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Cover picture: Despite the continuing wet weather, harvest is underway across the state.

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The science, politics and confusion over the Reef

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

The true business of farming is well and truly at hand.

With a difficult and frustrating harvest season unfolding, we are all hoping to see some fine weather deliver momentum and certainty through the later part of the year.

Nothing tests the tenacity of the industry and its capacity to work together more than the unifying desire to get the crop off as efficiently as possible.

While I call this the real business of farming - the day to day reality for our members - there is also a wealth of issues to be tackled behind the scenes.

It's our job at CANEGROWERS to both forecast these issues and, if possible, head them off before they have direct impact on the core business of our members.

Much like the actual weather forecast, projecting future policy challenges for our industry is an art in itself. However, experience and past performance are pretty good predictors.

Policies and communication around the health and actions to maintain the vitality of the Great Barrier Reef are never off our radar.

This month, the Reef raises itself to an even higher priority, with the media adding to an already a volatile mix of confusion and mixed messages about the damage associated with the recent coral bleaching event.

While early reporting on the consequences of this event predicted up to 95% mortality for corals, the extent of the bleaching was later clarified to be focused on the northern section of the Reef. This week we saw additional reporting that up to 35% of corals in this area have died.

One response to this is to suggest that the science is wrong, inflated or poorly reported. Or that there are ulterior motivations associated with the messages.

Alternatively, it could be that analysis of the event is indeed complex and the effects genuinely uncertain within the timescales we require.

My theory is that all of these possibilities are true to a greater or lesser extent. The real problem is not the information as such, it is the decisions that are made as a result of it.

I suspect over the coming weeks this type of confused reporting will become even more profound for our industry.

We are also awaiting the release of the State Government to release its next iteration of the Reef Water Quality Report Card.

Unfortunately the track record on the release of these reports cards is not great. In fact, every time a report like this has been released in recent years, it has generally been bad news for our industry.

In the past these reports cards have reported on water quality improvements across the Reef and compared it to a previous water quality benchmark.

As an industry that is often targeted to do more to improve the quality of the water entering the Reef, it is a shame that this report card process is often based on old and irrelevant practice-change information (compared to BMP adoption) and that rather than being part of the reporting process we are deliberately kept in the dark.

So, as it has been in the past, it appears it may be in the future.

We are very proud of the extensive and deliberate steps cane growers are taking to adopt Smartcane BMP and other changes to engage in real action associated with managing a sustainable farming enterprise right next door to one of the world's greatest natural wonders.

This report card will come and go - some people will choose to grandstand over its contents, others will be more circumspect, but many people will be simply left confused.

CANEGROWERS will be professional and diligent in our assessment, but most of all we will continue to respect and champion the efforts of those farmers who refuse to be swayed by the rhetoric but instead take a leadership role in forging a sustainable and profitable industry for all. ■



“We will continue to respect and champion the efforts of those farmers who refuse to be swayed by the rhetoric but instead take a leadership role in forging a sustainable and profitable industry for all.”



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Meet your new policy committees

The CANEGROWERS policy committee structure provides the opportunity for growers to do a deep dive investigation into critical issues affecting the future of our industry.

Three core policy committees have been formed from members of the Policy Council, who selected their own areas of interest and expertise.

The Committees will be facilitated by a CANEGROWERS Policy Manager and may seek additional contributions from others within the industry as the committee itself sees fit.

The Committee chairmen, who are all Directors of the QCGO Board will regularly report policy development progress to the Policy Council.



CANEGROWERS

FARM INPUTS AND RESEARCH

Burn Ashburner

Kevin Borg – Mackay (Chairman)
Glenn Clarke – Proserpine
Mark Pressler – Bundaberg
Michael Pisano – Herbert River
Steven Pilla – Burdekin
Tom Harney – Tully

This committee will deal with policy in the following important areas:

- Research, Development & Extension (SRA, Productivity Services, GM sugarcane, Grower Training)
- Value chain (CSA support, Cane auditing/Milling technical, Harvesting)
- Industry expansion - Transport
- General farm inputs
- Farm Business Management
- Workplace Health & Safety

ECONOMICS AND TRADE

Warren Males

Rajinder Singh – Tableland (Chairman)
Allan Dingle – Bundaberg
Phil Marano – Burdekin
Owen Menkens – Burdekin
Anthony Ross – Mackay

With 80% of Queensland's raw sugar make exported, this committee has a strong focus on the costs of production and on the returns from exports. It will cover these policy areas:

- Sugar marketing - Electricity pricing
- International trade - Taxation
- Domestic sugar trade - Competition

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Matt Kealley

Joe Marano - Innisfail (Chairman)
Mark Mammino - Isis
Drew Watson - Mossman
John Ferrando - Cairns region
Jeff Cantamessa - Herbert River
Greg Plath - Mackay
Michelle Fischer - Rocky Point

This committee deals with some of the most complex and challenging issues facing growers and the industry. It will address policy around:

- Smartcane BMP - Biosecurity
- Great Barrier Reef water quality
- Weeds and pests
- Chemical and fertiliser stewardship
- Vegetation and land management

SUGAR TAX SUGGESTION

Industry responded quickly to suggestions recently from Federal Liberal MP Russell Broadbent for a sugar tax of 10% in Australia to fund sporting facilities.

The Food and Grocery Council said there was no evidence that singling out sugar with a tax would combat obesity.

CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan told ABC Radio that the debate around a sugar tax simplified what is a complex debate about nutrition.

"We're proud to be producers of sugar which is a natural product grown in a very healthy environment in Australia and is a very good energy source for Australians," he said.

"It just needs to be consumed sensibly and in moderation and indeed the stats support that most Australians do that."

FARM PRODUCTION TO HIT \$58.4 BILLION

The gross value of Australian farm production is forecast to increase to \$58.4 billion in 2016-17.

That's according to the latest analysis released in the ABARES Agricultural Commodities report.

Acting ABARES Executive Director, Peter Gooday, said that, if realised, the gross value of farm production would be around 13% higher than the average value for the past five years.

This is due largely to an increase in the gross value of crop production.

"In 2016-17, the gross value of crop production is set to increase by 6.6% to \$29.2 billion, which is largely due to a rise in the gross values of horticulture, cotton and oilseed production," Mr Gooday said.

Export earnings for sugar are expected to increase 21%.

A significant rise in export earnings is also forecast for cotton (40%) and canola (43%).

However overall export earnings from farm commodities are forecast to fall slightly to \$44 billion in 2016-17.

Beef exports are forecast to fall by 12%, mutton by 17% and dairy products by 1%.

VIDEO WINNERS CELEBRATE CANE GROWERS' REEF COMMITMENT

A CANEGROWERS video competition has shone the spotlight on the efforts of growers to safeguard the Great Barrier Reef.

