

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared as a cotton management tool for the cotton growers and their consultants in the Darling Downs Cotton Management Group.

This report summarises the data collected in this group for the 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 seasons. The first part of the report presents the information in bar graphs showing the average results for each season. The second part of the report presents the information in scatter graphs which shows the range and variability of each field's results.

The Report's information has been collected from 162 dryland and 169 irrigated fields over the last three seasons. All of the fields are located around Dalby based on the cotton growing areas of Jimbour, Macalister and Warra north of Dalby, and Nandi and Kupunn to the south-west.

In the last three years there has been a change in the attitude of growers in the group towards the adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This has been driven by the increased availability of IPM tools such as the newer Ingard varieties and softer chemical options. The group has also participated in this benchmarking report and workshops which have shown the economic benefits of IPM. They have also shared experiences of other growers and consultants on how they have managed their crops and what has been successful.

FARMBIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writers acknowledge the funding provided to this project over the last three years under the Farmer Group Training provisions of *Farmbis*.

METHODOLOGY

All data has been collected from the participating growers and their cotton crop consultants in the Cotton Management groups during the three seasons. The information has then been entered into the *Cotbench* computer program for comparison and reporting.

To eliminate the variations in chemical prices between chemical suppliers and cash and account prices, the prices of all inputs have been standardised using an average of the selling prices of various chemical outlets. The prices used for operations, including spray applications and cultivations, are a percentage of available contractor's rates.

By standardising all of the above costs we have put the emphasis of this report on production management, rather than attitudes to marketing or hail risk or the purchasing price of inputs. Therefore the gross margin figures do not reflect the actual financial performance of grower's fields but are a measure which allow grower's field performance to be measured against others in the district.