Discover the future of sugarcane harvesting.....

- Lightweight, less compaction - get onto fields quicker after rain
- Faster harvesting, especially in high yield areas and plant crops with increased chopper power and speed
- Cleaner samples with lower cane loss and more tonnes in the bin
- Less fuel consumption and reduced operating costs with Smart Cruise
- Greater comfort, less manual tasks and reduced fatigue
- Harvesting functions and touch screen monitor right at your fingertips
- The ease of control with joystick operation and GPS guidance option
- Better protection of your stools securing better yields for future crops

For more information on the Case IH Austoft Sugarcane Harvester or to arrange an in-field demonstration, call your local Case IH dealer today
Chair’s Comment

With all the issues on our plate this year, one that has the potential to be very debilitating for cane growers and indeed many other farmers is the APVMA decision on the use of diuron.

Alf Cristaudo,
CANEGROWERS Chair

Industry News

4 Industry news briefs
6 Regional round up
5 Spotlight: diuron review by APVMA makes product virtually unusable for cane

What’s New

10 QSL update: raw sugar futures trade in tight range
11 Season production overview
12 SRDC update: overcoming the harvester compromise
14 PEC Unit up and running
15 STL Annual General Meeting and Grower Director elections

Farmers Teaching Farmers

16 Mackay grower picks up bronze at national spray awards
17 Still active at 100: cane grower’s valued experience
18 Global environmental credentials on show at ISSCT

Member Services

20 Member deals: marathon offer
22 Classifieds
It’s hard to believe that it was more than a month ago when we announced the Sugar Poll results!

How time has flown. After the positive vote result, we have continued to keep you up to date with the latest in research, development and extension, and last edition reported that the submission to establish Sugar Research Australia had been sent to federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Joe Ludwig.

While all this has been going on, changes have been made at BSES Limited, and the most marked change being the introduction of the Professional Extension and Communications (PEC) unit.

This fortnight we include a look at the new PEC unit, with an article from unit leader Dr Andrew Ward. Read more on page 14.

This edition also features a two-page article on new technology designed to better separate cane from trash before milling. Read more on page 12.

And finally, a belated happy birthday to Bundaberg region grower, Arthur Zunker, who turned 100 not long ago.

His energy is inspiring – he was still working on farm until the age of 92 – and continues to play an active role on farm. Read his story on page 17.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

Jasmine Hunt

Golden tips

Rural Women’s Award applications close today

The 2013 Rural Industries R&D Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women’s Award identifies and rewards women’s contribution to primary industries and rural communities by providing financial assistance, mentoring, resources and support via its nation-wide network of business and community leaders for selected state winners.

State and Territory winners receive a $10,000 financial bursary to implement their Award vision. Each State and Territory winner and runner-up will have the opportunity to participate in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Course and will be supported to develop an individual integrated leadership plan.

Applications close on 15 October 2012. For more information or to download the 2013 application form please visit www.rirdc.gov.au

New report confirms Aussie sugar consumption is on the decline

By CANEGROWERS Communications Manager, Suzi Moore

Australian’s sugar consumption has fallen by 9.3% over the past eight years, according to a new, independent report by an independent commodity specialists group this month.

The report, Sugar Consumption in Australia: A Statistical Update, published by Green Pool Commodity Specialists, is the first comprehensive assessment of Australia’s sugar consumption trends since 1999. Green Pool’s Director, Tom McNeill, said the assessment included a rigorous analysis of the data and used the same methodology as that used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The key findings from the Green Pool Report are:

• Contrary to previously published data, Australia’s apparent sugar consumption per capita has dropped 9.3% from 46.26 kg per person per year in 2004 to 41.97 kg in 2011.
• In the longer term, consumption has fallen by 15.0 kg per person/year over the last 60 years - declining by 26.4% from a peak of 57.0 kg per person/year in 1951.
• The report confirms that sucrose (from cane sugar) forms the major source of sugar in the Australian diet.
• Consumption figures within the report are apparent consumption and not actual consumption. Taking into account food wastage, from producer to consumer level, actual consumption is expected to be lower.

All aspects of sugar consumption in Australia were incorporated into the calculations - including household use, processed foods and beverages, takeaways, convenience foods and restaurant meals. Imports and exports of sugar and sugar-containing manufactured foods and beverages were also assessed.

CANEGROWERS said that the report findings are in line with the declining sugar consumption seen in other first world countries over time. CANEGROWERS CEO, Steve Greenwood, said that Australia’s sugar marketing strategy is based on international demand. Australia exports about 80% of its production, the majority to the burgeoning Asian market. “The majority of our sugar goes into Asia. If we were to double our production overnight, they would still need more,” he told The Courier-Mail shortly after the study was released.

“All the study does show is that the bit of hype that we’re seeing over sugar consumption in Australia is a bit overdone. The per capita consumption is reducing.”

The Green Pool study puts paid to ambit claims made recently by author of the controversial and disputed best seller, Sweet Poison, David Gillespie, who made unfounded assertions that rising sugar consumption was to blame for spikes in obesity and diabetes in Australia, while he was on the publicity trail promoting sales of his latest book.

The Greenpool report findings confirm that per capita consumption in Australia is declining – a drop 26.4% over the past 60 years – however obesity has doubled and diabetes has tripled in this time. This does not support a correlation between sugar and obesity on Australian soils.
Decision to take away diuron debilitating for cane growers

By CANEGROWERS Chair
Alf Cristauodo

Here we are, it’s already mid-October and the harvest is almost complete in some areas, still some way off for others; with the weather holding all the cards.

With all the issues on our plate this year, one that has the potential to be very debilitating for cane growers and indeed many other farmers is the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) decision on the use of diuron.

The APVMA’s suggestion that the only allowed use of diuron is in a tank mix with paraquat, at a maximum of 450 grams per hectare is really quite ludicrous.

The industry had agreed previously to reduce the use of diuron by half, down to 1.8 kg per hectare, together with responsible management practices - particularly the use of weather forecasting in the wetter months. We have worked with the federal government and have participated in their Reef Rescue program for many years now. Through this program, and others, we have encouraged and promoted best management practice (BMP) to minimise any negative impacts we, as growers, might have on water quality and sediment movement through erosion.

Diuron is a very important tool in our weed management program, and the possible alternative chemicals are very expensive and not proven to be effective in all soil types or conditions. The removal of diuron from farmers’ toolboxes may mean farmers are forced to resort to cultivation again, due to unaffordability and ineffectiveness of alternatives; and loss of productivity. This is not the ideal alternative, especially as many growers use minimum till and trash blanketing.

Cane growers have demonstrated in recent years their commitment to the responsible use of chemicals and should be given the opportunity to continue to use diuron until effective affordable alternatives can be found. While I don’t pretend to be a scientist, I have great difficulty in swallowing the so called “science” dredged up by APVMA to support the drastically reduced rates being considered for recommended use.

The APVMA’s suggestion that the only allowed use of diuron is in a tank mix with paraquat, at a maximum of 450 grams per hectare is really quite ludicrous.

Alf Cristauodo, CANEGROWERS Chair

These new reduced rates render diuron basically useless, except as a spot spray mix. It would appear that the precautionary principle is at the heart of this science, and there is no real, hard evidence.

CANEGROWERS has challenged APVMA and the “science” and will continue to do so until we can get some common sense and a realistic appraisal of diuron impacts.

Onto a related issue, there has been a scientific report and some media attention given to the decline of coral cover in the Great Barrier Reef. Cyclones, coral bleaching and crown of thorns starfish (fuelled by nutrients) have all been implicated. Serious science shows that any impacts on the reef from water quality emanating from cane farms is infinitesimal compared to one natural event such as storms and cyclones and not necessarily big ones. Another fact that many refuse to accept is that coral is a living organism and like everything in nature all living things aren’t always perfectly healthy, and have a life and death cycle and natural predators, such as crown of thorns star fish, among others.

Some in the community want to vilify farmers to distract attention away from what happens in congested urban environments. While we are a very small percentage of the community, we are an easy target as a scapegoat.

