

1) Background

Best Management Practices (BMP) was launched in 1997 as a voluntary program. An industry commitment was made to have 100 percent grower adoption of BMP by the 30th June 2001. To achieve this an implementation program was developed through the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) and involved both the former CRC for Sustainable Cotton Production and Cotton Australia.

This program was initiated at the grower association level by cotton CRC Extension Officers and former Cotton Australia Area Managers (now Grower Service Managers). They were responsible for distribution of the manuals, maintaining a record of the recipients and the delivery of training workshops for growers. The workshops were designed to show growers how to understand and use the manual. Growers were invited to an introductory meeting where trainers provided a brief introduction to the development and content of the manual and then stepped them through each section of the manual and presented worked examples to reinforce the whole process. Further meetings and farm visits were conducted when required to help growers complete the manual. These workshops were largely conducted between the 1997/98 and 1998/99 seasons.

Initial implementation of BMP by cotton growers was slow. To increase the implementation rate and to ensure the ongoing commitment of the cotton industry to BMP, it was recognised that a person dedicated to overseeing the implementation program was required. To facilitate this process, the BMP Implementation Co-ordinator position was appointed in January 1999. The main purpose of this position was to co-ordinate and facilitate the implementation and adoption of BMP by cotton growers.

Three key things had to be done:

1. Obtain more resources.
2. Increase the level of awareness and interest in BMP again.
3. Increase the number of growers implementing BMP.