, NSW)
- *Tiralee* - Tim and Roger Commins (Whitton, NSW)
- *Grassdale* – Matthew Wayne (Dalby, Qld)
- *Bruan Park* – Scott Morgan (Gunnedah, NSW)
- *Connamara* – Ian and Marilyn Carter (Pine Ridge, NSW)
- *Breza Farming* - Brett and Liza Crothers (Dalby, Qld)

Waterloo

Waterloo Partnership

Andrew and Clare Gill and Family

Narromine, NSW

Andrew and Clare, along with Andrew's two brothers manage a highly effective family farm of 8,500ha south-west of Narromine, NSW. Using a strict one in, one out rotation with wheat or barley the Partnership usually grows 350ha of irrigated cotton and 320ha of dryland cotton most years. The operation uses a double skip on a 4m furrow semi-irrigated system to allow for greater control of irrigation water on the cracking black clay soils of the farm. Andrew has invested heavily in designing and installing a solar-diesel hybrid bore, one of the first of its kind in the world, which has decreased pumping costs by up to 40%, with an anticipated 3.5-year payback period.

Tiralee

Commins Enterprises

Tim and Roger Commins

Whitton, NSW

Tim and Roger Commins manage a multi-enterprise operation near Whitton in the Southern Valleys of NSW. They and their 24 staff manage a 350-hectare hardwood eucalyptus plantation, a wine tank and storage facility, hydroponic seedless mandarin plantation (in partnership) and an ethanol plant, along with 1500ha of irrigated cotton, 160ha of faba and 200ha of wheat. Highly innovative growers, they are currently converting their farms from siphons to bankless channels in order to automate much of their irrigation, minimising labour needs and creating machinery efficiencies. Relying on a winter cereals and faba rotation and reducing the amount of back-to-back cotton helps to maximise their cotton yields and provide for a long term production system.

Grassdale

Mort and Co Lotfeeders Pty Ltd

Matthew Wayne

Dalby, Queensland

Primarily a feedlotting company, Mort and Co own two holdings - "Grassdale" and "Pinegrove" - 50kms apart on the Darling Downs in Queensland. The 3224ha enterprise varies greatly in its soil types, water availability, cropping infrastructure and even weather conditions, thus requiring an adaptive and highly tailored management style. Matthew has full responsibility for the farming operations, assisted by a staff of four plus contractors and consultants. The operation includes 500ha of flood irrigation, 216ha of overhead sprinkler irrigation and 2500ha of dryland farming.

Bruan Park
Scott Morgan
Gunnedah, NSW

Scott farms 730ha on the Liverpool Plains near Gunnedah in NSW. Unconstrained by conventional methods of sourcing farm inputs, Scott recently installed 2km of underground mains pipe, which he sourced and imported himself. He created a 70% saving on installation as well as ongoing cost and water savings. Similarly, he offsets half of his farm and domestic energy needs through a 20KW solar system, which will continue to create savings. The majority of his 270ha of irrigated cotton is watered using lateral irrigators linked by a telemetry system incorporating moisture probes and automatic controls. Scott continually seeks water and energy efficiencies on his farm with an ultimate goal of farming energy neutral.

Connamara
Connamara Partnership
Ian and Marilyn Carter
Pine Ridge, NSW

Ian and Marilyn farm a 2500ha dryland operation, "Connamarra", on the fertile black soils of the Liverpool Plains. Their 'lean and mean' management style means they highly scrutinise all nitrogen and pest control inputs in an effort to maximise profitability of the operation. Using a combination of a four-year cotton rotation, no till farming, 1.5m beds and the innovative use of water injection, Ian can conserve soil moisture and drive yield outcomes through the erratic seasonal conditions. His 35 years of experience in farming has helped him quickly adapt to the cotton production system that he has been implementing for the last five years. He received this year's Upper Namoi Cotton Grower of the Year Award.