We will always look to be as responsible as we can be and have a vested interest in maintaining and protecting our major asset, our land and water.
Check out my new wheels: smart permit gets cane to mill faster

The Queensland Government has agreed to extra loading for cane trucks using new high-tech flotation tyres, after many months of lobbying from CANEGROWERS.

State Transport Minister Scott Emerson (pictured right) announced last fortnight that the high-tech flotation tyres would be used on trucks this season to allow increased sugar cane haulage, from 14 tonnes to 16.5 tonnes.

CANEGROWERS lobbied the Queensland Government to allow use of the flotation tyres, which carry heavier loads on the road while providing minimum soil compaction in the field.

"We asked and the Minister delivered," said CANEGROWERS CEO Steve Greenwood.

Mr Greenwood congratulated Minister Emerson on facilitating the special concession, saying it will bring greater efficiencies to the expensive business of transporting cane to the mill.

"This is a smart decision which is good for the sugarcane industry, which by extension is good for the State," he said.

Plea for level crossing safety during cane cutting season

Queensland Rail has pleaded with motorists and pedestrians to act safely at level crossings during cane cutting season. Queensland Rail Acting Chief Executive Officer, Jim Benstead, said too many people across Queensland are gambling with their lives for the sake of saving a couple of minutes, and pedestrians and motorists need to be aware that one mistake around a level crossing could be fatal.

"We urge people to remain focussed on the roads and exercise additional caution around level crossings, as a train could be passing through the cane fields at any time and from either direction. Trains can't swerve to avoid motorists so if there's a collision, the car, truck or pedestrian will come off second best," Mr Benstead said.

In the first six months of 2012, there were 213 reported near misses on the Queensland Rail network, 83 of which occurred in regional Queensland.

"Any one of these incidents could have ended in tragedy, and Queensland Rail authorities often wonder if the people who choose to ignore level crossing protection, understand the dangers and the consequences of being hit by a train," Mr Benstead said.

The maximum penalty for ignoring level crossing warnings is death, but survivors can receive on the spot fines of $200 (pedestrians), or motorists can cop a $300 fine, three demerit points and costs for damages. For further information please visit queenslandrail.com.au or facebook.com/QueenslandRail/.

iGrow – learn from the best in the sugarcane industry

We all know that successful cane growing takes a combination of knowledge, skill and experience. We also know that such information is incredibly valuable to the next generation of growers.

iGrow is a mentorship program that provides young growers with the professional development opportunities to learn from leading sugarcane growers and industry professionals. Through the program, you will develop new skills to increase your productivity and learn methods to secure the long-term sustainability of your business.

If you are interested in enrolling and/or would like more information about iGrow, contact CANEGROWERS Chief Operating Officer, Ron Mullins on ron_mullins@canegrowers.com.au or 07 3864 6444.
Government commits to $4.6 million for sugar research

Premier Campbell Newman and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry John McVeigh met with sugar industry leaders last fortnight to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with BSES Limited, which will see the state government provide an additional $4.6 million over four years for industry research, development and extension (RD&E).

While in Mackay, Premier Newman said Queensland’s $1.2 billion sugar industry would benefit significantly from the funding boost which would strengthen research into better yields and better productivity.

“The extra funding of $4.6 million over four years is an election commitment, which will bring total investment for the sugar industry to $16 million over that time frame,” Mr Newman said.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry John McVeigh said the new funding would support research projects that increased yield, productivity, encouraged greater efficiency along the supply chain, maintained environmental sustainability, and helped find diversification opportunities.

“One very important project will look at better selection programs to develop varieties that tick all the boxes – higher yield, higher sugar content, disease resistance and tolerance to weather extremes,” Mr McVeigh said.

Election platform delivered

This announcement delivers on the first of six key platforms CANEGROWERS took to political parties as issues that must be addressed as priorities by government. CANEGROWERS has been working closely with the new Queensland Government to ensure each of the election promises are fulfilled. CANEGROWERS’ six Rs for rebuilding rural Queensland:

1. Reinvest in research and development
2. Remove inefficient government costs: water and electricity
3. Reduce green tape: accelerate innovation
4. Reinvigorate plans for: growth
5. Retain and enhance: biosecurity measures

Government commits to $4.6 million for sugar research

CANEGROWERS Mackay Chair, Paul Schembri, Premier Campbell Newman and CANEGROWERS Chair, Alf Cristaudo in Mackay last fortnight. Photo by Sonia Ball.
Regional Roundup

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices.

MOSSMAN
At the end of week 15 (29 September), Mossman had crushed 410,226 tonnes of cane for a mill average-to-date of 12.55 CCS. Mossman is still cutting around 95% of estimate which is now at 520,000 tonnes of cane. Mossman is at almost 79% of crop cut. ■

TABLELAND
At the completion of week 18, the Tableland Mill had crushed approximately 65% of the estimate. The mill average tonnes of cane per hectare is holding at 108, and the CCS is continuing to climb gradually at 13.9 CCS. CANEGROWERS Tableland along with the Mareeba District Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association hosted a visit from the Queensland Minister for Energy and Water Supply Mark McArdle. A special thankyou to Brad Maisel for taking the Minister on a tour of his farm. ■

CAIRNS REGION
Showers across the Cairns region have caused disruptions to farming, harvesting and milling operations. Favourable growing conditions are being reflected in both the plant cane and ratoons. Mulgrave Mill is scheduled to cease crushing on or around 2 November, and Babinda zone growers supplying South Johnstone Mill can expect to finish crushing on or around 11 November, and Mulgrave Mill is scheduled to cease crushing on or around 2 November, and Mulgrave Mill is scheduled to cease crushing on or around 11 November... ■

HERBERT RIVER
The Herbert’s crop estimate is now shaping to below 3.8 million tonnes. The Herbert region is looking forward to its next variety adoption meeting with BSES and the opportunity to emphasize the need for better late season varieties and longer ratooners. Growers are looking forward to renewed focus on core plant breeding now that the industry has demonstrated solid support for the formation of Sugar Research Australia with BSES as its centrepiece. The Herbert has had general rainfall of 20 mm and more across the region at the end of September and early October. Whilst it has disrupted the harvest, it provides valuable moisture for young plant cane for the 2013 crop. The current forecast finish date for the 2012 season is 15 November.

BURDEKIN
Crushing has progressed at mills in the Burdekin, with all four mills crushing an average of 377,500 tonnes per week in the past seven weeks. The Burdekin’s season end date is tipped for around 13 December. As of the end of September, 4 million tonnes had been crushed representing 51% of the district’s newly estimated 7.95 million tonne crop. CCS levels are slowly increasing. Sucrogen’s $450 per hectare incentive to put new land under cane has resulted in 2400 hectares being approved and a further 800 hectares pending. Over recent times a number of disputes have arisen between growers and harvest contractors which have been difficult to resolve. To reduce the likelihood of disputes arising and to assist in resolving disputes, CANEGROWERS Burdekin is encouraging growers to have a written contract with their harvest contractor to utilise the template provided by Chris Cooper. ■

PROSERPINE
The million tonne milestone was achieved by Proserpine Mill during the last week. Total cane crushed to the end of September was 1,027,557 tonnes. Some 176,053 tonnes were crushed over the last fortnight – slightly below expectations due to two rather long, unanticipated stops. With the crop cutting close to the pre-season estimate, and now 62% harvested, the mill remains on track for a mid-to-late November finish. Variety Q208 continues to be the stand-out performer. ■

MACAY
Plane Creek Mill crushed 68,600 tonnes of cane for the week ending September 15. The highest CCS sample was from a rake of plant KQ228 at 16.75 from the Koumala Productivity District. The Mackay region mills processed 239,516 tonnes of cane last week ending 30 September. Farleigh mill completed a successful week with 78,938 tonnes crushed. Year to date the three mills have crushed 3,124,949 tonnes of cane from an expected crop of 5,700,000 tonnes. The total cane crushed to date is 3,124,949 tonnes of the 5,700,000 tonne estimate. The PRS average to date is 14.10 and the CCS average to date is 13.90. ■

BUNDABERG
A total of 89,245 tonnes was crushed at the Bundaberg mills last week. The finish date is late November. A more accurate figure will be known next fortnight as we get a better handle on how much cane has been used for plants. Bundaberg Sugar workers rejected the company’s latest offer and are continuing to negotiate. CCS has been very good and the district average year to date is currently running at 14.37. Base CCS has been increased from 13.6 to 14.00 at both mills. ■

ISIS
Weather conditions have been favourable for harvesting for the last 11 weeks. Isis Mill passed the half-way mark on 26 September and as of 3 October had processed 858,940 tonnes or 59% of the estimate. Early to mid-December is the likely termination date. Most of the spring plant has happened and growers are now resorting to irrigation to engender a good strike. September and the start of October has been windy, resulting in fair cool conditions. CCS is disappointing with results varying from 11 to 17. The seasonal average is now 13.40. Isis Mill Shareholders’ AGM will be held on Saturday 20 October.

