

Cotton Farms – what do they look like?

Some insight to the make up of cotton growing farms can be drawn from the 2011 cotton grower survey.

A survey of 183 cotton growers, covering 45,410 of dryland and 114,622 ha of irrigated cotton was completed for the Cotton CRC and the Cotton Research & Development Corporation in 2011. The survey looked into features of cotton properties, farming practices in the 2010-11 season and the use of information and research.

While filling out a survey is probably not your favourite thing to do, the information gathered is really valuable for the industry.

It gathers key data to help tell the industry 'story'. It also helps for targeting research and extension efforts.

A cotton grower survey will be repeated in 2013.

Many thanks to the growers who contributed to the 2011 Cotton Grower Survey.

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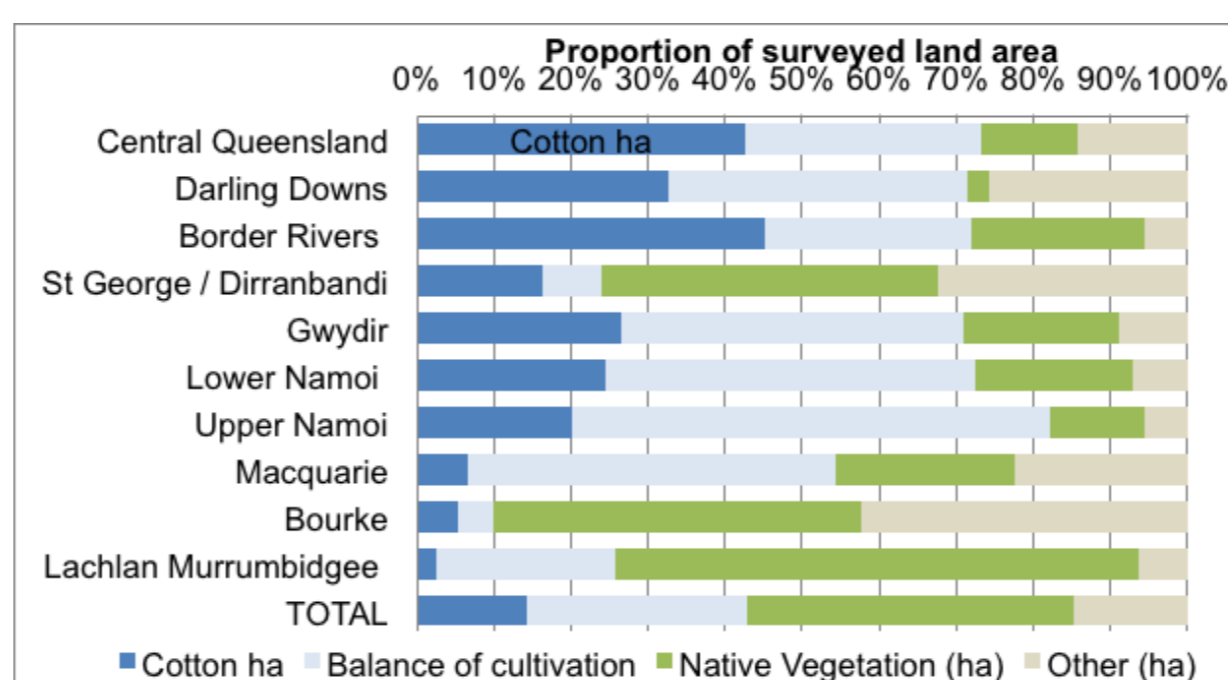
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Farm sizes:

- Range in size from 105 to 93,000 ha in size with an average of 6,130ha
- Irrigated farms grow between 18 and 21,175 ha of irrigated cotton (average 686ha)
- An average of 614 field ha of dryland cotton (high due to a few very large crops – dryland cotton areas ranged between 6 and 12,040 ha).
- Around 40% of total farm area is cultivated (ranging between 1.5 and 100% on individual farms)
- Cotton accounted for approximately 1/3 of the cultivated area in 2010-11

