

# MCA

## AG MANAGEMENT

ON BEHALF OF GLOBAL  
AG PROPERTIES P/L

*AgriRisk High Achiever of the Year*

### A NEW STRUCTURE FOR OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Macintyre Downs is a well established, large scale cotton farm in the Macintyre Valley near Goondiwindi Qld. It has been an irrigated cotton farm for 30 years, with a history of corporate ownership. MCA Ag has provided consulting agronomy services to the farm for the last 8 years.

When new owners, Global Ag Properties took over in August 2013, Michael Castor and his team from MCA Ag Management put forward an innovative proposal to run the enterprise. This model provides ultimate transparency on all transactions on which to base a sound partnership. MCA Ag Management provides services on a contract basis to Global Ag Properties. They provide management services, staffing, consulting agronomy services and the machinery needed to the run the farm. Global Ag Properties provides the finance and receives the returns.

Global Ag Properties are the biggest farm investor in the world with a growing portfolio in Australia. Their worldwide standard model is to lease farms out to partners, so Michael's proposal was unique.

### LARGE SCALE COTTON PRODUCTION

Michael's production philosophy is to apply proven practices that are based on sound research using the latest technology, generating

### HOME PROPERTY

"Macintyre Downs" Goondiwindi, Qld

### GENERAL MANAGER

Michael Castor

### CONSULTANT AGRONOMIST

Frank Valentine

optimal results and reliable, consistent returns for the investors.

The enterprise is largely black cracking clay soils with some lighter soils. Development of new cultivation land is occurring at present with the conversion of 215 Ha of grazing country into cultivation. The existing cultivation country is managed with an aim for a 3 year rotation in cotton of cotton>cotton>fallow, however there is presently not enough water allocation to achieve this.

## FARM FACTS...

### TOTAL ENTERPRISE SIZE

3,012 Ha

### AREA TO COTTON 2013/2014

1,234.6 Ha

### AVERAGE YIELD 2013/2014

13.5 bales/Ha

### WATER ALLOCATION/S

5,710 ML river  
< 26,644 ML p.a. high flow

### TYPE OF IRRIGATION

Flood



At the moment, the men and machinery ratio is based on a one in, one out system until such time as they can maximise the security of their high flow water allocation through adequate storages.

## WATER SECURITY DETERMINES PRODUCTION

Macintyre Downs' system is entirely reliant on the amount of water available in a year. Much work has gone into shortening watering intervals; however these changes are limited by staff and infrastructure restrictions.

The enterprise operates a flood irrigation system from the medium priority river allocation and when available, a significant high flow allocation. Whilst fields are prepared to take advantage of the maximum water available, the actual availability may vary considerably, making planning and guaranteeing returns to investors very difficult.

## HIGH YIELDS HAVE BEEN GENERATED

The 2013/2014 season saw some fields yielding in excess of 14 bales/Ha and a whole of farm average of 13.5 bales/Ha. This was extremely pleasing for consultant agronomist Frank Valentine. Nitrogen nutrition is managed simply across the farm by using only urea but with a strong emphasis on timing of application. Ultimately the aim is for

evenness of plant population at 10 plants/m but to have a soft as possible policy on pests in an effort to protect beneficials.

The creation of weed free, clean paddocks and a gradual process of upgrades to ageing infrastructure are the key management focuses at present. A recent de-silting of channels program hopes to yield more efficient irrigation. Steps have also been taken towards creating efficiencies in fuel use through the changeover of pumps.

## FUTURE EFFICIENCIES EXPECTED

Hopes are high for a 14-16 bales/Ha yield without making any major changes. Michael believes that they can achieve this by doing simple things such as improved field design and maintaining a close eye on timing. The structure now in place is one that has the potential to change the face of the cotton industry, facilitating international ownership of land, with local management and Michael is the ideal person to demonstrate this model's effectiveness.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:  
[WWW.AUSTRALIANCOTTONAWARDS.COM](http://WWW.AUSTRALIANCOTTONAWARDS.COM)**