MARYBOROUGH
Just over 10 weeks of crushing has been completed and the MSF has crushed 431,880 tonnes at CCS of 14.16. The crop estimate is falling due to the continuing dry weather that we are experiencing. CCS levels continue to rise and are the highest for many years. CCS for this week to date is 15.27. The majority of the planting has been completed however some growers are in need of rainfall to provide sufficient moisture to plant. ■

ROCKY POINT
By the end of week five, Rocky Point has crushed a total of 79,278 tonnes of cane, with season to date CCS of 14.56. The Rocky Point crush has made better progress this week, and there is optimism of similar results going forward. Spring planting is still underway, and most growers are busy watering the drier blocks to ensure a good strike. ■
Diuron review by APVMA makes product virtually unusable for cane

By CANEGROWERS
Senior Manager – Environment and Natural Resources, Matt Kealley

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has released their diuron review findings report, and the outcome is not good for sugarcane growers.

Under the recommendations of the review findings, the following uses will be supported:

1. Diuron when used in combination with paraquat - rates 250 g ac/ha up to 450 g ac/ha.
2. Diuron/hexazinone products – only low rate of 250 g/ha and spot spraying.

At these rates, diuron does not have any efficacy or residual effects. Furthermore, diuron is not supported for pre and post-emergent use at rates of 1.8 kg ac/ha or band sprayed at lower rates.

The 2012 Diuron Review Finding and Environmental Risk Assessment Report, which focuses on the risk to aquatic organisms from runoff, has concluded that some uses of diuron continue to present risks, specifically adverse effects in aquatic environments.

The report proposes the removal of a number of uses such as apples, pears, citrus, grass seed crops and pastures uses as well as uses in non-agricultural situations such as roadsides, right of way and industrial areas. Changes to use of diuron in bananas and other cropping situations are also proposed.

CANEGROWERS met with the APVMA on Wednesday 26 September and were briefed on the review so as to fully understand the implications of the decision and process in the future.

The APVMA outlined the science and modelling that determined the rate for acceptable risk of diuron to the environment.

The process going forward is that APVMA has asked the registrants to show cause as to why these rates should not be finalised. The registrants also have the opportunity to comment on the technical documents.

The APVMA has indicated there will more than likely be a phase-out period for product on hand and this will be managed at the current suspension label conditions of 1.8 kg ac/ha with the window between 5 December to 31 March.

The common phase-out timeframe for most chemicals is two years, however this is yet to be finalised or confirmed.

CANEGROWERS has made the APVMA aware that the recommended rates are ineffective for weed control. The recommendations are going to have a significant effect on the industry in terms of cost, effective weed management and sustainable practices.

With the final decision on diuron to be made on or before 30 November 2012, CANEGROWERS has written to and met with the federal Minister for Agriculture, Joe Ludwig, on this issue. CANEGROWERS will also be following up all options and will keep you informed of developments.

National rural women’s conference to be held in 2013

Registrations for one of the biggest gatherings of rural, regional and remote women in Australia opened last fortnight. The inaugural National Rural Women’s Conference being held in Canberra from 18-20 February 2013 is expected to bring more than 500 women from regional, rural and remote Australia to learn, discuss challenges, celebrate and share their vision for the future. Guest speakers include Maggie Beer, Liz Davenport and first Mayor of the Northern Territory’s Tiwi Islands Lynette De Santis.

For more information visit www.nrwc.com.au
Latest weather update

By Professor Roger Stone

Here is the latest and updated information, issued Sunday 7 October 2012, covering shorter-term weather forecasts, monthly and seasonal climate forecasts. In effect, this means we are providing information for the short, medium and seasonal (longer term) periods. Included are more detailed single month forecasts which, it should be noted, are experimental.

Note, for forecasts valid for the actual day of issue, always refer to latest BoM forecasts for that day/hour. The forecasts below are issued by selected computer models (including those generated at USQ) and are meant more for extended range applications.

14 October - 23 October weather forecasts - totals for the week (lesser confidence):
5 - 15 mm SEQ (nil remainder) this new information will need to be updated as more data are received.

Seasonal and monthly forecasts

The seasonal and operational three month climate forecast (higher confidence) for the total amount of rain over the October to December period shows rainfall probability values close to normal for this three month overall period for sugar regions of Queensland – however, higher rainfall probability values exist for this period for inland regions and includes the inland Burnett and inland Fitzroy regions. In probabilistic terms this equates to ~40-50% probability of exceeding the long-term median rainfall for this time of the year for sugar regions but 60% - 70% for regions further inland.

This forecast is based on the currently highly fluctuating values of the SOI and ‘SOI phases’ - the latest phase being ‘rapidly rising’. Note: these forecast rainfall values are relevant to the long-term median values for each rainfall station for this season of the year.

Individual months (only experimental for feedback purposes as to the value of this type of output):

- October: For October itself, latest rainfall probability values output by coupled ocean-atmosphere computer models show 20%-30% chance of exceeding the median for sugar regions of Queensland.
- November: ‘generally average falls’ for this time of year. This equates to a 40%-60% probability of exceeding the median for this month.
- Longer-term overview: Westerly anomalies have recently re-turned to the equatorial Pacific. Thus, all advanced general circulation models continue to suggest the further development of an El Niño event of marginal strength over the coming summer months. This also suggests, statistically, a later than average commencement to the summer core wet season in North Queensland.

Note that this type of climate pattern does not preclude shorter-term weather/rain events that should be able to be identified/predicted closer to the onset dates through the use of weather forecasts of the type used above.

SOI: The 30 day average SOI to 7/10/12 is plus 2.31 (+2.31).

Climate change research investment strategy released

Last fortnight the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry released the Filling the Research Gap: Research Strategy which will guide future agricultural research investment in Australia. The Filling the Research Gap component of the Carbon Farming Futures Program provides $201 million in research funding over six years. The broad aim is to research new technologies and practices that will assist land managers reduce emissions and increase soil carbon. The objectives for the research strategy are to:

- Provide options for land managers to reduce emissions while boosting profitability and productivity.
- Increase understanding of likely effects of climate change on specific industries and on the benefits of mitigation and adaption.
- Develop flexible land and water management approaches to support better decision making.
- Develop technologies to increase resource efficiency and offset potential future production impacts caused by climate change.
- Contribute to the international body of knowledge on emissions reduction and adaptation for agriculture.

The research strategy will encourage collaboration and coordination between research projects and across industries and seek to improve communication between research, land managers industry and government.
Our services match your needs

Whatever your nutrient needs this season, we have the resources and specialist expertise to meet them. Whether you are after soil and tissue testing, practical agronomic advice or precision blends, we can supply them. Plus we’ll arrange payment terms that suit your financial plans.

Contact your local Incitec Pivot agent or call 1800 009 832 toll free.

www.incitecpivotfertilisers.com.au

Incitec Pivot Fertilisers is a business of Incitec Pivot Limited ABN 42 004 080 264

We’re here to help you grow
By QSL Treasurer, Stephen Stone

Sugar

Raw sugar futures traded in a tight range during the past fortnight, with the March 13 prompt contract breaking the 19 c/lb level, due to speculative shorts squaring their position after the October futures expiry. The OCT12 expiry was one of the least volatile in a long time as the uncertainty of the CS Brazilian harvest makes it very risky to take a large position at this stage. Eleven thousand, seven hundred and ten (11,710) contracts were delivered to the market with BNP Paribas and ABN Amro Clearing taking the sugar into Brazil and Argentina.