Canetube, backed by the Australian Government Reef Programme, asked students and anyone creative in the community to make a short video highlighting the work of farmers, their partnerships with government programs and the importance of the industry to regional communities and the economy.

"Farming in Queensland has changed significantly in recent years and our growers are driven by a deep desire to protect the beautiful Reef which is in their backyard," Matt Kealley CANEGROWERS Manager of Environment and Sustainability said.

"But farmers can be a modest and quiet bunch so we needed the help of budding filmmakers and animators to help celebrate their achievements."

CANEGROWERS will be sharing these videos far and wide to tell the story of the technologies and positive farming practices that are helping the Reef.

Feel free to join in on Facebook, Twitter, your websites and other platforms and share them with friends and contacts.

CANEGROWERS received some excellent entries. The finalists can be viewed on the Canetube YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/thecanetube/playlists.

MAJOR PRIZE WINNER (\$10,000)

The Reef that we love – Kathryn Dryden, Innisfail - <http://bit.ly/2cP4Dcj>

A two-minute animation showing the relationship between cane farming, the environment and coastal Queensland communities.

SECOND PRIZE (\$5,000)

Cane growers: The Wet Tropics hidden environmentalists – Cameron Kennedy, Cairns <http://bit.ly/2cwCoTm>



SECONDARY SCHOOL PRIZE (\$1,500)

Sustaina-billet-y – Sam Camm, Mackay region <http://bit.ly/2cRJC3J>

PRIMARY SCHOOL PRIZE (\$1,500)

Finn's Word on the Sweet – Finn and Hannah Dryden, Innisfail <http://bit.ly/2ciTOzi>

The Canetube competition received assistance from the Australian Government, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and Smartcane BMP (the sugarcane industry's best management practice program for farms).

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CANEGROWERS Regional round-up

By CANEGROWERS district offices

Mossman

At Week 14, Mossman Mill had processed a total of 474,371 tonnes of cane for a mill average of 11.30 CCS.

Coastal growers have supplied 345,087 tonnes of cane for an average of 10.65 CCS, while Mareeba growers have supplied 129,284 tonnes of cane for an average of 13.04 CCS.

Light rain has continued to disrupt harvesting operations across the district, with throughput further hampered by mechanical issues at the mill.

Congratulations to Chris McClelland who is the third grower in Mossman to achieve Smartcane BMP accreditation.

WANT MORE NEWS, VIEWS AND PHOTOS?

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Cairns Region

Growers across the region are becoming increasingly concerned about season length and the opportunity to get off all of their crop.

Unseasonal wet weather has had a negative impact on both planting and harvesting. The season to date CCS also remains well below the five year average.

Tully

With less than two weeks before the mid-point of the harvest and crushing season, CCS is at a disappointing level of 11.7.

Although CCS is climbing slowly, it is inevitable that the seasonal average for 2016 will be well below the long term average for the district.

Cane yield continues to increase due to the damp, humid conditions and some varieties are showing signs of early suckering.

The Mulgrave Zone Cane Supply Agreement is likely to be ready for distribution in the coming days.

Babinda Zone growers, for the most part, have signed their contract and are awaiting the outcome of the on supply agreement, where relevant.

Harvesting has continued despite some parts of the district receiving heavy showers. Most growers have taken the view that they will harvest what they can when they can.

Planting has been disrupted but is still underway in some parts of the district.

Despite their busy workload, many growers have taken the time to attend information meetings on future of raw sugar marketing and the progress of cane supply contract negotiations.

Herbert

At the time of printing the Herbert had crushed just over 40% of the estimated 2016 crop by both tonnage and area.

Rain during week ending 17 September, as well as some mill issues, resulted in a full day of lost processing time.

Harvesting contractors and growers are working hard to find firm ground to keep the harvesters and haulouts rolling in nightmarish conditions.

Planting remains well behind schedule, especially in the more traditionally wet parts of the Herbert.

SRA's variety officer Heidi Clements is leaving the Herbert to take a position as a plant breeder with the cotton industry at Narrabri, NSW.

Heidi will be missed for her wealth of knowledge and experience in the Herbert variety program and also for the way she developed the cane exhibits at the Ingham Show, where

there has been an upsurge of interest from young exhibitors.

SRA has provided a timely reaffirmation of its commitment to continue with the Herbert's variety improvement program and the recruitment of a new officer to replace Heidi is underway.

SRA is also recruiting for the farm manager position at its Herbert station following the relocation of Andrea Bryan in recent months.

Grower Choice in marketing remains the major issue for growers and the organisation.

There has been some written communication with Wilmar in regard to the growers' proposed draft Cane Supply Agreement and detailed feedback has been provided to Wilmar regarding its draft CSA.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River is willing to meet at any time in the

near future to negotiate. We are still awaiting a response to the detailed feedback provided to Wilmar. A confidential update has been forwarded to members.

The re-shaped Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership (which includes Terrain NRM as a partner with industry) is in full recruitment mode, with 11 extension and science officer positions available.

These positions will support the delivery of a Commonwealth-funded program of engagement with cane growers across the Wet Tropics Region with the aim of achieving end of catchment water quality improvements through tailored nutrient and herbicide regimes for growers that include a focus on productivity, profitability and sustainability.

Burdekin

At the end of Week 15, 3.8 million tonnes or 46% of the crop had been crushed compared to 69% or 5.7 million tonnes at this time last year. It is expected the last stick of cane will be crushed after Christmas and growers remain concerned that there will be standover.

Representative groups from all regions that supply Wilmar mills came together in Townsville recently and the outcome of the meeting was a united view that they will fight to stop Wilmar stripping them of their rights to utilise QSL as their sugar marketer.

It has been a long time since all of the Burdekin collectives were united but Wilmar's actions have achieved this.

Phil Marano, Chair of CANEGROWERS Burdekin said that the relationship between growers and the miller has never been so bad.

"Historically, when the price of raw sugar has been at these attractive levels, growers have been putting as much land under cane as they could," he said.

"Due to Wilmar's actions, what is happening today is that cane farmers are looking to diversify into alternate crops so they are not solely reliant on Wilmar.

"Wilmar has encouraged this to happen by cancelling the long term cane supply agreement and taking an unacceptable negotiation stance that is delaying a replacement agreement."

Wilmar, in its submissions to government and comments in the media, have made much of its \$2 billion investment in Queensland mills.

This investment could be negatively impacted without a sufficient supply of cane.

Wilmar has stated that some growers have signed an individual contracts. CANEGROWERS Burdekin understands that some growers have decided to take the risk so they could lock in forward prices for 2017 and 2018.



We stress to any growers considering this action to take care in going out on their own as they are giving up on many long term operational collective benefits.

