

## **Best Management Practices (BMP) A Grower's Perspective**

Ian Hayllor – Cotton Grower Dalby, QLD

### **The Challenge:**

- To secure our future

### **How:**

- Education.
- BMP Adoption.
- BMP Accreditation.
- A Proven Track Record.
- Community & Government Support.

For our industry to have a more secure future, free of further restrictive government legislation, we need to have all growers operating their farms at a high management standard. Educating growers, staff, consultants, ground-rig operators and aerial spraying contractors is the obvious way forward. BMP adoption with its accreditation process will, I believe help bring all growers up to a level of management that is demanded by our communities and government. A proven track record of improvement in all aspects of cotton production is what we are seeking.

### **Growers are not Rushing to be BMP Accredited, Why?**

- Not fully understanding the process.
- The Cost of the Audit.
- Too much paper work now.
- Growers wanting to be all ranking No. 1 before the audit.
- Growers don't like audits.
- Cannot see the advantage in being audited.
- I don't need an auditor to tell me how to run my farm.
- Can BMP deliver?
- Once we start will the process get harder and more complicated?
- Manual not user Friendly.

Growers are putting forward many reasons why they are not, at this stage, getting involved in the BMP accreditation process. The cost of the audit is often used as a

reason, but realistically, \$750 per audit would have to be one of the smallest investments a grower could make to secure his and the industries future. More education will hopefully encourage growers to adopt BMP and participate in the audit program.

### **How do we Encourage Growers to become BMP Accredited?**

- Education.
- Reduce Audit Cost.
- Government Rebate.
- Cheaper Insurance.
- Cheaper Interest Rates.
- Premium Price for Cotton.
- Cheaper Ginning.
- Increase Cotton Australia Levy to Pay Audit.
- Increase Research Levy to Pay Audit.
- Chemical Label Requirement.
- Chemical Company Rebate.
- Form Local IPM, BMP Management Groups.
- Visits to BMP Accredited Farms.
- Understand the Value of Accurate Record Keeping & Farm Management Plans. Eg: Tail Water Management Plan.

Once involved, growers will see the benefits gained from being involved in the BMP accreditation process. To encourage the more reluctant growers to participate in BMP, we may need to offer incentives. There are many different ways that we can do this. The most exciting possibility would have to be a greater demand for our cotton on the world market because it's produced in the most sustainable possible manner on accredited cotton farms.

Chemical companies should also see the advantage of having accredited farmers use their products in a most responsible way, reducing the risk of resistance or their products being identified in sensitive areas.

Visiting BMP accredited farms and seeing first-hand how the farmer has managed the many complex issues to the satisfaction of the auditor would be a very educational process.

### **Reliability of the Audit Process.**

- If a BMP Farmer Fails, Will the Package Fail?
- Is an Auditor able to Verify Growers Records and Adherence to BMP Standards in the Field?

- Should we Work Towards ISO14001 as a Truly Independent Audit Process?

Credibility is one of the more important parts of the whole BMP process and will have greater importance when the more reluctant growers go through the audit program. A major part of the audit process is based on record keeping. Some growers could record incorrectly; having detailed farm inspections and being able to check weather records against computerised weather stations should help with this problem. Neighbours may be reluctant to report on a neighbour who is not operation within BMP guidelines and causing a certain amount of tension within the community. The auditor really needs to hear about these problems. This is a very difficult issue to handle and will need to be debated further.

#### **The Benefits BMP Adoption has had to our Farm Management.**

- Improved Occupational Health & Safety.
- An Increased Understanding in the Need for more Accurate Farm Records.
- Improved Understanding of the Roles & Responsibilities for Myself, Staff, Consultant and Contractors.
- See the need for Management Plans. Eg: Tail water Management Plans.
- Brought Forward the "One Day" jobs. Eg: Fully Bunded Chemical Storage Shed.
- More Certain Future for My Farming Operation.
- Better Relationship with my Neighbours.
- More Care & Consideration when Planning our Cotton Growing Areas.
- Feel Qualified to Encourage other Growers to go through the Audit Process.

**Having been through the Audit Process, I can honestly say it has helped me improve the standard of management on my farm. We now operate in a more efficient environment with management plans in place to minimise the risk of causing problems for myself or the Cotton Industry.**

**I encourage every grower to adopt BMP and go through the Audit process!**