The short term outlook prompt positioning above 19 c/lb was quite extreme, similar to what we saw in June when the market rallied to 24 c/lb. The global physical surplus is still yet to arrive, as evidenced by resilience in physical premiums, a flattening of the futures curve at a time most expected further steepening to carry the surplus down the curve, strengthening flat prices, firm refined prices and refining premium. We expect producer pricing to hover waiting to capture the quick move lower in prices if they sense the current strength is stalling. The lack of news is always an issue at this time in the calendar, as we await final results of Brazil’s crush and the start of possibly disappointing Indian and Thai 2013 seasons. We expect prices to be contained within the wider 18-25 c/lb range going forward.

UNICA showed lower harvesting numbers for the first half of September crushing despite the dry weather, as some mills in CS Brazil stopping for maintenance; however the recoverable sugar per tonne was higher than expected. The second-half of September had some significant rain reducing sucrose levels and slowing the crushing pace, though the benefit of the rains will be seen in the 2013 crop.

Currency

The Australian currency had a volatile two weeks, trading in an extremely wide 325 points range. The Aussie dollar was initially boosted by Chinese liquidity injection of USD 57.92 billion, rallied up to a high of 1.0475 on 28 September. However, the gain was short lived, and the Aussie was marked lower over the second week of the reporting period after the RBA rate cut announcement. Downward revisions to global growth appear to be the major reason for the recent RBA rate cut of 0.25%, taking the cash rate to 3.25%. The move by the RBA, and weaker AUD data in general, dragged AUD to a low of 1.0150. However, given the sustained demand for Australia’s high yielding AAA rated sovereign bonds, a solid degree of support for the A$ despite current downward pressure should be maintained. The market is anticipating another rate cut by the end of 2012, with the timing of the next rate cut highly uncertain. Anticipation of a follow-up move in November should keep A$ heavy into the meeting.
WHAT'S NEW

Season production overview

By Greg Beashel, QSL Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

This article provides an overview of mid harvest production and provides an insight of sugar quality outcomes generally.

With the wet start to the season resulting in mill finish dates varying from November through to late December 2012, as at 30 September a total of 1,508,000 tonnes of RSSA sugar had been received across all terminals, with just over half of this already shipped to customers.

While the forecast RSSA supply has decreased marginally since March, the harvest pool and associated buffer tonnage continues to perform the role of mitigating risks associated with undersupply.

Sugar quality

QSL’s quality control program allows us to provide sugar products tailored to meet the individual needs of refinery customers around the world.

Through our quality scheme, Queensland mills are encouraged to meet pre-determined quality specifications for polarisation, colour, moisture, starch and dextran.

This gives Australian sugar a competitive edge on the international stage and allows QSL to command a premium for Queensland raw sugar on the global market.

This year has been a reasonably good year for sugar quality with high levels of compliance from supplying mills.

Advances program

The next increase under the advances scheme is scheduled for 24 October 2012.

Any subsequent increases after that date will be reviewed in light of current sugar prices at the end of October 2012 and will be notified to milling companies.

2013 Season Pools

QSL is currently working with the industry to determine whether any additional pools will be offered for the 2013 Season. We are expecting to undertake regional roadshows before Christmas to discuss the current pool offerings and any new pools.

Other business

QSL’s Annual General Meeting will take place on 19 November 2012 at 10 am at the Christie Corporate Centre in Brisbane.

The purpose of the AGM is to present and discuss the financial position of the company, activities that have taken place during the year and the strategic direction of QSL.

It is also an opportunity for members to ask the QSL Board questions of relevance to the industry.

Notices and more information will be sent out to members in the coming weeks.
SRDC update: overcoming the harvester compromise

By Carolyn Martin

Field trials will begin in NSW and Queensland later this year to determine the practicality of new technology that better separates trash from cane before milling.

The post-harvest trash-separation technology could significantly increase the value of Australia’s sugarcane crop.

With funding from the Sugar Research and Development Corporation, and other sources, a Brisbane-based company, Norris Energy Crop Technology, has been examining the economies of the ‘split harvesting technology’.

The company’s Principal Consultant, Chris Norris, created significant cane grower interest with a series of presentations at SRDC Regional Expos in northern Queensland earlier this year.

The accompanying tables from his presentation illustrate the potential to significantly increase revenue for both growers and millers using the new technology (see Table 1 and Table 2).

They indicate that post-harvest trash separation, in association with low harvester extractor fan speeds, results in significant increases in sugar recovery, both through reducing harvesting cane losses, and increasing milling sugar recovery.

As well, the lower Extraneous Matter (EM) levels (ie. trash and soil) being milled could allow either a shorter season length or alternatively the milling rate can be reduced to retain the same season length.

Chris’s company recently received SRDC funding to start a new project titled Quantification of the Potential to Reduce Harvesting Losses by Utilisation of Field Edge Trash Separation Technology.

The project will investigate the impact of different trash extraction and billet length strategies on overall sucrose recovery, and total cost of cane delivered to the mill.

A series of field trials during the coming harvest, at Childers in Queensland, and Condong in NSW, will study the impact of supplementary cleaning on harvesting, transport and milling losses or recoveries.

Chris Norris said his company is very excited by the opportunity the SRDC funding provides.

“We are looking forward to publishing the findings of our research which we expect will assist in significantly increasing the value of the Australian sugar industry,” he said.

“Essentially, trash removal on the harvester is a compromise, and we want to take that compromise out of the equation.

“Our project aims to demonstrate that commercially available separation systems provide superior trash extraction and low cane loss, and that the benefits to the Australian industry can match those experienced in other countries

Table 1
Relative to “common practice” with the harvester extractor fan running at around 900 RPM, “low loss harvesting with the extractor fan at 600 rpm in association with post harvest separation results in higher sugar recovery per hectare harvested, a higher milling rate and potentially a shorter harvest season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cleaned Cane CCS Pre-Harvest</th>
<th>Conventional Green Harvest</th>
<th>Conventional Green Harvest + Mill-based Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean stalk weight Pre-Harvest</td>
<td>Harvester Fanspeed &amp; Operation</td>
<td>Harvester Fanspeed &amp; Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills Fibre crushing rate: Current Practices</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Price $500/t</td>
<td>Low Loss</td>
<td>Best Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Recovery</td>
<td>Product delivered from field (t/ha)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fibre % in product being milled</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre % in EM components being Milled</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS of material Milled</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Recovery (t/ha harvested)</td>
<td>10.220</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Milling Parameters

| Milling rate (through milling train) @ nom t/hr fibre | 299 | 317 | 328 | 344 | 399 | 405 | 408 | 412 |
| Sugar Production (t/hr) | 32 | 36 | 39 | 42 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 |
| Area Harvested (ha/hr) to supply mill | 3.12 | 3.55 | 4 | 4.92 | 4.75 | 5.04 | 5.43 | 6.31 |
| Crush season length (weeks) @ 85% availability | 29 | 26 | 23 | 19 | 19 | 18 | 28 | 14 |
where we have installed trash separation systems.

“We will show that this results in a significant increase in recoverable sucrose through reduced losses in the harvesting and milling processes.

“We will also quantify the impact of field edge separation on in-field costs, the effect on field-to-mill transport costs, and the net change in return associated with improved practices,” he said.

Among those to attend Chris’ recent presentation was the CANEGROWERS Tully manager, Peter Lucy.

Peter said afterward he hopes the research will help re-focus the industry on looking at ways to solve the problem of harvesting efficiencies and costs.

“Currently, it would seem that the conflicting economic drivers in the growing, harvesting and milling sectors of the industry don’t really encourage us to look at harvesting, which means that as harvesting capacities have needed to increase over the years, we’ve increased our losses,” he said.

“So there isn’t really an incentive to maximise production.

“The problem with harvesting is that the more you try to clean the cane with the harvester, the more cane losses you get.

“But the converse is that the more you try to reduce cane losses, the more trash you produce.”

