



Cotton in the Southern Murray–Darling Basin

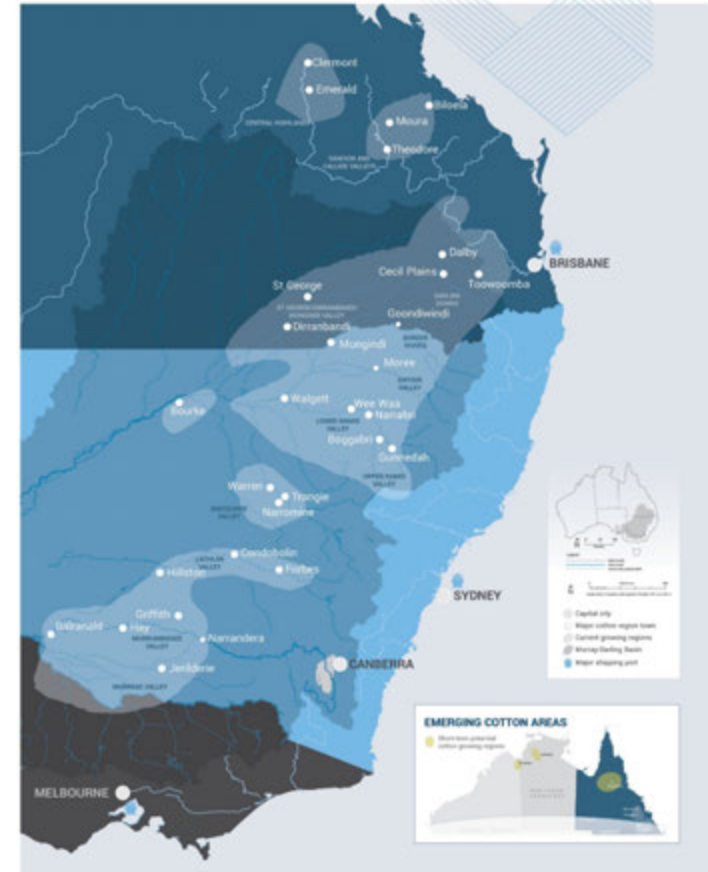
MDBA River Reflections Conference

Michael Murray
General Manager
Cotton Australia

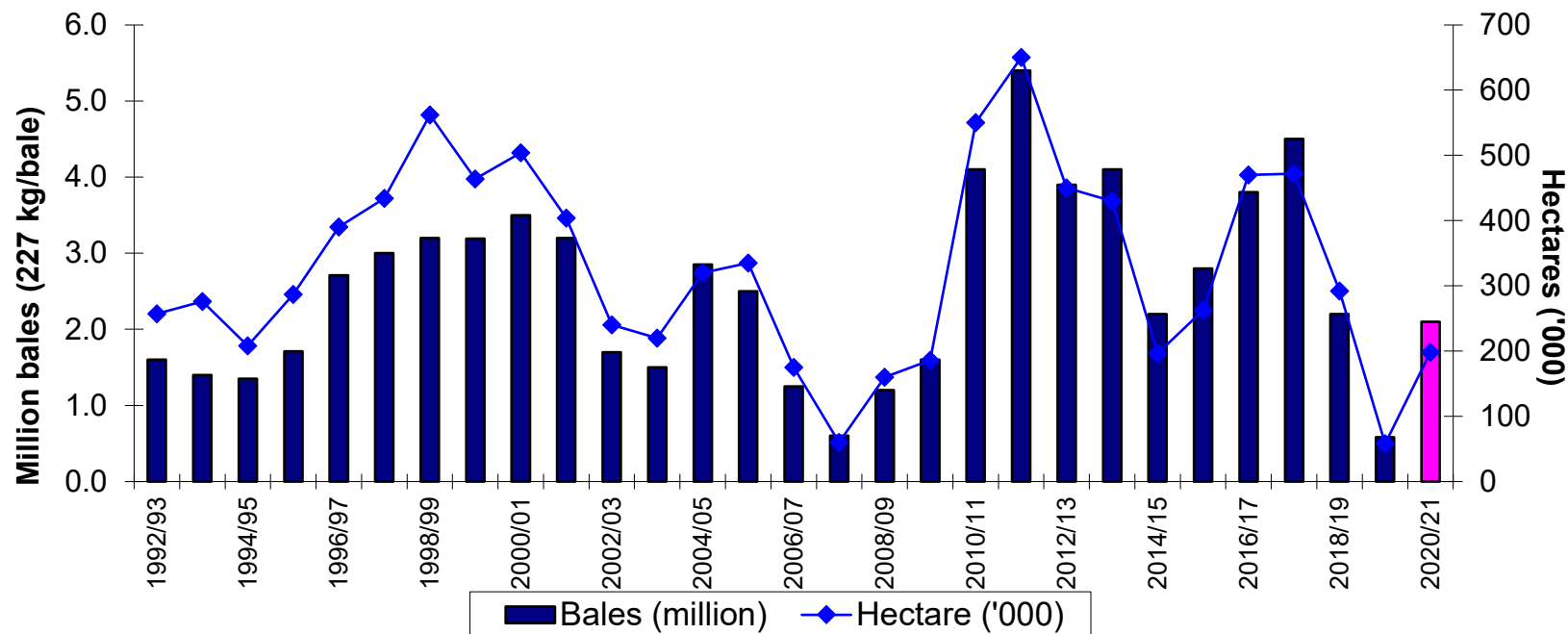
Industry overview

- Cotton is grown in more than 150 regional communities across New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and now the Northern Territory.
- Up to 1,500 farms grow cotton across Australia and 90% are family-owned farms, producing about 80% of the crop.
- About 66% of the country's cotton is grown in New South Wales and about 33% is grown in Queensland.