Pictured above: Grower representatives from Wilmar milling districts meet in Townsville to discuss Cane Supply Agreementss .

Continues page 8...

Proserpine

Rain interrupted harvesting operations in Proserpine again over the past fortnight, with another four days lost in addition to the 26 days already lost so far this season.

Falls of between 20 and 30 millimetres were recorded through most of the district, with harvesting crews forced to continually move around in search of dry ground.

Less than 130,000 tonnes of cane were crushed during the fortnight bringing the season to date total to 690,041 tonnes.

This represents around 38% of the revised season estimate of 1.8 million tonnes. At the same time last year, Proserpine mill had completed 58% of its annual harvest.

The wetter than average winter and spring are also affecting CCS levels and last week's average of 12.70 was well below the same period last year when the weekly CCS was 15.06.

Year to date CCS now stands at 12.48.

Providing there is no more rain interruptions, the mill remains optimistic of a mid-December finish.



Mackay

Wet weather again impacted on throughput at Mackay Sugar's three mills for the week ending 18 September.

Throughput for the week was 182,822 tonnes, bringing the season total to 2,357,637 tonnes. PRS for the week was 12.70 with a PRS season to date average of 12.40.

Respectively the mills crushed: Farleigh 60, 866, Marian 63,818 and Racecourse 58,138 tonnes.

Cane supply was sporadic due to wet harvesting conditions, while Marian Mill encountered bagasse system faults and a lack of injection water pump capacity during this week.

Isis

In Week 12, Isis growers passed the half way point for the season, with the Isis Mill processing 729,777 tonnes of the 1.3 million tonnes estimated for 2016.

Harvest in Week 11 was slowed by storms which brought rain falls of between 6mm and 21.4mm across the region. Despite this 59,222 tonnes were still processed through the mill. Further delays affected production in Week 12, with 59,365 tonnes processed.

Given the effects of storms and subsequent delays, our harvest groups and the mill delivered an outstanding effort to reach the 118,587 tonnes processed over weeks 11 and 12. This progress indicates the 2016 crushing campaign remains on track to be completed by late November.

Whilst wet conditions lowered cane quality, we are still seeing a steady climb in CCS. A surprising drop in fibre and ash values was noted in Week 11, with one harvest group delivering fibre values at 13.04% and ash values at 1.37% in comparison to the weekly averages of 15.05% for fibre and 2.09% for ash.

The season to date CCS has climbed to 13.42 with the weekly CCS rising to 14.10 in Week 11 and 13.92 in Week 12. KQ228 still dominates supply and continues to deliver excellent CCS with a South Kolan grower achieving 15.96 units from spring plant KQ228 in Week 11. In Week 12 Q208 took the spotlight with a Gregory River grower achieving CCS of 15.89 units from 6th Ratoon Q208.

Plane Creek

Wilmar's Plane Creek Mill hit the 38% mark in Week 13 (ending 17 Sep) with a throughput of 44,880 tonnes bringing the season total so far to 529,538 tonnes. CCS rose slightly for the week to 13.15, for a season average of 12.68.

Rain late in the week impacted on harvesting, while a failed tippler trunnion roller shaft on Thursday was the only major stop for the mill for the week. Highest CCS sample for the week was from the West Hill area of a healthy 15.69 units from 5th ratoon Q208.

Bundaberg

The Bundaberg Sugar mills crushed 88,715 tonnes of cane during Week 13, bringing the total crushed so far this season to 848,726 tonnes. This is approximately 49% of the revised 2016 season crop estimate.

The average CCS at both Bundaberg mills was higher than the previous week's result. Bingera's average CCS rose by 0.05 units with a result of 14.27, while Millaquin's CCS increased by 0.12 units to 14.22. The district average CCS for the week was 14.24 units, bringing the season average to 13.57.

We have agreed to increase the Base CCS to 13.60 at both mills from Week 14 (commencing 18 September).

The highest individual CCS recorded for the week was 16.60 units. This was from KQ228A plant cane from the Millaquin area. The three major varieties of KQ228A, Q240A and Q208A once again made up the majority of supply.

Maryborough

As at 19 September, MSF has crushed 425,009 tonnes at CCS of 13.29.

Last week the mill crushed 38,497.22 tonnes at CCS of 13.64. The highest CCS for the week was 16.00, from a block of Q240 R1 from Tinana.

The district has received some light showers over the past week which has caused some interruption to the crushing. The mill has now crushed approximately 55% of the estimated crop of 770,000 tonnes and is on target to complete crushing by the end of November, weather permitting.

The spring distribution of tissue cultured plants has been completed. ■

Money Matters

with AustSafe Super

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Over the past few weeks, you've learnt a little bit more about AustSafe Super, what motivates us, how we operate and how we provide support to CANEGROWERS.

This week, we'll be highlighting some of the tools that AustSafe Super can supply to employers and members to ensure all their super is in the same spot and working as hard as it should be.

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SRA releases new **VARIETY GUIDES FOR 2016/17**

SRA has released new hard-copy publications that provide detailed information on sugarcane varieties for growers and millers.

The 2016/17 variety guides contain specific local information that is applicable to the needs of all sugarcane regions in Australia. Variety guides have been released for the following regions: *Southern and NSW; Burdekin and Central; and Herbert and Northern.*

SRA Adoption Officer **Roderick Fletcher** said the guides provide growers and millers with detailed information about sugarcane varieties to help them make the decisions about which varieties may suit their conditions and other requirements.

"Breeding new sugarcane varieties is the single largest focus area that SRA invests in for growers and millers," Mr Fletcher said.

"These guides provide useful information on agronomic considerations when selecting new varieties to plant and trial. The information comes from the best available data of regional variety performance and disease ratings."

Far North Queensland sugarcane grower **Len Parisi** said he was a keen reader of all published information on varieties so that he could make informed decisions about what varieties to plant.

He said that good information, such as that provided in the variety guides, was vital to help inform his decisions. As well as new varieties that have been approved for release for Far North Queensland, SRA6 and SRA7, Mr Parisi said that the main varieties on his planting list include: Q240, Q241, Q242, Q245, Q246 and Q247.

"I am very happy with the new varieties," he said. "It is hard to get new varieties to work properly for everybody, but the research into them has been spot on and SRA are doing very well."

"Not all varieties will work for everyone and we all have to take new varieties on



board and use them in our area and see what is suitable.

"I have a lot of soil types, from high range granite gravels to river flats, so there is not one variety that suits all of my conditions. I make sure I read all the material that comes out, attend events, talk to the plant breeders, and then work out what I want for my property."

Further information on varieties and farm planning is available via SRA's free online tool, QCANSelect, which provides comprehensive information to maximise productivity from variety selection.

