

Australian Cotton Industry Data Platform: FAQs

Section 1: About the Data Platform

What is the Platform?

The Platform is being developed as secure, centralised, industry-owned digital infrastructure by CRDC to support the Australian cotton industry. It aims to simplify, automate, and enhance the way data is collected, accessed and shared – giving growers and the supply chain better insights and more time to focus on what matters.

Why is the Platform needed?

Right now, cotton data is scattered, duplicated and time-consuming to manage. The Platform aims to simplify and automate data management, reducing duplication and saving time for everyone involved, from growers and consultants to gins, merchants and brands. The goal is to create a smarter, more connected and future-ready industry through better use of trusted, grower-controlled data.

What will the Platform do?

It is being developed to serve as a secure data warehouse that automatically brings together the farm data you're already collecting and supply chain data. With your permission, it is intended to support a range of data uses, from compliance, sustainability reporting, benchmarking and market access. The goal is to collect data once and use it many times.

The Platform aims to bring all your farm data together, help you do more with less effort, and put you in full control of who sees what. It's being designed to make your work easier, not harder, and to future-proof the Australian cotton industry.

Who is building the Platform?

CRDC is developing the Platform in partnership with the Australian cotton industry, including growers, gins, merchants, consultants, and researchers. Although CRDC is leading the project, the Platform will be valuable digital infrastructure for the whole industry.

How is it funded?

The Platform is funded through CRDC's core research and development investment, supported by grower R&D levies and the Australian Government. As a cornerstone of CRDC's Clever Cotton Strategic Plan 2023-2028, the Platform represents a long-term investment in digital infrastructure for the benefit of the Australian cotton industry.

Who will govern and manage the Platform?

CRDC is leading development of the Platform under the direction of the CRDC Board, with input from an industry advisory group, comprised of representatives from across the whole Australian cotton industry supply chain, including growers, consultants, ginner, merchants and industry bodies.

Where did the idea come from?

The concept of a digital platform stems from the CRDC-led Australian Cotton Industry Digital Strategy and builds on years of groundwork, including CRDC's leadership of the Accelerating Precision to Decision Agriculture (P2D) project, which highlighted the need for better data automation, system compatibility, and trust in how data is managed. The Platform is part of CRDC's Clever Cotton Strategic Plan 2023–2028 and the Strategic Roadmap for Australian Cotton.

What progress has been made so far?

Significant work has already been undertaken to establish the foundations for the Platform. This has included development of the Australian Cotton Industry Digital Strategy, engagement with growers and industry stakeholders, governance development, implementation planning, identification of priority applications and engagement of delivery partners. While much of this work has occurred behind the scenes, it has been important in ensuring the Platform is built on strong foundations and positioned to deliver long-term value for growers and the broader cotton industry.

When will the Platform be available?

The Platform is being developed in phases through a deliberate and staged approach, with CRDC working towards 2028 to deliver its initial vision. CRDC is working with growers, industry stakeholders and delivery partners to ensure governance, implementation and technical development are built on strong foundations as the Platform evolves. Timing will continue to be reviewed as the project progresses. You can view the latest timeline and key milestones at www.crdc.com.au/dataplatform.

Will using the Platform be mandatory?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. The Platform is being designed to offer real value to those who choose to use it.

Will there be a cost to use the Platform?

No. The Platform will be free for Australian cotton growers, as it is funded through CRDC's core R&D investment. Your levy contributions are helping build and maintain this industry-owned resource.

Section 2: Benefits

The Platform aims to help growers:

- **Save time:** Automate data collection and sharing and reduce duplication.
- **Own your data:** Keep full ownership and control of your data.
- **Simplify compliance:** Streamline reporting and regulatory requirements.
- **Support smart decisions:** Use insights to improve sustainability and profitability.
- **Boost market access:** Improve transparency and traceability for brands and consumers.
- **Stay future-ready:** Adapt easily to changing technology and market needs

What are the benefits for gins, merchants, agronomists, and brands?

The Platform aims to streamline supply chain data flows and consistency, improve transparency, reduce paperwork and enable verified sustainability claims, helping all stakeholders operate more efficiently and effectively.

Why is the cotton industry building this?

It's a foundational piece of infrastructure being developed to modernise and strengthen Australian cotton. It aims to support both individual grower success and collective industry competitiveness in global markets by helping growers and the broader industry gain greater value from trusted data.

Why now?

Global expectations around traceability, sustainability, and data transparency are evolving rapidly. The Platform aims to help ensure Australian cotton can meet these rising demands through better data use, without placing the burden on individual growers.

How does the Platform relate to the Strategic Roadmap for Australian Cotton?

The Platform is a foundational pillar of the Strategic Roadmap for Australian Cotton and a key initiative under CRDC's Clever Cotton Strategic Plan 2023-2028. While the Platform aims to support traceability, sustainability and other current industry priorities, it is being developed as long-term digital infrastructure that can support future industry needs and opportunities over time.

Why should I get involved?

The future of selling cotton will include the data that is behind it. The Platform is being developed to help you manage that data securely and efficiently. It also supports the bigger picture: positioning Australian cotton as a premium, sustainable fibre.

Section 3: Data Ownership, Privacy and Security

Who owns your data?

You do. Data ownership will remain with whoever generates or supplies the data, whether that's a grower, consultant, merchant, shipper, spinner or brand.

How will my data be used?

Only with your permission, and only for agreed purposes. The Platform is being designed for you to always stay in control and can change or withdraw your permissions at any time.

Can I choose what data to share?

Yes. You can share some, all, or none of your data. You can also change your mind at any time.

Do I need to give permission for each use of my data?

Yes, as outlined in the Farm Data Code you will be informed of how your data will be used, and asked for permission if that changes.

Will others be able to see my data?

The Platform is being designed so that your identifiable data will only be accessible with your permission. If data is to be used for industry reporting, it will be aggregated or de-identified.

Where will the data be stored?

The data will be securely stored in a cloud-based system that complies with all relevant Australian privacy laws.

What about privacy and data breaches?

CRDC is developing the Platform in line with strict government data protection standards, including the Privacy Act 1988, and aligning with the NFF Farm Data Code to ensure security and privacy. In the unlikely event of a breach, it will be managed in accordance with national legislation.

What is the NFF Farm Data Code?

The NFF Farm Data Code outlines best practices for data ownership, privacy, and transparency. The Platform is built to align with this Code.

What if I decide to stop using the Platform?

You will be able to stop sharing your data at any time. Your data will remain securely stored in the system unless you request its removal. No one will be able to access it without your permission.

Section 4: Getting Involved

How is the industry involved in the Platform development?

The Platform is being developed with growers, gins, merchants, researchers, consultants and other industry partners to ensure it is practical and trusted.

Can I give feedback or be involved in testing?

Yes! We strongly encourage growers and other stakeholders to be part of the Platform development. Your input is essential to creating a platform that is useful and tailored to industry needs.

Opportunities to get involved will be shared at key points during development, through email updates, industry networks, and the CRDC website. At any point, you can register your interest in being involved by emailing dataplatfom@crdc.com.au

What does it mean to be 'Platform ready'?

It means making sure your data:

- Is being collected digitally (where possible)
- Is accurate and consistent
- Can be exported from your current systems

Doing this now will make it easier to connect when the Platform becomes available.

Will someone help me use the Platform?

Yes. Training and support will be available as the Platform is rolled out, such as how-to guides, demonstrations, and help from CRDC or partners.

Where can I get more information?

Please email dataplatfom@crdc.com.au if you have specific questions about the Platform.