

Code of Conduct review panel listens to growers - Regional round-up

CANE

AUSTRALIAN

GROWER



CANEGROWERS

24 September 2018 Price \$9.95



MANAGING RUN-OFF

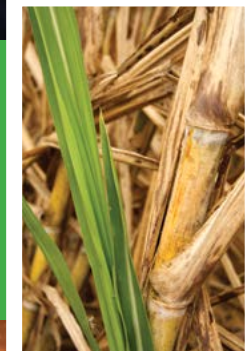
USING WETLANDS TO MINIMISE
OFF-FARM IMPACTS



Women's
field day
a sweet
success



Bioreactors
trialled in
new reef
program



Trends in
sugarcane
borrowings

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR AUSTRALIA'S SUGARCANE INDUSTRY

CANE COUNTRY WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED



ACCESS THE BEST CANE-SPECIFIC COVER ON THE MARKET

Queensland is a beautiful place to live, but it can also be volatile and unpredictable. Making sure you have the right insurance cover is so important.

Get the right cover

CANEGROWERS Insurance brokers have access to a range of insurers to provide you with the most competitive cover.

No fees for members

As a membership service, no broking fees apply for CANEGROWERS members.

We come to you

CANEGROWERS Insurance brokers will visit you on farm to talk over your insurance needs.

Help to lodge claims

If something goes wrong and you need to report a claim, we are here to assist you during the claims process.

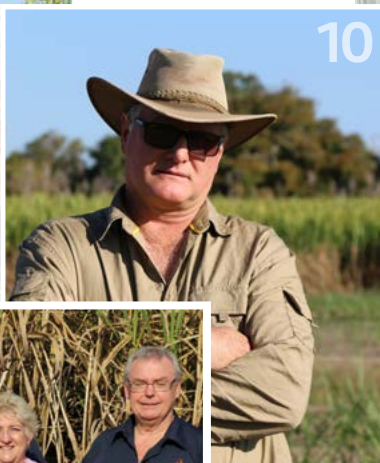
Contact your local CANEGROWERS Office to discover how WE CAN HELP YOU!

CONTENTS

24 September 2018



18



10



20



16



17



8

Features

- 5 Code review panel listens to growers
- 10 Smartcane BMP journey delivers economic outcomes
- 14 Managing run-off: Innisfail grower takes action
- 16 Bioreactors trialled in new reef program
- 17 Research partnership driving the future of Australian sugarcane
- 18 Women's field day a sweet success
- 20 Farm innovations showcased at Precision Agriculture EXPO in Ingham
- 22 Trends in sugarcane borrowings

Also inside:

- 2 CEO's comment
- 4 News in brief
- 6 Regional round-up
- 12 QSL report
- 23 Classifieds
- 24 Rainfall report

COVER IMAGE: Innisfail grower Bill Sinton has created a wetland to capture and treat run-off before it leaves his farm. Read more on page 14.

Editor: Wayne Griffin

Design and classifieds: Angela Linhart

Articles appearing in *Australian Canegrower* do not necessarily represent the policies or views of CANEGROWERS

Published every second Monday by
CANEGROWERS

Level 6, 100 Edward Street, Brisbane,

Queensland Australia

ABN 94 089 992 969

Postal Address: GPO Box 1032, Brisbane,
Queensland 4001 Australia

Telephone: 07 3864 6444; Fax: 07 3864 6429

Email: info@CANEGROWERS.com.au

Website: www.CANEGROWERS.com.au

AUSTRALIAN CANEGROWER ISSN 0157-3039

Volume 40 Number 19

Printed by Printcraft

23 Links Avenue, Eagle Farm QLD 4009

Subscriptions

Yearly subscriptions for 25 issues (postage included)

Within Australia \$160 inc GST

Overseas (AUD) \$250

The consumer is closer than we think

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

The horrendous situation currently facing Queensland's strawberry industry is a salient reminder of just how exposed Australia's farmers are to their consumers. Horticultural producers have always been at the tip of the spear when it comes to food safety and the direct impact on consumers of both farm and supply chain practices. Our thoughts really do go out to the farmers caught up in this event.

It comes at a time of peak production and market opportunity for them. Similar impacts have recently been felt in the live animal export trade and rockmelon production. Clearly the fresher your produce when shipped to the consumer, the higher the risks.