NEW RESEARCH IDEAS SOUGHT TO BENEFIT AUSTRALIAN SUGARCANE INDUSTRY

SRA is seeking new and innovative research ideas that will help improve the productivity and profitability of sugarcane growers and millers.

Each year, SRA invests in targeted activities that will deliver benefits on-farm and at the mill.

SRA is now putting the call out for applications for new research projects that would begin from 1 July 2017 onwards.

SRA CEO **Neil Fisher** said that research ideas were sought within identified priority areas that aligned with the SRA strategic plan and four Impact Areas.

"SRA has analysed our current portfolio of research activity and the current call for projects is being prioritised toward new projects that would fill a gap in our existing research knowledge," Mr Fisher said.

"We encourage researchers and research institutions to put their best ideas forward so that we can create real benefit for growers and millers."

"We also seek projects that have been developed in consultation with industry, that have a focus on collaboration and require an investment that is realistic in relation to the potential outcomes."

More information on the SRA strategic plan and four Impact Areas is available at www.sugarresearch.com.au.

Information on how to apply is also available from the website. Alternatively you can call the SRA Research Funding Unit on (07) 3331 3333 or email funding@sugarresearch.com.au.

Applications opened on 1 September 2016 and will close on 9 October 2016.

SRA will run a two-stage selection process beginning with the submission of preliminary research proposals (PRPs). Successful PRP applicants will be invited to submit a final research proposal (FRP).

Pictured: Fishery Falls farmer Len Parisi has a long list of varieties on his planting list in 2016. Inset: Variety Guide 2016/17



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By Greg Beashel
QSL CEO and Managing Director

“Accessing pool results is only part of the process. It’s just as important, if not more so, to know how to interpret and compare this information.”

Understanding and comparing pool results

QSL has always been committed to providing growers with regular updates on the performance of its pricing pools. However the ability to compare our performance with other marketers has taken on added importance in light of Marketing Choice.

While past or current performance is no guarantee of future results, growers need to be confident they are comparing ‘apples with apples’ when they look at different marketers’ pricing results.

QSL provides regular updates on pricing pools on our website (www.qsl.com.au), as well as a matrix for each pool which allows growers to calculate potential changes to the pool’s returns based on fluctuations in the ICE 11 raw sugar price and the Australian dollar exchange rate.

You can find the current indicative pool prices and links to the matrices on the QSL website homepage.

But accessing pool results is only part of the process. It’s just as important, if not more so, to know how to interpret and compare this information.

QSL’S PASSIVE MANAGEMENT BENCHMARK

When assessing our pool performance, QSL often refers to our performance

in relation to the Passive Management Benchmark (PMB). But what is the PMB and why do we use it?

The Passive Management Benchmark is basically a pricing performance benchmark calculated by determining the result of pricing undertaken in a routine manner by following an evenly spread sales pattern, adjusted for applicable constraints such as infrastructure, storage and the time available to price.

The PMB is, in effect, the pricing result that would have been secured if you had no view of the raw sugar market and just priced the same amount each trading day during the period concerned.

By comparing our pricing results against the PMB, QSL is assessing the success of our pricing decisions.

Did we successfully read the market and adjust our marketing and sales program to capture added value, or did we make decisions that didn’t pay off?

The PMB provides a baseline against which we can make those assessments.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE VS INDIVIDUAL POOL RESULTS

When we shared our 2015-Season results for all QSL-managed pricing pools back in July, we advised that the average net result (inclusive of the QSL Shared Pool outcome) for the QSL-managed ICE 11 Pools was A\$388.67/tonne IPS.

This average net result price is a weighted average of the QSL-managed pool results, calculated as if a grower had tonnage in all of the available QSL Pools proportional to the total allocations made state-wide. ►





It does not include individual forward pricing results, or the QSL US Quota Pool (which finished the 2015 Season at \$614.84/tonne IPS net).

Due to the high amount of tonnage allocated by growers to the QSL Harvest Pool, this pool's result has a strong impact on QSL's average net result.

So while the QSL average net result provides an insight into grower pricing secured through the QSL-managed pools, our individual pool results provide the full picture of the possibilities that were available through that season's QSL pricing products.

Last season, all but one of QSL's managed 2015-Season pools surpassed our weighted average price, with the Actively Managed Pool the best in-season performer with a final result of \$412.93/tonne IPS net, while our 2015 3-Season Forward Pool was the overall best performer, returning \$440.71/tonne IPS net.

COMPARING RESULTS

QSL strongly believes that price performance comparisons must be done on a like-for-like basis.

We also believe that the outcomes achieved by individuals or by committees making pricing decisions on behalf of individuals should be reported separately and not included in a marketer's average prices, as they are not results determined by the actions of the marketer and therefore not a reflection of that marketer's performance.

When comparing the results of raw sugar marketers, make sure you clarify:

- *The period of time the product or pool is being priced over*
- *Who is making the pricing decisions*
- *Whether the values reflect actual prices paid or are simple averages of a number of pools/products*
- *Whether the values include US Quota allocations*
- *The risk management strategies and mechanisms used in each of the products.* (For example, it would be misleading to compare an in-season production risk pool with specific restrictions governing when sugar

can be priced, to any other pool not operating in a similar way or with a very different objective.)

HOW WE COMPARE

I've included a comparison of 2015-Season Pool results below.

Please note that the QSL Actively Managed Pool result has been represented in two forms, both with and without a USQ premium allocation, in order to enable a fair comparison with the relevant MSF Sugar and Wilmar pools. ■

2015 Season (including USQ Premium)	MSF Sugar	QSL
COMMITTED IN-SEASON POOLS		
MSF Seasonal Pool	\$371	
QSL Actively Managed Pool		\$418
Guaranteed Floor Pool	\$374	\$411
UNCOMMITTED IN-SEASON POOLS		
MSF Late Season Pool	\$407	
QSL Harvest Pool		\$386

All prices AUD/t IPS net. MSF Sugar data sourced from Grower Circular 15 July 2016. QSL prices as of 30 June 2016.

2015 Season (excluding USQ Premium)	Wilmar	QSL
COMMITTED IN-SEASON POOLS		
Wilmar Pool (100% Discretion)	\$383	
QSL Actively Managed Pool (30% Discretion)		\$418

All prices AUD/t IPS net. Wilmar Pool data sourced from Final Cane Payment Advice dated 14 July 2016. QSL prices finalised as of 30 June 2016.

PLEASE NOTE: This report contains information of a general or summary nature. While all care is taken in the preparation of this report, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial, investment or product advice or a risk management strategy. You should seek your own financial advice. This report should not be taken to include representations as to future matters, and nothing contained in this report should be relied upon as a representation as to future matters. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this report.