Benalla
Breza Farming
Brett and Liza Crothers
Dalby, Qld

Brett and Liza Crothers and their family farm 1255ha on five holdings on the southern side of Dalby in Queensland. Good quality soils and their effective water distribution system saw the Crothers win the Darling Downs Cotton Grower of the Year Award in 2015. The operation accesses a mix of water sources from the Condamine River and Oakey Creek, along with overland flow and 884 ML of bore water. This fully integrated system provides a level of security of water for their cotton operation, feeding their three laterals, a centre pivot and their furrow irrigation. This allows them to spread their risk and respond rapidly to where the water demand is at any point in time, making the Crothers highly successful cotton growers.

Chris Lehmann Trust Young Achiever of the Year, sponsored by Bayer CropScience

- Rebecca Fing (Goondiwindi, Qld)
- Elle Storrier (Hillston, NSW)
- Benjamin Egan (Warren, NSW)

Rebecca Fing

Cotton Australia Regional Manager

Goondiwindi, Qld

Rebecca Fing's breadth of experience in the cotton industry belies her young age. For more than 14 years she has combined her love of cotton with her love of training. As well as her role as Cotton Australia Regional Manager for the Macintyre Valley, and her positions of leadership in Wincott, she has also helped more than 800 cotton industry staff members to gain formal qualifications in agriculture and business management. She has helped to make the industry more productive by improving attraction and retention of staff and increasing their skills and knowledge levels.

Elle Storrier

Agronomist

Hillston, NSW

Elle has been an Agronomist for 9 years and started her own agronomy consultancy in the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Valleys at the age of 28. Since completing her university degree she has gained experience across four different cotton valleys. Elle has been highly active in Helicoverpa Bt insecticide resistance monitoring programs as part of the egg collection team, which has helped the industry better understand and plan for resistance management.

Benjamin Egan

Cotton Farmer

Warren, NSW

Ben is a sixth generation farmer and currently runs the family operation north of Warren in NSW. "Kiameron" is 6000ha in total with 1100ha of irrigated and 1100ha of dryland cotton. Ben is determined to run an efficient, sustainable and profitable enterprise whilst continuing his industry involvement with the Macquarie CGA, NSW Farmers Association and as a Young Farming Champion mentoring young people interested in agriculture. Ben is a passionate farmer who has demonstrated his ability to inspire and educate others.

Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year

Dr Guy Roth
Roth Rural
Narrabri, NSW

Dr Guy Roth has been a significant contributor to cotton industry research, delivery and education over the past 25 years. He has created a range of platforms that have underpinned significant achievements and developments for the whole cotton industry. His research interests have stretched from irrigation technologies and remote sensing, to integrative research into production, social and environmental aspects of cotton farming systems. He has attracted significant funding to industry research, mentored countless other researchers and managed integral cotton industry organisations over the length of his career.

Dr Paul Grundy
QDAF
Toowoomba, Qld

Dr Paul Grundy has worked in the cotton industry since 1999. Most recently he has been working closely with the growers in the Central Highlands to get an understanding of their production constraints. From this he has undertaken highly relevant and practical research and delivered impactful results. His work has included helping central Queensland growers to change their planting practices, assisting in the commercialisation of an improved pigeon pea variety for refuges, and the assessment of the viability of cotton in the Burdekin region. Paul is renowned for his collaborative nature and ability to communicate effectively, including his highly viewed film “How to change a siphon”.

Associate Professor Bryce Kelly
University of NSW
Kensington, NSW

Associate Professor Bryce Kelly has been undertaking research for the cotton industry since 2006. Bryce has improved the cotton industry’s understanding of groundwater resources to better inform the cotton and CSG industries, government and broader community on the potential impacts of the CSG industry. He has pioneered a new research methodology using a car mounted analyzer to determine aquifer connectivity across areas of Queensland and NSW. With his ability to convey highly complicated concepts he has the respect of our cotton industry and also achieved international acclaim.