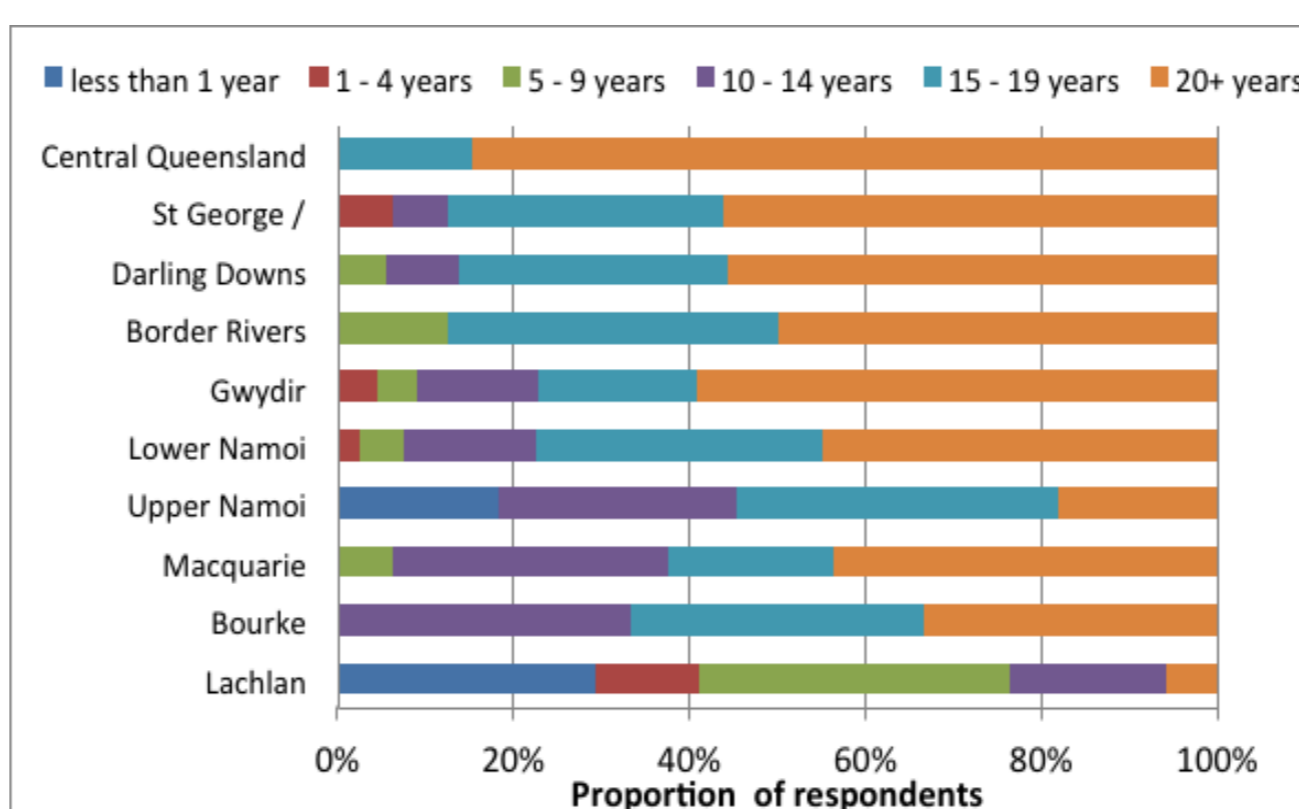
Land use mix on cotton farms



Most growers have years of experience with cotton:

- ¾ have more than 15 years experience in cotton
- 9% o grew cotton for the first time in 2010-11
- Many farms kept growing cotton through the drought - 57% of farms had grown cotton for at least 5 of the past 6 years