As a largely exported bulk commodity, sugar should be insulated from such a market reaction. In many ways the consumer is often blind to our product and its providence.

Ironically, this does not always work to our advantage.

The consumer backlash to sugar is obvious to anyone in the industry. While it's not the short instant and potentially catastrophic crisis that fresh produce industries often face, it could be considered more of a slowly smouldering deck beneath our feet.

Sugar, as a food ingredient, is still in high demand and global consumption rates are still growing, albeit gradually.

But the individual consumer continues to show signs of an alarming rate of concern, confusion and/or apathy about the role sugar plays in a healthy diet.

Recently, CANEGROWERS joined the Australian Sugar Milling Council to provide evidence to the Federal Senate Inquiry into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia.

Senate inquiries tend to be very broad ranging and can stray into all sorts of interesting, although perhaps unimportant areas.

This inquiry is travelling that well-worn path in that the breadth of input and diversity of views leaves the door open for almost any conclusion to be drawn by the Committee.

But some important issues emerge time and again.

The fact is, Australia does have an obesity problem. It's particularly acute in vulnerable, low socio-economic communities, as well as amongst teenagers (particularly boys), and those who are already overweight or have type 2 Diabetes.

The specific causes, and therefore the response strategies, are really the only issues that are up for debate.

At CANEGROWERS, we believe it is in our industry's best interests to be involved in this discussion, because the tendency to rush to quick but ultimately ineffective solutions might once again leave farmers exposed.

Research conducted by us, again in collaboration with the Milling Council, suggests that Australians are more confused than ever about the messages they get on how to maintain a healthy diet. More worryingly, they look to government to fix the obesity issue.

This is a perilous situation. It appears consumers see government intervention, and not a focus on personal responsibility or trust in the food supply chain, as the pathway to their own health and wellbeing. All the more reason for us to remain engaged in this discussion.

The deck below our feet is, in fact, our support from our local communities. Being part of those communities and supporting them, as we in turn look to them for support, is the only way to remain part of their enduring future.

CANEGROWERS is well positioned to support this approach and through our regional network the opportunities for community engagement are rich and deep, but they cannot be taken for granted.

Further investment and time are needed to broaden our traditional approach to community engagement and recent strategic decisions by CANEGROWERS has positioned us to realign our efforts to this cause.

We look forward to testing and building on these ideas with the community over the coming months and we will be working hard to get your feedback on our progress. ■





Knockdown and residual weed control from a herbicide that stays where you put it

VALOR® 500WG is the herbicide for cane growers that stays where you put it. It can be used with knockdown herbicides for improved control of emerged weeds, or at higher rates for extended residual control in-crop.

Purchase Valor before February 2019 to qualify for the following rewards*

**Southern Cross Lures™
fishing lure**



OR

**Alvey™
fishing reel**



OR

**40 L Engel™
fridge/freezer**



Ask your local rural reseller for details of how to claim.

* Rewards available while stocks last and linked to purchases of Valor, terms and conditions apply.



SUMITOMO CHEMICAL
AgroSolutions Division

www.sumitomo-chem.com.au



*Scan here to see more information
about Valor 500WG Herbicide*

Valor is a registered trademark of Sumitomo Chemical Company, Japan.
Southern Cross Lures is a trademark of Patrick Jones Agronomy Services Pty Ltd.
Alvey Fishing Reel is a trademark of Charles Alvey & Sons Pty Ltd.
Engel Portable Fridge/Freezer is a trademark of Sawafuji Electric Co Limited.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rats: aerial baiting permit extended

Cane growers across Queensland can now access aerial baiting programs to control rat infestations following the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority's (APVMA) decision to approve an industry-wide permit for the control of Australian Ground Rats in lodged sugarcane.

The permit is an extension of a previous aerial baiting permit granted to CANEGROWERS in 2017 that was limited to the Mackay and Herbert growing regions. The new industry-wide permit is valid until 31 March 2022.

Growers in all cane growing districts can now apply Rattoff® by helicopter or unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to cane crops that are lodged following heavy rains and/or high wind events and are not accessible by ground to distribute sachet baits.

"It also means that production losses from rat damage can be reduced, which flows through to tonnes in the mill, CCS in the cane and dollars in the pocket."

