

## Year 12 Agriculture Cotton Trip 2013

For the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Cotton Trip, Year 12 Agriculture (2013) spent the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of May travelling one of Australia's most popular cotton production area, learning about all aspects of production for growers. We began with an early morning bus trip and headed to the Australian Research Institute at Narrabri. Here we were exposed to the entomology department and discovered the impacts of cotton's biggest pest, *Helicoverpa armigera* (Heliothis) and how best to control it. We gained information on the life cycle and also the genetic modification of cotton which has enabled pesticide usage to be reduced, profit to be increased and technology to be further developed. We began to understand the time and effort put into breeding resistant and better cotton varieties by the team of scientists when we toured the greenhouses. After leaving the Research Institute, we journeyed to Cotton Growers Services, Wee Waa. It was here that we were exposed to the history of the cotton industry and the implications of the Global Food Challenge and the ability of the Cotton Industry to increase yield and quality to help meet this challenge. Our class were also cooked delicious steak sandwiches for lunch! We moved onto Cotton Seed Distributors, also based in Wee Waa and discovered that this organisation is the single remaining seed distributor in Australia that is a non-for profit organisation. CSD is involved in bulking up planting seed and undertaking quality assurance of seed in order to make it available for easy access and planting by growers. Auscott, Narrabri was our next stop. Here we experienced the ginning process of cotton, and were lucky enough to be taken through each step; from when the cotton arrives in modules and round bales (a new improvement for this industry) to when it exits as bales (providing nothing catches on fire!) Our class was hosted wonderfully by the Carrigan family at their cotton farm Milchengowrie, where on Saturday we were granted the opportunity to speak with a local agronomist, Carol Sanson who encouraged us to pursue a career in the agriculture industry and gave us her valued insight into entics and the tricks of the trade, being a woman in agriculture. Our class were surprised to find how trusting the Carrigan's were, as they allowed us to drive tractors (both GPS operated and manually run), pack modules and also drive their expensive cotton picker. We are all grateful for this opportunity as we were exposed to areas that were new to many. Our stay ended with syphon practice, and we were rewarded with cake if we were successful in syphoning water from the Carrigan's pool. This excursion has enabled our agriculture class to have insight into the entire cotton production process and we are extremely grateful to all those that were involved and made it possible especially the Carrigans for being wonderful hosts and Bron (our fantastic teacher) who has run this trip for 10 years straight now. This practical understanding will greatly benefit us this year in our studies.

Thank you so much to Wincott, particularly Georgie Carrigan and KIAG Pastoral Company at Boggabri and Kate Groves ( Young Future Cotton Leader ) , and CRDC for their financial support with our tour and the encouragement we get from all facets of the Cotton Industry. Also it was fantastic to have Sophie Davidson – the education officer from Cotton Australia accompany us.

Once again a huge thankyou...

Year 12 Agriculture 2013 (written by Hannah Kermode and Lucy Suttor)

## **Agriculture – Year 12**

### **HSC Cotton Excursion**

In May of this year, year 12 Agriculture Molly, Ellie, Kylie & Laura, spent two day learning about cotton as their focus product for the HSC. The two days were sponsored by Cotton Australia, WINCOTT & CRDC. The two days involved a trip to Narrabri & Wee Waa to visit the services needed to produce and prepare cotton. We visited the

- *Australian Cotton Research Institute* and learned about the Integrated Pest Management, how to select traits
- *Cotton Seed Distributors* and learned about how cotton seeds are prepared, packed and what happens to the waste materials. We learned that at nearly every stage waste products are recycled.
- *Cotton Grower Services* and learned about how Agronomists play a vital part in the growth and protection on cotton & farms.
- *AUSCOTT* we learned about how the cotton fibres are separated from the seed and plant material.

On the second day we visited [Milchengowrie Homestead](#) and the Carrigan family showed us how to and let us participate in the harvesting of cotton, making a cotton module and siphoning water for irrigation. We also learnt about the beneficial bugs and pest that call the cotton plant home, as well as about the black soils from Ms C Sanson from DPI/CGS. The excursion and field trip was very educational and fun, with the farm trip the most fun.

A BIG THANKYOU to Sophie & Sandy from Cotton Australia and Georgie plus the Carrigan Family (KIAG pastoral company), for a wonderful experience.

### **Product Study Talk**

Sandy from Cotton Australia & Erin from AgVantage came to the year 12 HSC Agriculture class to give a talk on “field to consumer”. It covered topics such as cotton farm as a business, decision making process, marketing, value added cotton products. It was also a hands on talk, with students being able to see and feel what each stage of the cotton process actually takes. The girls asked lots of questions and enjoyed the fact they had someone to talk about the cotton process, as this is part of their “HSC product study assessment”.