PRECISION HARVESTING

Could this be the biggest harvesting revolution since the end of hand cutting?

A Queensland company plans to revolutionise Australia's cane harvesting operations, dramatically increasing the quality and quantity of cane reaching the mill, while driving up incomes for growers and harvesting contractors.

The Sugar Cane Harvesting and Logistics Optimisation Tool, or SCHLOT, is the brainchild of father-son team Chris and Stuart Norris.

The pair, who founded Norris Energy Crop Technology in 2009, believe that current practices aimed at reducing the cost of harvesting operations are actually costing the industry tens of millions of dollars each year in lost cane and lost quality.

"The industry is overly concerned with harvesting costs and doesn't seem to appreciate the value of sugar being lost," said Stuart, an aeronautical engineer with experience in the defence, aerospace, resources and agricultural industries.

"Contractors are paid by the tonne and they obviously need to cover their costs, so it is not surprising that many of them simply cannot afford to focus on cane quality and reducing losses.

"RESEARCH SHOWS THAT EVERY DOLLAR SAVED THROUGH SHORTER BILLETS ACTUALLY COSTS AROUND \$5 IS LOST SUGAR – WE WANT TO GIVE THE INDUSTRY THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE TO KEEP THAT \$5."

"I think most people would agree that Harvesting Best Practice reduces losses and gives a better job, the big question is whether or not the gains of HBP outweigh the cost."

"SCHLOT is about finding that 'Sweet Spot', where everyone makes more money.

"The research shows that every dollar saved through shorter billets actually costs around \$5 is lost sugar – we want to give the industry the knowledge and confidence to keep that \$5."

SCHLOT, which is currently in the final stages of development, can overcome these issues Stuart claims.

The online modelling system estimates the best financial outcome for any harvest event by finding the right balance between increased costs and reduced losses. ►

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"SCHLOT considers over 150 parameters in each calculation, so it has most of the variables you can think of covered, and we've found good correlation with actual trial results so far," Stuart said.

"We understand that this is a cost sensitive industry, but giving people the power to compare cost savings and lost income will mean more income for the industry as a whole."

Norris ECT is currently in talks with various milling groups interested in trialing the SCHLOT modelling system in their region.

Stuart believes that once the industry begins to recognise the size of the prize, adoption of SCHLOT will pick up pace across Australia's milling regions.

However, he admits that industry-wide adoption would require a significant increase in the size of Australia's cane harvester fleet.

"Ultimately, the harvester fleet would need to increase by 50%," Stuart said.

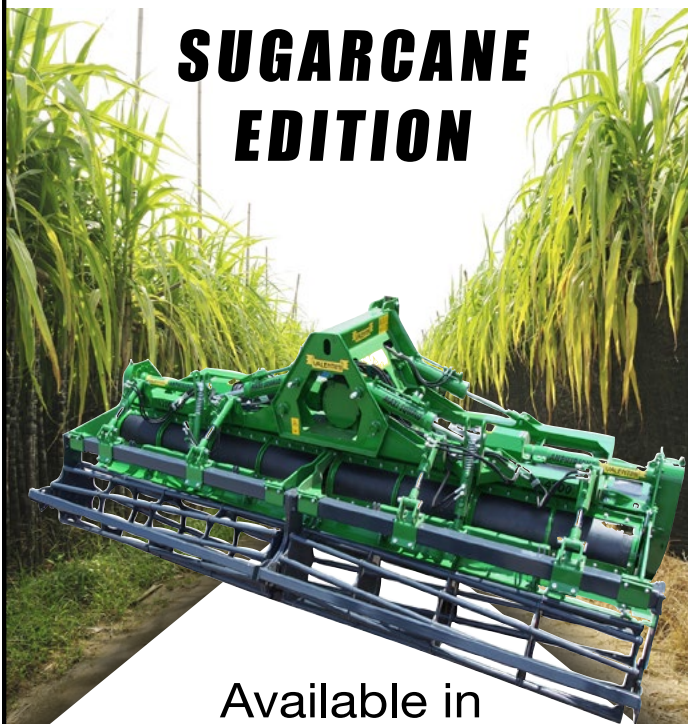
"That's obviously a significant investment in machinery, in the region of \$250-\$300m over time, but when weighed up against the benefit, which SRA themselves conservatively estimate at around \$150m of added value to the industry each year, then we believe it's an investment worth making."

Pictured top: A snapshot of SCHLOT's online interface.

Below: What do short billets really cost? A number of trials have suggested that for each dollar saved on transport with short billets, over \$10 worth of sugar is being lost.



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NIFFTY AG Tillage Solutions are showcasing our multipurpose **P38- Raised Bed Management Tool**.

This tool is for raised beds can be used for pre-applying fertiliser, mixing soybeans into the soil, side dressing, stool splitting, trash incorporation and working soil to depth. This tool has been designed for the Australian sugar cane farmer to provide maximum flexibility allowing you to incorporate your farming methods with minimum passes.

See it in action and discover how it can benefit your operation. To attend one of our demonstrations please contact Nifty Ag Dealer Ben Poggioli on 0407 590 335.

For further information visit our website at:

www.NiftyAg.com



Reduce input costs and increase yields with **ADVANCED TILLAGE TECHNIQUES**

Supplied by Nifty Ag

Precision till machinery manufacturer, Nifty Ag, will showcase its equipment at the National Biological Farming Conference in Cairns, 28-30 October.

Company founder **Steven Peterson** will demonstrate Nifty Ag equipment and speak to delegates about the benefits and techniques of precision tillage and strip-till.

Mr Peterson will also give practical demonstrations of Nifty Ag equipment operating in the field, running trails alongside local dealer **Ben Poggioli** of Tillage Solutions Australia.

This is an ideal time to learn more about how improving tillage techniques can increase outputs and reduce costs.

Mr Peterson said growers had shown a significant interest in the P-38 Raised Bed Management Tool.

"This is a superbly constructed, rugged and versatile tillage device that will add value to all cane farms," he said.

"Designed specifically for Australian sugar cane farmers, the P-38 can be used for pre-applying fertiliser, incorporating soybean into the soil, side dressing, stool splitting, trash incorporation and working soil to depth."

Nifty Ag also produces a rotary harrow for the P-38 Raised Bed Management Tool that reduces soil particle size and any left over clods from the tillage pass.

It also pins any remaining residue in the soil to speed up the decomposition time.

"This has been perfected over the past several years - it offers excellent performance and will not choke like conventional baskets," Mr Peterson said.

Also of interest to cane growers is Nifty Ag's P-50 Sugar Cane Water Furrow Management Tool.

"This tool is used to incorporate residue waste while cleaning and maintaining your water furrows. With the addition of the optional shank, compaction can be relieved in the water furrow to aid water absorption."

