



the **ARCHIBULL** PRIZE

CAREER SNAPSHOT

Agronomist Martin Murray rattles along the dirt roads between Moree and Caroona as he returns from advising a wheat farmer, in conjunction with a seed consultant, on the best varieties to plant in the coming season.

Martin then continues to a Helicoverpa refuge, which he monitors as part of a compliance program with Monsanto and APVMA (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority). The Helicoverpa moth was the number one threat to cotton before the introduction of the genetically modified BT cotton, which has reduced chemical use in the industry by 90%.

However, by talking to researchers Martin knows there is potential for Helicoverpa to become resistant to BT cotton, and so at the refuges he actively encourages the moth to breed on conventional cotton and pigeon pea crops. He checks the plants are receiving enough water and nutrition and explains to a university student how the refuge moths will breed with any BT resistant ones and the BT resistant gene will be eliminated in their offspring.

While at the refuge a farmer asks Martin to map a neighbouring cotton field and with a GPS in his top pocket Martin flies around the perimeter on a motorbike. He dodges water channels and contour banks and thinks to himself this must be one of the perks of the job. It is certainly faster than when he rode a postie bike to Broome in 2014 raising \$10,000 for charity Aussie Helpers.

Adrenaline fix sated Martin is back into the ute to answer a long list of phone messages from chemical and fertiliser representatives, farmers wanting him to check crops and his office wanting to know why there is a dint in the company motorbike.

This is Martin's career in agriculture. What will yours be?



MARTIN MURRAY

AGRONOMIST MARTIN MURRAY WORKS WITH RESEARCHERS, GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TO ENSURE AUSTRALIA'S COTTON CROPS ARE PEST FREE.