To request a copy of the research presentation by Chris Norris or for more information about this SRDC research project contact SRDC Senior Investment Managers Bianca Cairns bcairns@srdc.gov.au or Ben Baldwin bbaldwin@srdc.gov.au on 07 3210 0495 or visit www.srdc.gov.au

---

**Table 2**

This table illustrates the significant improvement in sugar recovery, results in very significant gains in returns to the grower after the increase in harvesting and haul-out costs. The primary benefit for the mill is the availability of increased fuel for cogeneration or other uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sugar Price $500/t</th>
<th>Low Loss</th>
<th>Best Practice</th>
<th>Common Practice</th>
<th>Max Bin Weight</th>
<th>Low Loss</th>
<th>Best Practice</th>
<th>Common Practice</th>
<th>Max Bin Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Recovery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product delivered from field (t/ha)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fibre % in product being Milled</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>17.40%</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
<td>14.40%</td>
<td>14.20%</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre % in EM components being Milled</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS of material Milled</td>
<td>10.70%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Recovery (t/ha harvested)</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>9.74</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.57</td>
<td>11.18</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>9.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milling Parameters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milling rate (through milling train) @ nom t/hr fibre</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Production (t/hr)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Harvested (ha/hr) to supply mill</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crush season length (weeks) @ 85% availability</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial: Miller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Sugar Value ($/ha)</td>
<td>$5,111.00</td>
<td>$5,009.00</td>
<td>$4,871.00</td>
<td>$4,301.00</td>
<td>$5,784.00</td>
<td>$5,911.00</td>
<td>$5,263.00</td>
<td>$4,613.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of trash at 50% of coal cost equivalent ($/ha)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$305.00</td>
<td>$214.00</td>
<td>$158.00</td>
<td>$97.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment to growers for sugar ($/ha)</td>
<td>$3,198.00</td>
<td>$3,227.00</td>
<td>$3,231.00</td>
<td>$2,902.00</td>
<td>$4,102.00</td>
<td>$3,983.00</td>
<td>$3,760.00</td>
<td>$3,308.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siding to mill transport costs ($/ha)</td>
<td>$234.00</td>
<td>$206.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$161.00</td>
<td>$234.00</td>
<td>$206.00</td>
<td>$189.00</td>
<td>$161.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income/ha harvested</td>
<td>$1,679.00</td>
<td>$1,576.00</td>
<td>$1,451.00</td>
<td>$1,237.00</td>
<td>$1,681.00</td>
<td>$1,552.00</td>
<td>$1,451.00</td>
<td>$1,196.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income/t crushed (“through rollers”)</td>
<td>$17.55</td>
<td>$17.69</td>
<td>$17.69</td>
<td>$17.69</td>
<td>$19.99</td>
<td>$19.31</td>
<td>$18.82</td>
<td>$18.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial: Grower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Payment (Payment formula on producted milled)</td>
<td>$3,198.00</td>
<td>$3,227.00</td>
<td>$3,231.00</td>
<td>$3,902.00</td>
<td>$4,101.00</td>
<td>$3,983.00</td>
<td>$3,760.00</td>
<td>$3,308.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting costs</td>
<td>$543.00</td>
<td>$571.00</td>
<td>$525.00</td>
<td>$542.00</td>
<td>$543.00</td>
<td>$571.00</td>
<td>$525.00</td>
<td>$542.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haulout costs</td>
<td>$159.00</td>
<td>$136.00</td>
<td>$118.00</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$159.00</td>
<td>$136.00</td>
<td>$118.00</td>
<td>$93.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop Production costs ($/ha)</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Margin $/ha</td>
<td>$1,295.00</td>
<td>$1,320.00</td>
<td>$1,389.00</td>
<td>$1,068.00</td>
<td>$2,199.00</td>
<td>$2,076.00</td>
<td>$1,917.00</td>
<td>$1,473.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% increase in gross margin</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BSES’s PEC Unit up and running

By PEC Unit Manager Andrew Ward

Earlier this year, in readiness for sugar research and development (R&D) reform, the Professional Extension and Communication (PEC) Unit within BSES Limited was formed. The PEC Unit plays a critical role in disseminating the results of collaborative R&D, and highlighting tangible scientific outcomes to fuel the growth of the Australian sugar industry.

In order to improve and streamline extension information delivery, BSES initiated the new PEC platform, led by a Unit Manager. This is in direct response to industry feedback.

Historically, BSES followed a regional extension model and employed more than 30 extension staff. With the procurement of nine specialised Development Officers, a discipline-based extension model, combined with a rigorously planned and integrated communication program will be rolled out in the coming months by the PEC unit.

The revised model will enable Development Officers to devise and disseminate communications specific to relevant local stakeholders, particularly the advisor community. The model, and the Development Officer’s work will revitalise and streamline extension across the industry, while still enabling region-specific communications to be developed.

This will allow the sugar industry’s researchers to share their research findings with a larger number of growers, in an easy-to-interpret way - encouraging adoption on-farm.

Growers’ profitability and sustainable farming practices are at the core of BSES’ value proposition, and our highly skilled team will enhance integration of research findings, and maximise productivity and adoption.

Growers’ profitability and sustainable farming practices are at the core of BSES’ value proposition.

Andrew Ward, BSES PEC Unit Manager

Within the PEC Unit, technology will supplement traditional modes of communication, and play a key role in presenting research findings and advanced research deliverables.

The introduction of an eMarketing initiative on BSES’s website will create a portal for timely dissemination of information to millers, growers and other related industry groups.

BSES will seek to gain efficiency through implementing the e-business strategy and experiential marketing, further enhancing the transfer of knowledge from researchers to growers.

The production of weekly extension videos, presenting the work of our world class R&D teams, will make research findings available as they happen, and keep growers connected with the work being undertaken throughout the industry.

BSES’s success is tied to the quality of its research and its application to more efficient farming practices, resulting in the continued growth and enhanced viability of the sugar industry.

Our values are framed by three pillars: problem-solving, pragmatism and industry connectedness. The values reflect the aspirations of BSES’s PEC Unit, while recognising the need for growers to have ongoing access to advisory extension is paramount.

With the support of the Sugar Advisory Services Development Program (SASDP), a network of advisors has been developed within each cane growing area. Over the coming months, it is the PEC Unit’s intention to develop strong linkages with these advisors to ensure that they have the most up to date research findings at their disposal.

BSES has built their reputation on the ability to orient new disciplines as the industry evolves, and the PEC Unit positions growers and millers at the centre of the picture; while working collaboratively with government and commercial partners.

For more information visit www.bses.com.au or call 07 3331 3333.
STL Annual General Meeting and Grower Director elections

Sugar Terminals Limited (STL) will hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members in Brisbane on Friday, 26 October 2012.

To be held at the offices of McCullough Robertson (level 11, Central Plaza Two, 66 Eagle Street), starting at 10 am, the Annual General Meeting will also include a Grower Director election.

Grower Director, Constantine Christofides, will retire from office at the AGM in accordance with the Constitution and, being eligible, offers himself for re-election.

Nominations for the position closed on 12 September 2012, and a nomination was received from Anthony Large. Brief details of the experience and expertise of the persons who have been nominated for the Grower Director position are as follows (as provided on the STL website):

Mr Constantine Christofides
Current Company Director of Sugar Terminals Ltd (3yrs), also member of the Audit & Risk committee. Management of Family cane farms in the Burdekin Region. Director and Trustee of various private companies. Director of South Burdekin Community Financial Services Ltd. Attended various AICD short courses.

Mr Anthony (Tony) Large
Extensive experience in growing, harvesting and milling of cane. Previous representative roles in the sugar industry include: Director of Proserpine Sugar Mill, Director of CANEGROWERS Proserpine, Member of Proserpine Productivity Committee, Member of Mackay Regional Advisory Group and Member of Proserpine Productivity Committee. In the community I have served 12 years as President of Show Whitsunday. I'm an active grower with 100 hectares on Up River Road near Proserpine, with extensive experience in growing, harvesting and milling of cane.

I'm not afraid to ask questions and have a strong view that all parts of our industry need to be constantly aware of our global competition to ensure our sustainability into the future. I also feel strongly that all parts of our industry need to be working a lot closer together to ensure that we are all of aware of where we are going.

Please take the time to choose who you want to be your Grower Representative and return your ballot paper that will be provided shortly.

Tony Large
Cane grower, Proserpine

Letter below provided by Tony Large.