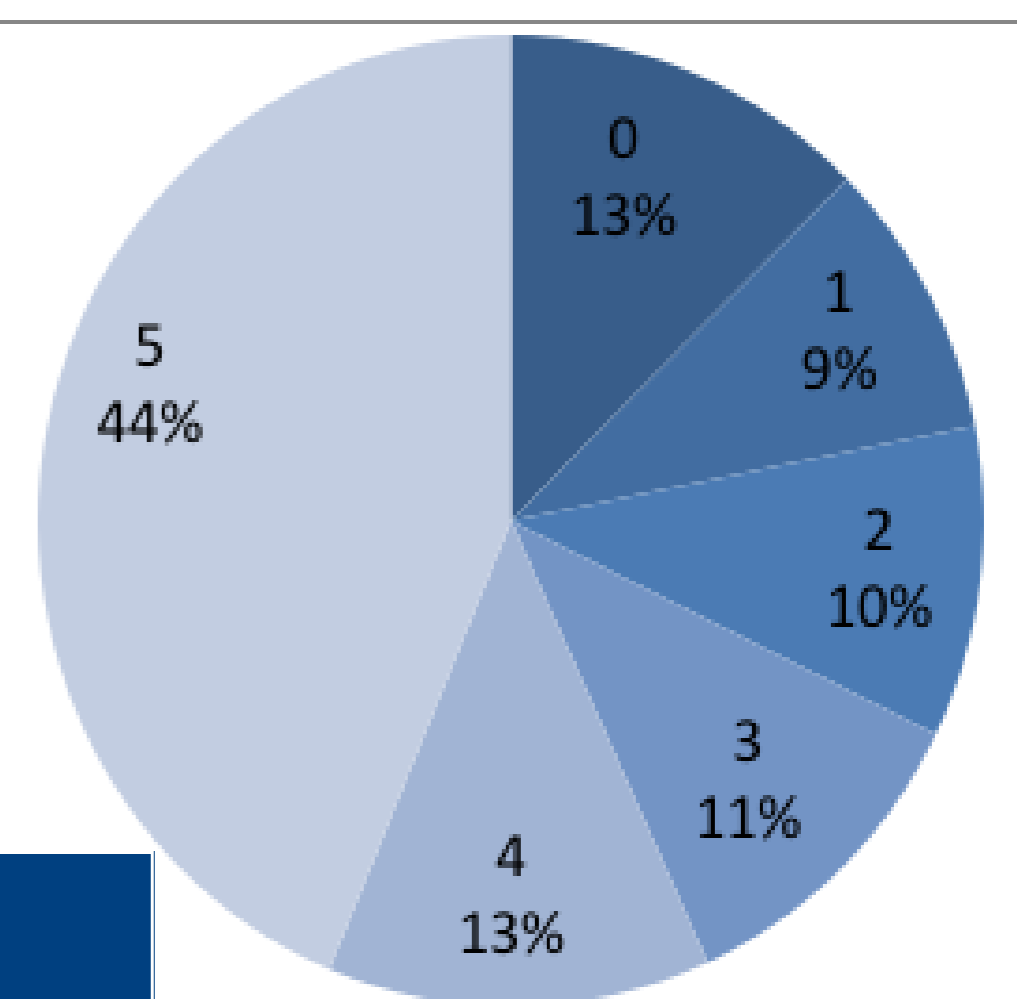
Growers' years of experience in the cotton industry



Environmental stewardship:

- Around 40% of farm area is dedicated to native vegetation on average
- 63 % of farms have a riparian zone ranging between 2 and 15 km in length (on average 7 km)
- 40% of growers are actively managing native vegetation
- 177 growers are collectively managing close to 100,000 ha of native vegetation
- ¾ of growers have more than 15 years experience in cotton
- 9% of growers interviewed grew cotton for the first time in 2010-11
- 57% of farms had grown cotton for at least 5 of the past 6 years

Number of years that cotton had been grown on the farm in the 5 years before 2010-11 (all these farms grew cotton in 2010-11)



2010-11 season	Average yield (Bales / ha)	
	Irrigated	Dryland
Central Queensland	6.1	1.3
Darling Downs	6.7	2.8
Border Rivers	10.1	2.4
St George / Dirranbandi	11.3	-
Gwydir	9.8	2.1
Lower Namoi	10.2	2.2
Upper Namoi	8.8	3.0
Macquarie	9.1	0.8
Bourke	9.9	-
Lachlan Murrumbidgee	0	-

Yields varied greatly, influenced by flooding in several regions, particularly Darling Downs, Central Queensland and Macquarie.