COTTON GROWING REGIONS



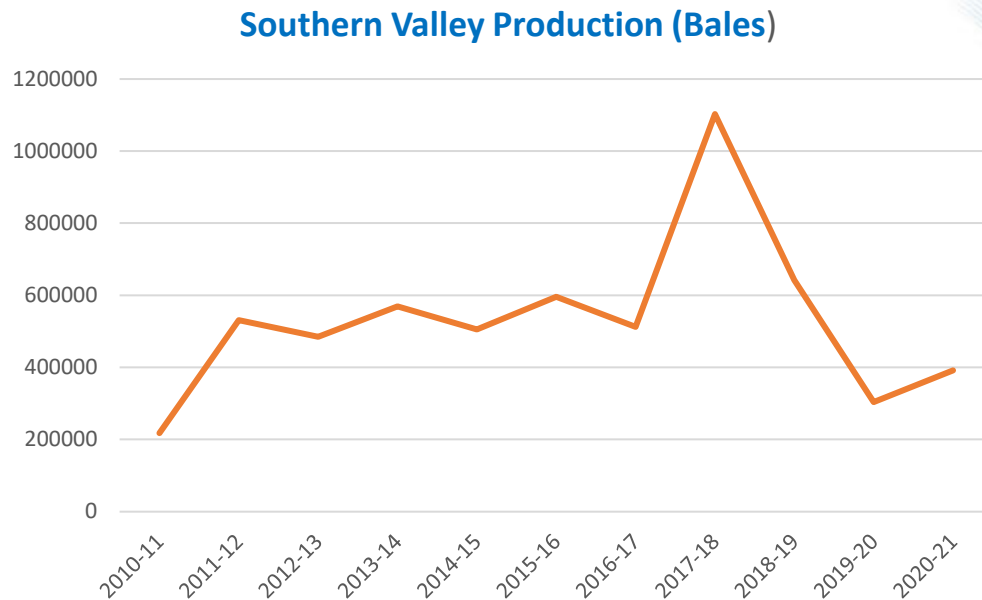
Cotton crop size variability



The southern NSW story

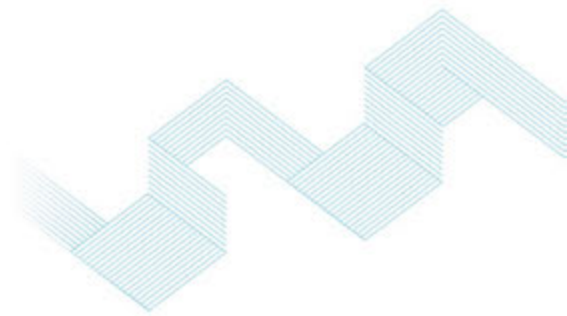
- Cotton was trialled in the Murrumbidgee in the early 1960's. Cotton gin constructed at Darlington Point. Trials unsuccessful, and the Australian cotton industry re-emerged in the Namoi Valley.
- 1990s – Cotton grown successfully in the Lachlan Valley, and approx. 2000 gin constructed in Hillston. Growers commence commercial trials again in the Murrumbidgee, testing such methods as ultra-narrow row.
- 2000–2010 – Increasing uptake in cotton areas across the Murrumbidgee and Murray Valleys.
- New gins constructed:
 - 2012 – Southern
 - 2015 – Rivcott
 - 2015 – Auscott Hay

The southern NSW story



What does 400,000 bales mean?

- Approximately \$160,000,000 spent growing the crop (\$4,000 ha)
- Approximately \$220,000,000 farm gate return (lint)
- Approximately 48,000 tonnes of cotton seed (oil and livestock feed)
- 86 million pairs of jeans or 480,000,000 t-shirts



Sustainability

Compared to 1992, producing
a bale of irrigated cotton
now uses...



Sustainability

Compared to 1992, producing
a bale of irrigated cotton
now takes...



34%
LESS
LAND

Sustainability

Compared to 1992, producing
a bale of irrigated cotton
now uses...



**97%
LESS**

INSECTICIDES

myBMP – best practices program

- More than 80% of growers are participating in myBMP
- An independent assessment of growers' practices is conducted by a trained environmental auditor to verify standards
- Once positively assessed by the auditor, the grower is then certified in myBMP



Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)

- BCI brings together farmers, ginners, manufacturers, retailers, brands, civil society and grassroots organisations in a unique global community committed to developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity.
- Cotton Australia joined BCI in 2014, with myBMP on-farm standards matched to the Better Cotton Standard.
- This allowed fully accredited myBMP Australian cotton growers to participate in the Better Cotton Initiative and sell their cotton as Better Cotton on the world market.



Australian cotton exports

- 99.9% of Australia's cotton is exported
- Australia is the third largest cotton exporter in the world
- Australia produces 3–5% of global cotton production
- Australia can deliver physical traceability of Australian cotton

