



# Driven by growers. Used by growers. Owned by growers.

## RECORD KEEPING Now is the time to start!

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I know now is the busy time. It is the full-on for harvest, land preparation, planting, herbicide application for weed and grub control, fertiliser application and irrigation. If you keep records of those activities over the next six months, you will be in a great position to become accredited in the Smartcane BMP program.

I know record keeping is a tedious process, but all you need to do is start. And we have the tools to help!

If you like keeping records in your pocket, the 2015 Pocket Diary is for you.

If you prefer paper based record keeping, the Smartcane BMP Block record keeping booklet is available. Pages from this booklet can also be downloaded and printed off from the Smartcane BMP website.

If you prefer to go online, the Smartcane BMP Block record keeping booklet is also available as an editable PDF document.

Staying online, you can use the Smartcane BMP online record keeping tool within the Smartcane BMP website.

Finally if phone apps are your thing, we have the Smartcane BMP record keeping phone app. This has also been updated to support tank mixes by allowing multiple product to be linked to an activity. We have also included a favourites function which populates an activity with operations from previous activities, to save data entry.

The Smartcane app is free to registered Smartcane BMP growers.

If these tools don't work for you, develop your own system. All you have to do is start! ■



## Burdekin growers back BMP

As of last month, the Burdekin has two farming entities through to the auditing process in the three key modules (soil health and nutrient management - irrigation and drainage - weed pest and disease management).

There are 13 growers currently going through to the accreditation process who have completed all three self-assessments modules.

In the past two weeks, there has been a gradual increase in the adoption of the Smartcane BMP process, with six new online self-assessments being completed. Three growers are on track to complete all seven of the Smartcane BMP modules.

The BMP process is a valuable tool, not only to check your own farming systems progression, but to show the wider community that cane farmers in general are actively farming in a positive and sustainable manner.

There are four steps to becoming accredited in a particular module:

**Step 1:** Complete the online Smartcane self-assessment questionnaire.

**Step 2:** Contact your local BMP facilitator for an on-farm visit.

**Step 3:** Start collecting evidence so that the officer can upload it.

**Step 4:** The BMP facilitator completes a pre-audit assessment and sends it to be audited.

It has been recognised that there is a need for improvements in both record keeping and chemical sheds across the region.

Records can be easily kept either in block record keeping booklets, a pocket diary, drawn on maps or even an exercise book.



Burdekin grower Gary Spotswood's low cost portable chemical shed.



For the tech savvy, on-board tractor GPS units and farm recording software are available (for example Farmworks, PAM, SMS).

Recently both CANEGROWERS and Agdat created web based data recording sites. Both of these websites work well and are now available as free apps on a smartphone (pictured below).

Contact BPS staff for more information on how to obtain and use these apps.

In relation to chemical storage, local grower **Gary Spotswood** has created a low cost portable chemical shed from an old IBC 1000 litre shuttle, which has passed the horticulture industry's Freshcare accreditation standards.

BPS will have a prototype shuttle for growers to view at the office. Feel free to contact staff on (07) 4783 1101 or call **Terry Granshaw** on 0437 553 149 for any BMP inquiries. ■



## Productivity officers accelerate grower involvement in BMP

Productivity officers from the Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS) have been working one-on-one with local growers to complete around 20 Smartcane self-assessments.

The way it is being organised, says local Smartcane BMP facilitator, **John Turner**, is that each officer makes contact with a grower, explains the process involved, and organises a suitable time to assist the grower with completing the self-assessment documentation.

"Our MAPS productivity officers will take the local grower through each Smartcane BMP question and provide any necessary information to allowed the grower to provide the most accurate answer," Mr Turner said.

Feedback on this approach has been very positive, with some growers admitting it was the only way they could have completed the questions.

"The knowledge that our productivity officers have of the growers' farming practices meant they were able to provide insight for each question and talk through scenarios that would have the best likely fit with that farm's current practices," Mr Turner said.

"With the productivity officer taking the grower through the process one-on-one, we've found it has greatly reduced the time growers would spend doing self-assessments on their own.

"MAPS started this one-on-one process earlier in the year and have already conducted over 100 self-assessments to date, while the number completed individually or in workshops in the area has only been around 20 for the same period."

Mr Turner says the experience of the productivity officers has made the self-assessment process smoother, easier and more informative.

He says that each officer naturally adds information around each question, making sure growers understand exactly what is being asked of them.



"With the harvesting season started the workload of productivity officers has increased," says Mr Turner. "But BMP is a local priority and any Mackay grower interested in completing self-assessment in Smartcane BMP, is encouraged to contact their local MAPS officer." ■

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*Mackay Area Productivity Services, productivity officer and Smartcane BMP facilitator, John Turner (left)*

### Smartcane BMP Farms & Areas

959	Farms in the system
53955	Area under Dryland (ha)
62152	Area Under Irrigated Cane (ha)
146584	Farm Area Total (ha)

## Tablelands closes in on target numbers for Smartcane BMP

**John Barbetti**, Smartcane BMP facilitator for the Tablelands, reports there has been a great response from cane growers in the local area.

Already 52 growers, from a local target of 60, have completed their self-assessment in the three key modules of Soil Health and Nutrient Management, Weed Pest and Disease Management, and Irrigation Management.

As part of the self-assessment engagement, Tablelands growers have been supplied with, and are now working through, their evidence list working document. This document is designed to help growers understand what evidence type is required, and develop their individual method and priority for collecting and developing the necessary records.

Local growers have been relying heavily on their facilitator, Mr Barbetti (pictured), who is pro-actively assisting in the process of collecting and uploading evidence. The next step will be helping interested growers on their way through the pre-audit process. ■

