

FINREP95

COTTON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

FINAL REPORT

"Operational Costs for Cotton Experiments"

DAN 73C

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NSW Agriculture

A final report prepared for the Cotton Research and Development Corporation

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REPORT SUMMARY

This project was initiated in 1992/93 to ensure that the quality of field research was maintained at the Australian Cotton Research Institute. Reduced budgets and the increasing field costs of experimental cotton was a concern for research staff who had little control over budget allocations. There was increasing potential for the quality of field trials to be jeopardised.

This project required an initial 'seed' grant by CRDC but once initiated only required limited contributions with lint sales being used to offset field costs. In 1994/95, changed treasury regulations altered the financial management of the project, but NSW Agriculture provided short term funds to ensure the effectiveness of the project.

Condensing all operational costs for experimental cotton through this project improved the management of the cotton crop by allowing coordinated applications of insecticide spays, improved irrigation management, rationalisation of experimental area and increasing the number of trials per hectare. More important, coordination of harvest and reduced buffer area improved yields from 3.0 bales/ha to over 5.0 bales/ha. This increase in yield, and accompanying lint sales, significantly reduced the costs of the project.

An important benefit of this project was to reduce the funding competition between the various areas at the station. This resulted in important infrastructure improvements being undertaken during the period including the expansion of the recirculation dam, landforming 12 ha of land previously unsuitable for research and improving the reliability and efficiency of the domestic bore.

This project has supported a wide range of cotton programs based at Narrabri covering all CRDC funded projects during this period. It has ensured that the best management practices are adopted for the experimental areas and that the quality of field research complements the high research standards maintained by the research group.