

Winning growers announced for the 2019-20 FastStart Cotton Establishment Awards

Broadacre
07.02.2020



The winners for the FastStart Cotton Establishment Awards for the 2019-20 season have been announced, with Angus Doolin from North Star, New South Wales, taking out the irrigated cotton category; and Brett Enklemann from Murgon in the South Burnett region of Queensland winning the dryland category. Each grower wins a pair of tickets to attend a tour of Kununurra, Western Australia, to observe farming practices in this diverse growing region.

The FastStart Cotton Program is a collaboration between Syngenta Australia and Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD) that funds research and practical solutions to support healthy establishment and robust growth in the early stages of a cotton crop's life. The competition, which compared establishment percentages and uniformity, saw over 70 entries this season across both dryland and irrigated categories.

"There are lots of growers out there doing a fantastic job of optimising their seedling establishment through the utilisation of the technology and tools that FastStart is providing," said Syngenta Seedcare Technical Services Lead, Sean Roberts.

"We want to recognise and celebrate this as best practice cotton farming. The Awards are a great way of doing this, as well as sharing what good looks like with other growers."

CSD Marketing & Extension Lead, James Quinn said this year's top farmers were all the more

impressive considering all the factors that contribute to establishment success.

Some of those correlated factors include how well the planter is set up, field and soil bed preparation, planting conditions, operator performance and the management of any soil insects and seedling diseases.

James said the FastStart Cotton Establishment Guide provided the information these growers needed to navigate crop establishment while FastStart-supported seed treatments helped safeguard seedlings against soilborne insect pests and diseases.

“Achieving even establishment of a cotton crop isn’t easy but it is critical in getting the crop off to a good start. This can influence the development of the crop and ultimately, yield and quality at picking,” said James.

The winning growers also reflected on the award.

“I’m thrilled to win the FastStart Cotton Establishment Award for the irrigated crop category, which is particularly pleasing given it’s been an extremely tough season,” said Angus Doolin.

“We focus on a full no-till system and aim to maximise seedling establishment by managing stubble within the plant line prior to planting. We use Syngenta seedcare treatments and adjust the planter speed to the conditions to ensure consistent seed placement.”

“I’m very honoured to have won this season’s FastStart Cotton Establishment Award in the dryland cotton category,” said Brett Enklemann.

“With the dry weather, this season has been a very challenging time; but with the use of a precision planter, FastStart technologies and a no-till farming system, the benefits are evident in the emergence and strength of this season’s cotton.

“The cotton industry is well known for its leadership and innovation, and the FastStart Cotton Program is a major contributor to this innovation, with great benefits to the Australian cotton farmer.”

The FastStart Cotton research and development program is funded through a contribution from the sale of CSD seed treated with Syngenta’s cotton Seedcare range. The program addresses key grower and industry challenges such as the control of insect pests and diseases, as well investigating complementary technologies to help drive yield potential and minimise risks associated with establishing cotton in Australia.