Attending the National Biological Farming Conference?

Why not join Ben Poggioli for a tour of his Tolga farm on 28 October, where you'll see Nifty Ag's P-38 and P-50 in action. If you're not attending, other demonstrations will be held in the weeks leading up to the conference. Following the conference demonstrations will be in the Toowoomba and Brisbane areas.

If you would like any further information, please contact Ben on 0407 590 335 (in Australia) or Steven Peterson on (01) 309 335 6354 (in USA).

For more information about the National Biological Farming Conference, please visit the event website at: www.nationalbiologicalfarmingconference.org.au

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The next step in planter technology

Supplied by Vanderfield

With many cane growers already using GPS tractor guidance or adopting some form of controlled traffic practices, the next step is automation and in-field electronic record-keeping on farm implements such as planters.

Vanderfield Eastern Regional Manager, **Jeff Jaques**, says the company has many growers interested in using technology to electronically record their field operations and crop inputs.

"We have seen a large increase in enquiries from our customers looking for ways to utilise their existing investment in equipment and GPS technology to automate application of liquid and dry crop inputs, particularly on their cane planters," Mr Jaques said.

"Initially the interest in GPS rate controllers was about achieving accurate application and maybe one day moving to prescription rates, but right now most of the enquiry is based around electronic

record keeping using application maps from the GPS."

The interest in using this technology on farm implements that are applying crop inputs has been the strongest with cane planters, which Vanderfield service from the Tweed to Proserpine.

Over the past two seasons, the company's professional services and R&D division, VNET Precision Farming, has been engaged to project-manage several cane planter builds for growers in the northern New South Wales, Bundaberg and Mackay regions.

This has been both to retro-fit existing planters and work alongside local manufacturers of new planters.



Main photo: A dual row billet planter fitted with the latest Greenstar technology including implement guidance.

Insert: Custom hydraulic installed by VNET Precision Farming.

Above: Sugarcane yield monitor, in-cab display.

Rate controller technology uses speed and position information from the GPS system to achieve a constant application rate of liquid or dry products, regardless of ground speed.

Typically, this involves adjusting a flow control valve for liquid products and hydraulic or electric motors for dry products.

Electronic feedback for required control comes from various sensors on the machine, such as liquid flow meters and shaft speed sensors.

“When the field is finished the grower can download a precise application report of the exact amount of product used in that field and the average rate applied.”

Use of these GPS control systems has been applied to the in-furrow insecticide application on planters and also to the elevators for consistent billet delivery.

“The advantage of these automated control systems is that once calibrated, the planter operator can quickly change their desired application rates on the GPS display when they move from one field to the next, without making any out-of-cab adjustments,” said VNET’s Planter Specialist **Stephen Frahm**

“When the field is finished, the grower can download a precise application report of the exact amount of product used in that field and the average rate applied.”

The company has also developed optical controllers for equipment with lasers.

An interruption of the laser beam tells the system that enough product is in the bin and the hydraulic motors turn on or off.

“Around two years ago we successfully introduced optic sensors on cane planters to automate elevating chains for consistent billet feed,” Mr Frahm said.

“This gave our customers the confidence in the full automation of cane planting from the tractor cab, making it a single person operation.”

If you would like more information, please contact your local Vanderfield rep on 1300VANDER (1300-826-337).

Sugar Yield Mapping

Supplied by Vanderfield

Vanderfield recently announced the release of an aftermarket sugar cane yield mapping kit. Kits are initially available to suit John Deere 3510, 3520 and CH570 machines, with other harvester models being added in time.

Through their 13 dealerships across Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia, Vanderfield service equipment for almost every crop type grown in Australia, including sugar, grain, cotton, fodder crops and horticulture farming systems.

The exposure to farming practices, technology and equipment from multiple crop types has allowed the company’s R&D division to more easily identify innovative opportunities for their customers.

The recording of crop yield has been available as OEM options on grain harvesters, forage choppers and cotton pickers for some time.

The data provided has helped growers in those farming systems study the cost of crop variability in their fields.

Yield information has underpinned growers’ decisions to implement more advanced precision ag techniques, such as zonal management of their fields.

For this reason Vanderfield decided to invest R&D into investigating options to monitor yield in sugar.

The Vanderfield cane yield mapping kit utilises a load cell data logging system, originally developed for use in machine harvested vegetable crops.

Billets are weighed by load cells as they move up the elevator, with compensation for tilt, elevator speed and ground speed.

The system measures the cane yield once per second with a reference to the GPS position.

This logged data is then used to create yield maps of a cane field.

VNET Precision Farming offers kriging services to convert the large amount

of data into yield maps to then allow growers and their agronomists to ground truth in the field on a tablet.

Consulting services to analyse trends found in the data are also offered.

Vanderfield Mackay Branch Manager **Stephen Emmert** said he was excited about their latest product offering.

“We already have the majority of clients using some form of GPS steering on their farm machinery and many are wanting to take the next step in precision farming, which includes variable rate inputs of fertiliser and soil amendments,” Mr Emmert said.

“Adoption of Smartcane BMP is also driving enquiries on the use of GPS rate controllers for accurate crop input record keeping – naturally the next step for our growers is the desire to understand variability in their crops to begin prescription farming.

“This is why we invested our own R&D into cane yield mapping.”

VNET Precision Farming Manager **Stephen Hegarty** said the company was excited about the agronomic and financial insights from the cane yield maps that may see them become useful decision support tools for growers.

“With accurate calibration we are able to use the cane yield maps to do detailed gross margin analysis within a field,” Mr Hegarty said.

“If there is significant variability in profit across a field, this forms the basis of justifying the return on investment of crop management practises such as variable rate fertilising or field drainage earthworks.”

If you would like more information, please contact your local Vanderfield rep on 1300VANDER (1300-826-337).

Fourth generation cane dynasty

RELIES ON CASE IH

Supplied by Case IH

Fourth generation sugarcane grower **Gary Raiteri**, who farms 157 hectares with his father **Lou** near Proserpine in north Queensland, introduced the first Case IH Austoft sugarcane harvester into his business in 1997. It was a 7700 model and in the almost 20 years since he has purchased another six.

"When our family first began growing sugarcane they were cutting it by hand, but today good quality harvesters are the backbone of our operation," Gary said.

"If they aren't going, we're not going, so having reliable machines is critical to the success of our business."

With a team of six and a limited number of days per year to cut, Gary estimates optimal productivity sits at approximately 800 to 1000 tonnes per day. It's their Austoft harvesters that enable them to achieve this capacity.

