



## Considering raingrown this summer?

**If you're considering your options for a rotational crop this summer, have a full moisture profile and the forecast is promising for more rainfall, raingrown cotton makes good business sense.**

Growers with cotton in their rotations achieve higher returns over the rotation cycle, compared with growers with solely grain-based rotations. And improvements in variety characteristics, performance and technology traits over recent years have simplified the process of growing raingrown cotton - making it a safer, more reliable and consistent performer.

### **The raingrown cotton golden rules (from CottonInfo partner, CSD):**

1. Use an experienced agronomist
2. Know your soil type
3. Plant into standing stubble
4. Have a plan for weeds
5. Plant on a full moisture profile
6. Use an appropriate row configuration and variety combination
7. Establish an even, healthy plant stand
8. Get value out of post-harvest tillage operations
9. Fit cotton into your rotation

**Want to know more?**

For all you need to know on raingrown - from benefits and returns, to marketing, row spacing, and controlling insects and weeds, plus more on the nine golden rules - check out our [Raingrown cotton: the viable alternative](#) booklet.

Cotton industry organisations (including CottonInfo, Cotton Australia, CSD, CRDC, AgriRisk, CCA, CGS and Monsanto) have worked together to produce this guide to raingrown cotton - specifically for you.

## Raingrown cotton: the viable alternative



**GROWING** raingrown cotton has become easier in recent times, due to major improvements in the farming system.

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Did you know? Growers with cotton in their rotations achieve higher returns over the rotation cycle, compared with growers with solely grain-based rotations. And improvements in variety characteristics, performance and technology trials over recent years have simplified the process of growing raingrown cotton - making it a safer, more reliable and consistent performer.

**This summer, consider raingrown cotton for these benefits:**

**Greater returns.** Decisions on what crop to grow are primarily based on commodity price, experience, risks and potential returns. The predictions from cotton marketers for the 2016 cotton season is for \$500 per bale - which, for some growers is a key determinant in considering raingrown cotton as a rotational option. And, as long-term growers know, cotton is the most profitable rotational crop over the long term.

**Less risk.** Major advances in the cropping system over the last decade has reduced the risk and heightened the reward for growers. All raingrown crops are highly dependent on the season, and yields obviously can't be guaranteed in any farming operation, but advances in raingrown cotton mean yields have increased and pests are more manageable with Bolgard 2, therefore production risks are reduced and yields have increased. Now, with Bolgard 3 on the horizon ( slated for commercial release in 2016/17) allowing greater flexibility in planting windows and possibly no need to pupae bust, the risks are lower than ever.

**Cash flow management.** End point loyalty systems are available, meaning major costs, like insect control, are pushed to the end of the season, and you only pay for what you pick.

## Looking over the fence:



### Scott McCalman, grower, Gunnedah:

The main benefits of raingrown are its profitability, its toughness and capacity to forage for stored fallow moisture, and its ability to respond to different management regimes. The biggest challenges are seed quality and breeding varieties capable of handling tough seasonal conditions - like drought and heat stress. I use zero till, controlled traffic, full cereal stubble ground cover and 1.5m super single rows to forage for moisture, and microbial seed dressing and liquid fertiliser to promote large healthy root systems.

### Ryan Pratten, consultant, Narromine:

Raingrown cotton ensures a full winter fallow period, which allows glyphosate, gramoxone and residual herbicides to be used in place of in-crop herbicides that may be developing herbicide resistance. Lack of summer rainfall is a huge risk: managed by only planting raingrown cotton in soil types that can store a significant amount of moisture, which needs to be completed full. Retaining winter crop stubble and minimising compaction is also crucial for water use



efficiency. I recommend double skip row spacing. Having the two rows together is thought to regulate the plant architecture early in the season so that moisture can primarily be used for fruit.



**Drew Penberthy, grower/consultant, Edgeroi/Bellata:**

Raingrown cotton provides better nematode tolerance, benefits from late summer rainfall, is sodic and salt tolerant, and is deeper rooted, so is better placed to take advantage of nitrogen bulges and other nutrients down to 1.5m. The challenges of this crop are a higher cost of production, discounts due to lack of varieties, pupae busting requirements and phenoxy spraydrift - plus a relatively high technology cost compared to irrigated cotton per bale. I'm going with 60 inch rows, either double skip or single skip, depending on rainfall between now and planting.

### For more information?

- Download the [Raingrown cotton: a viable alternative](#) booklet (*if you're an [Australian Grain](#) subscriber, you'll find your hard copy of the booklet in the July-August magazine*).
- Visit the [Dryland Cotton website](#).
- Read the raingrown chapter in the [Australian Cotton Production Manual](#).
- Contact your local [CottonInfo regional development officer](#).
- View the CottonInfo youtube video on [raingrown cotton row spacing](#)

options, featuring CSIRO's Mike Bange.



## Single skip (66% of area planted)



### Row spacing in raingrown cotton



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