Open letter to fellow canegrowers
20 September 2012

On 26 October 2012 Sugar Terminals Limited (STL) are having an AGM in Brisbane, at the meeting there will be an election by rotation for a Grower Director.

I have been nominated for Grower Director and am asking for your support. I think it is important that we all take an active interest in the activities of STL and that we maintain this asset as a valuable part of our sugar industry, now and well into the future.

My past experience in the sugar industry include: Director of Proserpine Sugar, Director of CANEGROWERS Proserpine, Member of the Mackay Regional Advisory Group and Member of Proserpine Productivity Committee. In the community I have served 12 years as President of Show Whitsunday. I'm an active grower with 100 hectares on Up River Road near Proserpine, with extensive experience in growing, harvesting and milling of cane.

Please take the time to choose who you want to be your Grower Representative and return your ballot paper that will be provided shortly.

Tony Large
Cane grower, Proserpine

Advertisement below provided by Con Cristofides.

STL Election
Constantine Arthur Christofides
Representing Shareholders.

I have re-nominated for the Grower Director position on STL.

Current Director of STL for the past 3 years.

Seeking your support for the upcoming election in October.
Tony explained one of the aims of on-farm changes is to improve water quality leaving agricultural catchments and entering the reef environment.

“We recently added a new 1,200 litre Howard Sprayrite sprayer to our fleet, which is fitted with a 15 metre self-levelling boom,” he said.

“It’s fitted to a GPS unit to ensure precise placement of chemicals, avoiding overuse. With its twin jet nozzle system, we get even coverage using low water rates. It’s also fitted with a 200 litre rinsing tank, enabling us to rinse our pump lines and jets with relative ease.”

The Bugejas also have a self-propelled John Deere 6500 sprayer, which has been modified to a 1.8 m wheel spacing to suit their controlled traffic operation.

“The Bugejas were nominated for the 2012 SPRAY Awards by the Reef Catchments Natural Resource Management Group in Mackay for their commitment to best practice spraying.

“We decided to go ahead with the nomination because we wanted to highlight to the wider community that canegrowers are not the environmental vandals they were once thought,” said Tony.

“We are acutely environmentally aware and work hard to manage best practice spraying while ensuring profitability. I always say it’s no use being green if you’re in the red – it’s important to get the balance right. I believe our spray operation and commitment to sustainable farming practices such as controlled traffic are testament to us achieving this balance.”

“With its high clearance of 2.5 metres and 1,600 litre tank capacity, we can spray seven rows in the one pass, saving on fuel costs while reducing soil compaction through controlled traffic farming.”

Record management is an important part of the operation, with three copies kept – one for each operator, Tony added.

“Data on wind management, speed, water volume, chemicals and humidity each time we spray is routinely recorded,” Tony said.

Now in their fourth year, the Spray Awards are an annual competition recognising outstanding spray applicators from across Australia. SPRAY stands for the Sustainable, Productive and Responsible Applicator of the Year.

The SPRAY Awards are an initiative of Syngenta, in partnership with Rural Press, and have proven successful in profiling great stories of how Australian growers and applicators (both ground and aerial) are making sustainable and responsible use crop protection tools to enhance productivity on Australian farms.

The 2012 competition was conducted across five regions (Queensland/Northern Territory, New South Wales/ACT, Victoria/Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia). Regional winners will be supported to travel to Sydney for the official Awards dinner, which this year will be hosted by Westpac Agribusiness, a new corporate sponsor of the SPRAY Awards in 2012.

The overall national winner this year was South Australian contractor and farmer Robin Krieg.

Robin runs a 2,500 hectare cropping operation, along with a contract spraying, urea spreading and hay baling business within a 30 km radius of the family property at Kangaroo Flat, near Gawler. Robin said his region’s close proximity to residential areas, along with the diverse range of horticultural production in the area, presents some key challenges during spraying.

Robin received a $15,000 study tour to the United Kingdom.

By Jasmine Hunt

Queensland cane growers Tony, John and Mark Bugeja were named third overall nationally after taking out the Queensland finalist position in the recent SPRAY awards, run by Syngenta and Rural Press.

The Bugejas run a 460 hectare operation with average yields of 33,000 tonnes at Palmyra, near Mackay on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef, and have implemented a number of on farm improvements aimed at reducing the environmental impact of sugar production.

The Bugejas were nominated for the 2012 SPRAY Awards by the Reef Catchments Natural Resource Management Group in Mackay for their commitment to best practice spraying.

Tony (pictured above), John and Mark Bugeja were named third overall at the national SPRAY Awards, run by Syngenta and Rural Press. The Bugejas run a 460 ha operation near Mackay. Right: Margaret Bugeja, Tony Bugeja and Sarah Iddles of Syngenta.
By Amy Claireton

In a world that often ignores history and devalues experience, the cane industry is fortunate to have several older people still active in the industry.

Arthur Zunker must surely hold the title of ‘eldest cane grower’, having notched up one hundred years on 7 September. The second youngest in a family of eight little Australians, Arthur comes from pioneer cane growing stock. Arthur’s grandparents met in Maryborough and both worked for Yengarie Sugar Refinery. In 1893 a flood in the Mary River damaged the mill, and crushed sticks of cane from the mill, caused the bridge over the river to be washed away.

When the Cran family of Millaquin Sugar Refinery re-located the mill from Yengarie to Mon Repos, the Zunkers moved to Bundaberg. Arthur’s father, Joseph, grew up in Bundaberg and began work at Millaquin Mill. Joseph married Emille Plath and she instigated the purchase of land for the family to grow cane. Their seven boys, including Arthur, grew up working the land and the family purchased land across the district, at Sharon, Kalkie, Qunaba and Burnett Heads.

“My mother imported the first shipment of potash from Germany in the 1920s to fertilise cane,” says Arthur. “The response was amazing and saved the cane industry. Straightaway everyone was using potash!”

In a lifetime that has seen the industry develop from horse and man-power to the highly mechanised systems of today, Arthur is thrilled with the progress.

“The changes in harvesting have been enormous,” he says. “When I was 50 we were still hand cutting cane and the first whole stick machines did not reduce the workload very much.”

Arthur suggested the concept of chopping the cane sticks up in the field and the Toft Brothers harvesters made a huge difference to the way cane was cut and transported to the mill. “We thought life was so easy!” says Arthur. “With the harvester chopping the cane and dropping it into wire bins we were finally rid of the dreaded tramline.”

“Then came irrigation in 1964 and the crops grew so big that the machines couldn’t handle them,” he says. “Before irrigation the cane would only grow a metre high and yield less than 50 t/ha. In the worst drought years Qunaba Mill would not crush any cane.”

When the harvesters were able to cut green Arthur was pleased to see an end to burning cane.

Arthur stepped back from managing the farm in 1985 to allow his son, Joe, and grandsons, Richard and Craig, to take that responsibility. He stayed actively involved in farm work, driving tractors and monitoring the flood irrigation blocks until he was 92, when a back injury made it necessary for him to stop work. Even now Arthur takes an interest in the day-to-day activities on the farm. He is immensely proud of his successors and is impressed with the advances in the industry. With tissue culture plants and auto-steer tractors and harvesters Arthur is sure he has seen the ultimate in cane farming technology.
Global environmental credentials on show at ISSCT

By Gordon Collie

Improving sustainability and environmental outcomes were a big focus when agronomists and agricultural engineers from throughout the sugar world gathered in north Queensland from 10 to 14 September.

The common thread of scientific research presentations was reflective of increased public scrutiny applied to modern cane growing practices, no more so than in Australia where most of the industry has to co-exist with the Great Barrier Reef.

Three days of workshop sessions in Townsville were interspersed with field trips to view a range of projects in the Burdekin and Herbert River districts.

The specialist gathering under the banner of the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ISSCT) was hosted by BSES Limited and chaired by BSES program leader and senior scientist, Dr Bernard Schroeder.

There were 65 presentations and posters on a wide variety of topical research with participants from 13 different countries.

Improving nutrient and water use efficiency, climate impacts and cropping systems technology were just some of the many topics up for discussion.

The program featured some novel research such as a project under way at the National Centre for Engineering in Agriculture where scientists have developed prototype sensing technology to assist with precision weed control.