"Machinery breakdowns, maintenance and upkeep all add up to less hours in the paddock, which becomes a problem when there's only so many days in a year we can be cutting. The only way we can reach 85,000 to 95,000 tonnes a year is with equipment that gets the job done efficiently."

The Raiteris purchased their latest Case IH Austoft 8800 series sugarcane harvester in 2013 and currently have another on order.

When it came to the newest addition, it was never a question that it had to be an Austoft.

Lined-up alongside competitors, Gary believes Case IH Austoft delivers superior value for money, in addition to 'superhero' performance.

"We are always trying to improve our yield and related efficiencies through the latest and greatest technologies available – whether that's to do with irrigation practices or machinery, and we're confident that with Case IH, we are working with the best."

Gary notes that the Case IH Austoft 8800 Series makes light work of a hard day's work, thanks to joystick operation and cab controls being easier to operate. He can comfortably do 800-1000 tonnes in a day and still feel fresh at the end of it.

He also identifies the automatic base cut height control (Auto Tracker) as a key feature that ensures precise, uniform cutting with reduced losses and stool damage.

"With the Auto Tracker, the harvester does half the job for you, plus it's better for the crop – and that

keeps farmers happy when we're contracting," Gary said.

"The improved hydraulics are also a standout feature. We're yet to find a paddock we can't cut! It cuts through without a worry where other machines have struggled."

Equally important to an operation like Gary's is the ongoing after-sales service, which Gary ranks as second to none. He appreciates that, should something ever go wrong, Case IH will look after him.

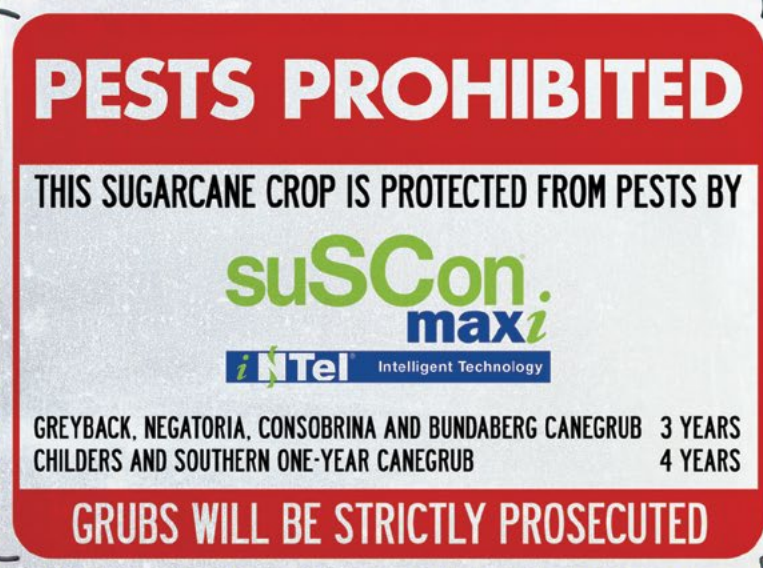
"Farming is an important part of my family's identity, so having the peace of mind that we have the backing and support of Case IH, especially its extensive after sales service in the area, is very important to us.

"At the end of the day, sugarcane is our livelihood and without machines like the Case IH Austoft sugarcane harvesters, we don't have a business. We've entrusted our farm to them because we trust them to get the job done each and every time," concluded Gary.

For more information see your local dealer or visit www.caseih.com.



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Bundaberg's sugarcane community farewells popular grower

Growers in the Bundaberg region have farewelled popular local figure Ernest "Ernie" Twyford.

Ernie passed away peacefully at the Friendly Society Private Hospital on August 25. He'd grown cane in the region for over half a century.

"Dad spent all of his working life cane farming in the Bundaberg area, first at South Bingera with his father the late Jim Twyford snr and later at Electra in the Pine Creek area," son, Graham said.

"He supplied cane to Bingera mill, now Bundaberg Sugar, for 52 years.

"Dad had cut cane by hand as well as worked cane with horses through to the mechanical age of growing and harvesting cane."

Ernie was also well known in the Pine Creek area for his community service.

Ernie is survived by his wife Thelma, children Dianne, Graham, Karen and Trevor, 14 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.



CO-OPERATIVE FARMING FORUM

A Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program (FCCPP) has kicked off with support from across the agricultural sector.

The Program's inaugural national forum in Kingscliff, New South Wales, was attended by farmers and farming groups, farm advisers and people with expertise in co-operatives and other collaborative business models.

"Over 200 people from across the country have converged to network and learn about the potential of co-operatives, collective bargaining and other forms of collaboration in the agriculture sector," Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce said.

"Co-operatives and other collaborative business models can help farmers band together to take greater ownership along the supply chain, boost their bargaining position and deliver increased returns at the farm gate."

The initial membership of the program's Industry Advisory Group (IAG) is in place and Mr Joyce said it would work closely with Southern Cross University, which is delivering the program.

"The IAG will provide ongoing advice to help drive the program to ensure it meets its objectives of providing expert advice and assistance to farmers across Australia looking to establish co-operatives or collaborative business models," Mr Joyce said.

"Co-operatives and other collaborative business models can help farmers band together to take greater ownership along the supply chain, boost their bargaining position and deliver increased returns at the farm gate."

The \$13.8 million Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program is a key initiative of the government's \$4 billion *Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper*.



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Rainfall Report

brought to you by AustSafe Super

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)			Average rainfall (mm)
	7 days to 9am		Year to date	Jan-Sep
	12.09.16	19.09.16		
Mossman	9	38	1489	1834
Mareeba AP	2	2	407	736
Cairns	26	21	1108	1689
Mt Sophia	56	44	2058	2800
Babinda	0	0	2844	3641
Innisfail	67	14	2769	3052
Tully	18	22	2983	3548
Cardwell	29	18	1773	1754
Lucinda	13	8	1815	1790
Ingham	8	20	1687	1671
Abergowrie	16	0	1133	1522
Townsville	11	5	944	908
Ayr DPI	2	0.6	508	752
Proserpine	16	0.8	1253	1098
Mirani	54	9	1272	1211
Mackay	54	0	1453	1256
Sarina (Plane Ck)	30	5	1619	1368
Bundaberg	19	10	735	722
Childers South	22	5	723	618
Maryborough	12	8	711	865
Tewantin	21	17	950	1334
Eumundi	29	16	888	1288
Nambour	26	23	903	1270
Woongoolba	9	1	439	1006
Murwillumbah	24	18	1250	1196
Ballina	3	16	1107	1411
Woodburn	4	17	712	1088



**AustSafe
Super**



The industry super
fund for rural and
regional Australia.

Zero indicates either no rain or no report was sent. These rainfall figures are subject to verification and may be updated later. Weather forecasts, radar and satellite images and other information for the farming community can be accessed on www.bom.gov.au. Weather report provided by the Bureau of Meteorology's Commercial Weather Services Unit.