Kate Mathieson



## Cattle Judging

This year 20 agriculture students from year 9-12 Agriculture participated in the junior cattle judging competition at *Gunnedah Show*. It involved judging the cattle, then if chosen to talk about why they gave they marks to that cattle. This year Kylie Crowley, Amy Moore, Brandi Megson and Jye Hicks all placed in the competition.

All students enjoyed the day so much that they participated again in Tamworth at the *Landmark* junior cattle judging competition in September.



## Youth in Cotton Camp- Moree

By Brandi Megson

RYAG- Youth in Cotton is a four day camp held in Moree, NSW.

The aim of the camp is to give yr 10 and 11 students and insight into the world of cotton production and the careers it can offer. It is also a way for future generations to become involved in the cotton industry



A combination of lectures and in the field demonstrations helped us to better understand the complexities and joys of working in the cotton industries. This included talks with people like Trudy Staines (Trudy has done just about everything you can do in the cotton industry), she taught us about field to fabric, the critters involved and we even received a demonstration of a mini cotton gin. This piece of machinery was made even more mind blowing when we visited the real, much larger version at Auscott. This one definitely didn't fit onto one table.

The trips around the Moree area really helped put what we had learnt in the lectures into real life context. Some of the topics learnt about were bugs, nutrients, moisture probes, water allocations, safety and marketing. There was also a farm tour of one of Auscotts properties and a spray demo; in regards to planes and spray rigs e.g spot sprayers.

However, it wasn't all just work. There were 13 students in total and we all managed to get along really well and have a great time while we were at it. Being the only kid who wasn't off a property I may have been freaking out just a bit at first however, everyone was great, especially when it came to me asking questions that may have seemed really stupid to them. This trip really helped increase my knowledge and my interest in Agriculture.

The wealth of information that we received in those four short days has opened up my eyes to the many areas of not just the cotton industry but also many of the other industries within Agriculture. One of the greatest things that I found on this trip was the amount of people that are dedicated to their jobs and how willing they were to teach the possible next generation. This trip proved to be an opportunity of a lifetime and I am definitely glad that I went. I would like to say thank-you to the Gunnedah West Rotary for sponsoring me and for helping get me there and to Moree Rotary for organising and running the camp and to the sponsors for helping make the camp possible.

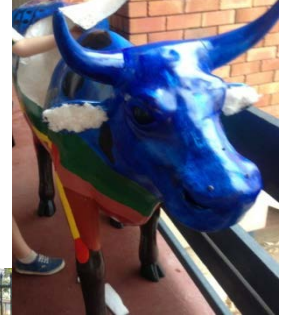


## ART4AG

2012 was our first year of participating in the Art4AG program, thanks to the support from the *Namoi Cotton Growers Association* and *Carroll Cotton Gin*.

The team comprised of then year9 students Cara Gold, Aleasha Wilson, Emily Stengent, Sophie Sutter, Courtney Borger and Clare Abra & art teacher Ms Emma Thompson. In November with the help of Mrs Kath Day-McGuirk we travelled to the presentations at Sydney Olympic Park. The Archibulls at the presentation were amazing, we were lucky enough to obtain an "award of excellence" for our video "Cotton and I Grow it" <http://youtu.be/Qg8KXvskVUE>. A highlight of the trip was meeting Glen McGraths wife and visiting Sydney's CBD.

Millabarry is currently at the Gunnedah Civic centre and then to the council, if you're interested please have a look at the fantastic job done.



### Talking to our sponsor

On Tuesday the 11th June 2013, six of us (Cara, Aleasha, Clare, Sophie, Courtney and Emily) attended the Namoi Cotton Growers Association meeting to present what we accomplished last year through the project.

The project allowed us to gain a greater understanding of both the cotton industry as a whole and ourselves.

It taught us a variety of skills from; team work, leadership, time management, writing styles, use of blogs, and other multimedia forms, along with an appreciation of art.

Before this competition there was no way I was going to present to a room full of strangers about cotton, now I have the confidence to that and much more.

Cara Gold

In 2013 we were lucky enough to participate again in the ART4AG competition, with thanks to the support from *Cotton Australia*. This year the team co-ordinators comprise of year 11 Brandi Megson and Natasha Fench, Yr10 Cara Gold & Courtney Borger and Year 9 Janika Readett and David Looker. Again we are

1. Developing a Blog that looks at how we clothe and feed our community with creative and impressive posts from year 9 -12 agriculture students. To see what we have done please go to <http://ghsarchi.tumblr.com/>. We are also
2. Creating a video with the focus on "Cotton in Fashion", which will incorporate a fashion show inspired by "cotton" from field to fabric,
3. Designing and creating an Archibull, whose theme this year is "Cotton in our global community". The Archibull this year was named Kapas, which is Indian for Cotton, see the blog for more information and hijinks from Kapas as she visits the Ag plot and various classrooms.

To see how we go this year and for more information please visit the blog.



Kate Mathieson Agriculture teacher

