



**Land (NSW)**  
**Thursday 3/09/2009**  
Page: 40  
Section: General News  
Region: NSW, AU  
Circulation: 50326  
Type: Rural  
Size: 103.71 sq.cms.



**slice**  
slicemedia.com

press clip

## Dryland cotton tips

ABOUT 100 growers and consultants have attended a series of dryland cotton information meetings in southeast Queensland which highlighted new tools to reduce uncertainty for growers.

Cotton Seed Distributors' Darling Downs-based extension and development agronomist, John Marshall, said with sorghum prices down this year, many growers were looking for dryland summer alternatives, but some were dismissing cotton because of memories of the crop in the 1990s.

"Since that time we've seen the introduction of Bollgard II, Roundup Ready Flex and Liberty Link technologies which simplify insect and weed control practices in cotton and allow better management of costs," he said.

"Because of these technologies, many people now consider dryland cotton to be as easy to manage as sorghum.

Using data from the past two seasons, growers using these technologies averaged two ground rig

sprays for sucking pests, one over-the-top herbicide, a shielded sprayer as a lay-by application, and occasionally an inter-row cultivation and chipping – mostly for fleabane," he said.

In the past, one of the major downsides of dryland cotton was the risk of major cost blow-outs due to insect control problems, but according to Mr Marshall, the Bollgard II product had all but eliminated this.

"Bollgard II offers season-long control of heliothis, our major insect pest. It works whether it's wet or dry, so we don't get those situations where you need to get the plane in to treat skip-row crops, which was where costs got out of control," he said.

"When you compare the costs of growing cotton and sorghum, cotton is about 40 per cent more, but almost half these costs are incurred around harvest – in fact up to this point sorghum and cotton's input costs are almost identical," Mr Marshall said.