Mossman – Tully

Toft 6000 with Rotary Chop & Cat 3306DI Motor, good Billet machine. Mob. 0428 100 564

JD 3520, 2012 model, adjustable powerfeed roller, elevator extension, GPS, well maintained, selling at end of 2016 crush. Ph: 0427 667 694

Toft 7500 Track Harvester - HBM Billet Planter - wide Elevator, double tipper bins on Trailer. Ph: 0438 654 784 or 0427 163 519.

Ripper Coulter - \$2000. Ph: 0447 006 371

185 CFM compressor valued at \$22,000 only done 1.8 hours. Kubota engine bargain priced at \$14,500. Any enquiries - Ph 0407 586 815

Toft 5000 swinging knife wheel machine plus extra parts. Ph: 0418 154 557

7 tyne Lely ripper & roller drawbar. \$22,000 + gst. Ph 0427327977

Slip on crop divider shoes to suit a JD 3520. Genuine JD, as new condition. Ph: 0409 912 062

Bonel billet planter, good condition, \$15,000 - Ph: 0407 364 012

Herbert River – Burdekin

2500 Cameco Full Track Harvester, C12 Cat engine, all piston and vane pumps, 4 blade chopper, two speed track drives, can cut two rows at a time up to 1.7m row spacing, plus extras. POA. Phone 0417 710 544

Brand new never used LS Heavy Duty 4 pin final drive hub to suite Cameco harvesters. \$10k Phone 0417 710 544

Dual Row Double Disc open attachment to suit Carta Billet Planter. Complete with shutes. \$4,400 inc. Ph 0417 608 868

John Deere 6210 4WD premium cab tractor. 2780 hours with quick hitch. 40km Quad Box. VGC. \$35,000 inc. Ph 0417 608 868

Mackay – Proserpine

12T SELF-PROPELLED 6x6 elev infielder VGC. 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)

6 Lengths of class 6 PVC Pipes, 6 metres long, 200ml diameter with rubbers \$150 each or \$700 for the lot. Mackay Area. Ph: 0419 705 530

1988 Toft 7700, 250 Cummins, 2 blade chopper system \$40,000 plus GST. Ph: 0427 244 790

Brand new 14.00 R 25 tyres for sale under half of new price. Ph: 0488 300 361.

Valtra 6400 4WD tractor - 100HP, air-con cab, 2004 model, 3700 hours, good condition. \$30,000 (inc gst) ONO. Ph: 0418 710 958 / 4950 3048

Aluminum Flood Gates 40mm are available for sale. SX Coupler 5" x 4" to connect traveling irrigation. Ph: 0408 776 914

Bonel trash incorporator fertiliser box, plastic bin, stainless steel worms, VGC. Ph: 0417 617 084

Bundaberg – Rocky Point

DROP-DECK, tautliner and flat top extendable for hire. 07 4159 8174 or 0417 004 717.

Michelin Agribab radial tyres on rims to suit Massey Ferguson. Rear 18.4/34, 90% tread. Front 14.9/24 on rims, 90% tread. \$3500 inc gst. Ph: 0407 699 779

Avokah water winch 410 turbine with hose reel with hose reel & 200m water lord hose in good working order - Ph. 0412 370 022

4 Row Janke Planter with fertiliser boxes, comes with plates for soy beans, peanuts, sorghum, mung beans etc. Have grown crops to 5.4 tonne per ha \$6750. J I Case 1194 tractor 49hp 12 forward speeds 4 reverse, approx 3000 hrs, gc \$8250. Rawlings 24 plate 24" trailing offsets \$4750. Hodge Cotton King \$250 - Ph: 041 8874 615

Wanted

TRACTOR TYRES of all sizes. 0418 775 698 all hours.

Tool Bar - 2" double bar arched. Phone evenings 07 4157 6198

PTO Rotary drain digger. Ph: 0747 765 242 or 0418 182 068

Positions Vacant

CARMILA AREA - Haulout operator required 2016 season. Ph: 0407 701 298

Work Wanted

Work wanted; wanting sugar cane to cut 2017 season. Ph: 0411 811 768

Property

INGHAM: Cane Farm for sale. Hawkins Creek. Total area 48.3ha. CPA 46.6ha. Shed, Electricity and water. Genuine enquiries Ph. 0407 635 175.

OAKENDEN: Cane farm or sale. Irrigated, flat, no rocks, good soil, close siding for carting, close to town. Call 0428 575 787.

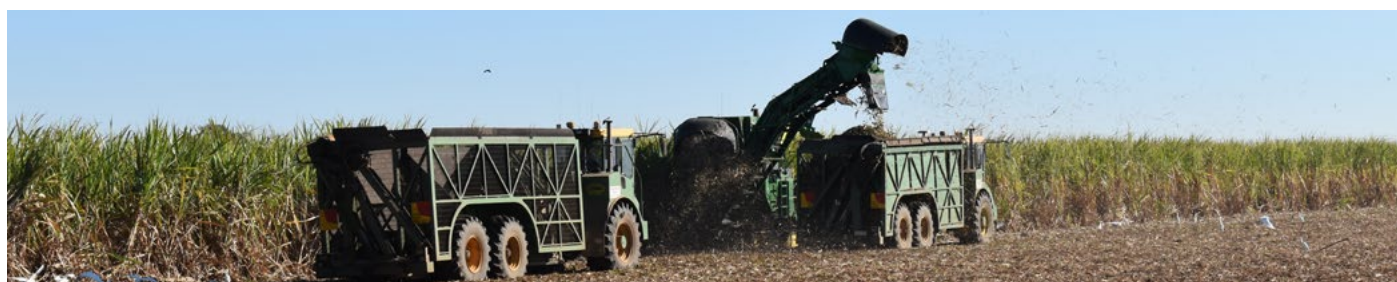
MACKAY: 1750 Acres, seven lots, Coastal flat freehold property. South of Mackay supplying Mackay Sugar. High rainfall area and endless potential for diversification. House and garage, equipped irrigation system, shed, machinery and equipment. Ph: 0407 157 792

MACKAY: 422 hectares, cattle and cane. Huge supply of water, absolutely drought-proof property, 120 mega-litre water license, right on the coast. Ph: 0407157792

HERBERT RIVER: Cane farm 60.73ha with machinery and 4 bedroom dwelling at 194 Lannercost Ext Rd, Ingham Ph. 40454321

WALKERSTON AREA: Cane farm for sale, fully irrigated, 42.5ha cane 3.6ha grazing Ph: 0418 185 663

Wanting to lease cane farm, any size, from Mirani/Dows Creek area. Ph: 0411 811 768





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