The ability to automatically and precisely identify and spot spray weeds in a cane crop would reduce herbicide use and costs with accompanying environmental benefits.

Machine vision is a technology that has potential to identify weeds using a combination of colour, shape, texture and height and would be particularly useful for picking Guinea grass which typically has similar leaf width and colour to cane.

The long term benefits of trash blanketeting are apparent from a comparative trial at Bundaberg.

Significantly higher soil carbon and available nitrogen levels were measured in the shallow topsoil under an eighth ratoon trash blanket growing next to a crop of first ratoon cane.

Farmers teaching farmers

Key learnings

The ISSCT agronomy conference was held in Townsville last month, and attendees learnt about current BSES research projects including:

- Prototype sensing technology to enable automatic and precise weed control.
- Soil research to determine the optimum nitrogen requirement that will maximises profit and minimises environmental losses.
- A rainfall simulation study in the Herbert River district was used to measure the runoff loss of herbicides applied to cane trash compared to bare soil.
Graham Kingston, who is now a consultant after retiring from a 42 year career with BSES, said it was clear that residual trash takes time to break down and benefits accumulate over time.

The soil carbon level in the top 5 cm under the eighth ratoon cane trash was 1.9% compared with just 0.5% in the first ratoon crop.

Available nitrogen levels tripled from 4 to 12 kilograms a hectare.

The accumulation of soil organic carbon also improved soil structure and rainfall infiltration, with the eighth ratoon cane still producing crops of more than 100 tonnes a hectare.

Danielle Skocaj from BSES Tully discussed the potential for using seasonal climate forecasting to fine tune cane nitrogen applications. She is studying the topic for her PhD thesis at James Cook University.

Plotting annual rainfall at Tully against crop yields showed a strong correlation between wet years and low crop yields.

A research trial has been established on four different soil types in the Tully district to test the tailoring of nitrogen applications to realistic yields based on seasonal weather forecasts.

The aim is to determine the optimum nitrogen requirement that maximises profit and minimises environmental losses.

A rainfall simulation study in the Herbert River district was used to measure the runoff loss of herbicides applied to cane trash compared to bare soil.

The research team from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Herbert Cane Productivity Services and Terrain Natural Resource Management also measured the reduced runoff benefits of sub-surface fertiliser application.

Sub-surface fertiliser applied under a trash blanket reduced runoff nitrogen loss by 88% compared to granular surface broadcast application on bare soil. Retaining nitrogen in the soil resulted in improved crop yield.

Herbert Productivity Services manager Lawrence Di Bella said the significant benefits measured in the research project were now being extended to growers in the region.
Win a free registration worth $310

CANEGROWERS is giving away 10 marathon registrations for the 2012 CANEGROWERS Great Barrier Reef Marathon, worth $310, to the first 10 lucky applicants. The package includes:

- Entry to The Solar Eclipse Marathon or Half Marathon.
- Supplies on the route which include water, energy drinks and bananas.
- Medical team with doctors and paramedics from St. John’s Ambulance.
- Time taking with chip timing system.
- Specially-designed Solar Eclipse Marathon medal.
- Personal runner photos and video from Marathon Photos.
- Certificate from Marathon Photos.
- Top quality functional running T-shirt.

For more information on race, accommodation options, the course itself and much more, visit the marathon website: http://solar-eclipse-marathon.com/

To apply: CANEGROWERS members or staff can apply by emailing their name, phone number and address to media@canegrowers.com.au

CANEGROWERS Great Barrier Reef Marathon

By Suzi Moore CANEGROWERS Communications Manager

The CANEGROWERS Great Barrier Reef Marathon is being held this year during the solar eclipse on 14 November 2012. Runners will be pounding down roads lined with sugarcane fields in the early hours of the morning, ending at the finishing line in Port Douglas. This year, the full course is 42 km and the half course is 21 km.

CANEGROWERS CEO Steve Greenwood said CANEGROWERS was proud to claim the naming rights for this event over the next 3 years, saying it was a great fit with all the work being done by sugarcane growers for the Great Barrier Reef over the years. “It is also a great time for our agricultural community to step up and support the tourism industry and local communities which have grown up around the sugarcane industry.”

Event organisers have welcomed CANEGROWERS’ three year commitment. “The Solar Eclipse Marathon, timed to start as the first rays of the sun reappear from behind the Moon in the early morning of 14 November, is the first of three adventure marathons planned for this quieter time of the year to help boost visitation to the area,” says Bruno Bennett, Business Manager for PDEM.

“With the help of CANEGROWERS, the aim of creating a major annual event for our region has now been assured.”

Marathon Ambassador Steve Moneghetti added his plaudits to the announcement saying what a coup it was for this annual event to be associated with CANEGROWERS. Moneghetti said: “The sugar industry is such a large part of Queensland’s life and it’s an industry which has been making its own marathon effort into protecting the iconic Great Barrier Reef. Few people know the Australian cane growing sector is viewed as one of the most progressive in the world. It’s an industry which has woven itself through the development of coastal townships up and down the coast, making CANEGROWERS support of this event such a great fit.

“On a lighter note, let’s face it: when I run marathons I really need my sugar!”
Using bulk purchasing power, Member Plus gives CANEGROWERS members savings on:

- electrical products
- new vehicles
- tickets & attractions
- car hire
- travel & accommodation
- and much more…

To check out monthly Member Plus specials, visit canegrowers.com.au today!

“Member Plus is a very easy, time-saving and worthwhile service to use. I saved $455 on the total purchase of a TV, Blu-ray player and fridge with one phone call to Member Plus. For any further items I require, I will use Member Plus for sure.”

CANEGROWERS member,
Andrew Vassallo, Eton
CANEGROWERS classifieds

FIRST 30 WORDS FREE FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS book online anytime of the day or night www.canegrowers.com.au or email ads@canegrowers.com.au

*As a FREE service to CANEGROWERS members, Australian Canegrower will print suitable classified advertisements UP TO 30 WORDS FREE FOR ONE ISSUE ONLY. A charge of $5.50 will apply for each extra 7-word line or part thereof. A charge will apply for advertising of non-cane growing activities. Advertisements must relate exclusively to cane farming activities, e.g. farm machinery etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at $11 per 7-word line incl GST. Only pre-paid ads will be accepted.

FOR SALE
• 1 x John Deere 6930 4WD. Excellent condition 2300hrs
• Kubota M9580 4WD Air Cab Bi Speed Turning
• Case JX1100U 4WD Air Cab with LH x Case Loader – 1300HRS
• 2005 Cameco Elevator & Fronts complete. GC.

WANTED
• 1 x Double Bin Trailer with Floatation Wheels. Call Ross on 4068 5499 or 0418 988 601

STOP PRESS
R U M Distributors

Toft 345-C8 Track Infielder
8.5 Tonne Highlift. In good condition
Phone: (07) 5594 9607
Pat 0438 599 412 or
Dave 0418 765 832

Liquid Nitrogen Beauleu R.U.M.
Your local R.U.M. distributors are:
Mackay Noel Jensen 0438 595 325
Burdekin & FNQ Wally Ford 07 4782 1990
Technical Information 1800 020 909

Not only do R.U.M. distributors sell R.U.M. They USE R.U.M. Give them a call, Have a look at R.U.M. at work.

QUALITY - PRICE - PERFORMANCE
$100 discount on 4 drum buy!

Diesel 15w40 CJ-4/SM (DEF, EGR) $775
Diesel 15w40 CI-4+/SL Long Drain... $725
(C1-4+ is a superior spec to standard CI-4)
Diesel 15w40 & 20w50 CF-4 .......... $675
(CF-4 is best suited to diesel vehicles pre-1994)
Multi Tractor Trans................... $695
Gear Oil 80w90, 85w140 GL-5 ....... $755
Hydraulic Oil Group II IS0 68 ........ $560
Harvester EPH ISO 68 ................ $695
Greasem $165 20KG/Cart $125 Ctn of 20
Unit 7 / 56 Boundary Rd, Rocklea
THE OILMAN GROUP PTY LTD
Manufactured By A Major International Oil Company
API License 2377
www.oilmcan.com.au
We don’t sell recycled products

We also stock new and second hand Cameco and John Deere Harvester Hydraulic Components
To view our range of equipment Visit www.nqmsales.com.au

JOHNNY FARMING COMPANY
Australian Distributor
Belshina Tyres & Chinese Imports
-Tractor Tyres
-Earthmoving Tyres
-Truck Tyres
-Cars & 4WD Tyres

DROVER EQUIPMENT AUSTRALIA
UTV’s, ATV’s & AG BIKES
See website for more details
P: 07 4852 2577 M: 0412 535 887
www.johnnyfarmingcompany.com.au
E: johnnyfarmingco@bigpond.com
133 Schmidke Road Mackay 4740

We don’t sell recycled products
Mossman - Tully

Lister engine. 30 HP, 3 Cylinder on wheels with Angus Pump suction hose. TCD Southern Cross 2000 travelling irrigator. 40 irrigation pipes 100mm diameter with sprinklers. $7,600 ONO. Could be sold separately. 07 4065 2145 (Tully)

1200 litres Svern front mounted spray tank with hydraulic spray pump to suit 8000 series JD tractors. $2,500 ex GST. 0408 772 972 (Mulgrave)

6 ft Slasher, Howard Gear Box and Trash Rake 3.2 meters 4.5 meters. 0247 327 977

6 ft Slasher, Howard Gear Box and Trash Rake 3.2 meters 4.5 meters. 0247 327 977 (Mulgrave)

Mitsubishi Colt 89 Model. 0457 255 961

Rake 3.2 meters 4.5 meters. 0247 327 977

6 ft Slasher, Howard Gear Box and Trash 972 (Mulgrave)

John Deere Tractor 7710 4 x 4 1850 on 07 4066 9353

Front new tyres VGC. 0428 669 353 or 07 4066 9353

A H 120” Howard rotary hoe with 4.5m offsets, Yoeman centre buster. 0427 070 110 (Mackay)

Toft 4000 wheeled harvester, swing knife, low hours, numerous spare parts, very tidy machine. $20,000 + GST. 0427 355 391. (Mackay)

Kinchant Dam Water Allocation for sale 50 megalitres @ $400/mg. 0401 567 874 or 07 4954 1164 (Mackay)

Fully rebuilt Kratzmann elevator to suit a Toft harvester, excellent condition, $15,500 + GST. Fully reconditioned oil cooler, suit 7700, $4,000 + GST. 0418 784 467

2 complete epicyclic hubs in good condition to suit 94 Toft fulltrack harvester $5,500 each Incl GST. 0413 014 392

2315 October 2012
Mill Mud Trailer. Vawdrey Trailer (1999) 44’ 9”. Registered with 2 x Toft Hi Lift RH side Tipping Bins. 0428 507 180 (Mackay)
John Deere 6800, 4WD tractor, 125hp, near new tyres. $35,000 + GST. 0427 541 140 (Mackay)

12t self-propelled 6x6 elev. infeilder. 6t side/tipper on Leyland tandem GC. Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Mason 9550 4 row precision vacuum seed planter GC. 0438 606 578 (Mackay)

4 Tonne rear tipper bin, twin double acting rams 18/4/30 wheels, good for planting bin. Good condition. $2970. 0419 601 959 0438 606 578 (Mackay)

SeaJay 6.1mt Boat 150 Yamaha $30,000. Compare 400 Compressor $9,900. TP120 Hardhose Irrigator $9,900. Ergon120 Rotary Hoe $9,900. Tractor Case Maxum 125 2009 model. $5,200 inc GST. 0435 026 622 (Bundaberg)

Bunderg 5 Tyne Ripper $4,400. Celli 120 Rotary Hoe $9,900. Trailo 120 Hardhose Irrigator $9,900. Compare 400 Compressor $9,900. Sealy 6.1mt Boat 150 Yamaha $30,000. 0417 746 623 (Maryborough)

Wanted

Tractor tyres of all sizes. 07 4168 4664 all hours.

HBM 4 Tonne Tipper with PTO driven wheels. Ph. 02 6963 6131 or 0412 696 313, Wheeler Cane Harvester. 0428 988 092 (Bundaberg)

International 1086 or 1486 tractor in good condition. 0427 624 212

Dump rake to suit three (3) point linkage and coil–tyne cultivator. 07 4959 5853 (Mackay area)

Rear tractor tyres & rims to suit MF 35 14-9-28 or swap for 13-6-38 tyres & rims. 07 4959 5883 or 0407 643 441

LS Final drive to suit Cameco 2500 full track. 0407 054 417

18.4R 46 or 20.8R42 tyres and rims to suit JD 8300 in good condition. 0409 912 062 (Tablelands)

Spare parts workshop manual for 205 MF Harvester. 0407 182 500

MSW trash incorporator, or trash incorporator disc assemblies any condition. 07 4056 3056 or 0427 563 056 (Gordonvale)

Dirt scoop 3 point linkage series1 linkage dump scoop. 07 4782 0140 (Inkerman)

Small offset, 20 discs or similar, 0407 595 212 (Mackay)

Stick planting extractor & plant trailers. 07 4777 6190 (AH) or 07 4777 1327 (AH)

Elevator to suit a Toft 7000. 0409 912 062

2 x 600 ltr Hardie spray tanks.1 with 4 row boom with Irvin legs, good condition $4,600 incl GST. 2nd with boom & 4 row bar, legs not included, good condition $4,600 incl GST. 0419 646 066

NSW

2 x 600 ltr Hardie spray tanks.1 with 4 row boom with Irvin legs, GC. $4,600 incl GST. 2nd with boom & 4 row bar, legs not included, GC. $4,600 incl GST. 0419 646 066

WEATHER REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Recorded rainfall in mm</th>
<th>Average rainfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 days to 9 am</td>
<td>Year to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/10/2012</td>
<td>09/10/2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mossman</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mareeba AP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Sophia</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babinda</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tully</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardwell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucinda</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingham</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abergowrie</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CANEGROWERS RETIREMENT FUND

Phone 07 3864 6444 for a Product Disclosure Statement
WWW.CRF.NET.AU

Warranty: Advertisers and/or Advertising Agents accept full responsibility for the contents of all advertisements and agree to indemnify the Publisher against all liability and claims or proceedings whatsoever arising from the publication and without limiting the generality of the foregoing to indemnify each of them in relation to defamation, slander of title, breach of copyright, infringement of trademarks or names of publication titles, unfair competition or trade practices, royalties or violation of rights of privacy AND WARRANT that the material complies with all relevant laws and regulations and that its publication will not give rise to any rights against or liabilities to the Publisher, its servants and agents in particular, that nothing therein is capable of a breach of Part V of the Trade Practices Act 1984.

Indemnity: Advertisers and/or Advertising Agents accept full responsibility for the contents of all advertisements and agree to indemnify the Publisher against all liability and claims or proceedings arising out of the publication of such advertisement. Provision of material or copy for publication constitutes acceptance by Advertisers and Advertising Agents of this condition.
Nothing will protect your fields more than a **good hard look**.

Cane growers are the key to protecting Australia’s fields from exotic insects and diseases that could devastate the industry.

It is important that you are aware of the risk, and if you spot anything unusual in your field you should always check it out and call your local BSES office or the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline** on **1800 084 881**. The call is free (except from mobiles) and early detection will help protect your industry.

Visit [www.planthealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au) for further information and a list of the top priority pests.

**LOOK. BE ALERT. CALL AN EXPERT.**

**EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE**

**1800 084 881**
PAINT THE TOWN RED
3.95% FINANCE ON
60-100HP TRACTORS*

Winter is over and it's time to paint the town red with finance from 3.95%* on 60-100 PTO horsepower tractors in Case IH's Maxxum®, JX, JXU, JX Straddle and Quantum C ranges. Offer only applies to tractors delivered before December 31st 2012. Don't miss out; talk to your Case IH dealer today! www.caseih.com

Terms and conditions apply. 3.95% p.a. for 36 months with 40% deposit and equal monthly repayments on selected models, 60-100 PTO HP, while stocks last. Finance provided by CNH Capital Australia Pty Ltd, only to approved business applicants. See participating dealers for more information.