"The benefits to growers and the industry is that growers have another option to effectively treat rats in areas where cane is difficult to get to," CANEGROWERS Senior Manager for Environment and Sustainability **Matt Kealley** said.

"It also means that production losses from rat damage can be reduced, which flows through to tonnes in the mill, CCS in the cane and dollars in the pocket."

The permit allows for a maximum 10,000 hectare treatment area across the entire cane industry.

Growers baiting for rats under the conditions of the permit must record the total area treated and the occurrence of any non-target deaths resulting from aerial baiting (e.g. birds).

These records must be provided to the local Cane Productivity Services Board, who will then forward them to CANEGROWERS to be compiled in an annual report to the APVMA.

Withholding periods of 14 days after application also apply to harvesting or grazing activities.



MOBILE BLACKSPOT

The Federal Government is calling on local councils, as well as state and federal MPs to identify mobile black spot locations to be targeted in Round Four of the \$220 million Mobile Black Spot Program.

Round 4 of the program was announced in June this year with the government investing \$25 million to eliminate mobile black spots in regional Australia.

"I'm delighted to see the next round of the program coming to fruition. The program is changing lives for so many regional and remote communities across Australia," Minister for Regional Services **Bridget McKenzie** said.

"We're taking a targeted approach this time around, to deliver a clear economic benefit. We are calling on state, territory and local governments, as well as our parliamentary colleagues, to nominate mobile black spot areas in their region where economic as well as social benefits can be realised."

MAYOR CALLS FOR CANBERRA'S BACKING

Douglas Shire Mayor **Julia Leu** has called on the Federal Government to back cane growers' plans to buy back Mossman Mill and create a state-of-the-art bio processing precinct in far north Queensland.

Councillor Leu said she would seek support for the project from senior government officials including Deputy Prime Minister **Michael McCormack** and Minister for Regional Services **Bridget McKenzie** when she travelled to Canberra for the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils meeting.

"The Federal Government has the perfect opportunity here to show us they unequivocally care about agriculture and regional communities in the Far North," Councillor Leu said.

"Our resilient Mossman and Tablelands sugarcane growing families are determined to not only save the local industry, but catapult it forward through fully-fledged biofuel and valuable by-products manufacturing."

"Everyone is well aware of the potential in the green transformation of the sugarcane industry and here is a prime opportunity for our federal politicians to be key stakeholders." ■

Code review panel listens to growers

The panel reviewing the Sugar Code of Conduct has wrapped up its public hearings and will now move on to preparing a report for the Federal Government due to be delivered before the end of the year.

In every location the panel visited, CANEGROWERS representatives were vocal about the importance of the Code to Australia's sugarcane growers, the backbone of the \$2.5 billion industry.

Public hearings were held in Gordonvale, Innisfail, Ingham, Ayr, Mackay and Bundaberg in Queensland and in Broadwater in New South Wales.

CANEGROWERS' overarching message in its submission and evidence was that the Code must be retained for the long term to provide certainty and stability to the industry by balancing the market power between growers and the regional monopoly milling companies when negotiating contracts.

Strong support for the grower position has come from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), which recommended that the Code not only be kept, but it be strengthened by making it compulsory for millers to provide grower choice in marketing and introduce penalties for breaches.

In its submission to the review panel, the ACCC said it has received eight complaints alleging that a sugar mill operator has breached the Code and that these complaints are the subject of two, separate investigations which are yet to be finalised.

In their submission, the members of CANEGROWERS Tully revealed that one of the complaints to the ACCC is over Tully Sugar's decision to shift the liability for harbour dues payable at Mourilyan to growers. This involves a sum of around \$450,000 per year and the issue was not discussed during cane supply agreement negotiations with growers.

"CANEGROWERS overarching message in its submission and evidence was that the Code must be retained for the long term to provide certainty and stability to the industry."

In contrast, while not part of any ACCC investigation, at the Bundaberg hearing, CANEGROWERS Isis Chairman Mark Mammino spoke to his district's submission which outlined challenges they faced in negotiating 2016 cane supply agreements with Isis Central Mill.

The submission goes on to say that once the Code of Conduct was put in place in April 2017, growers witnessed a change in approach from the mill.

The wider farming community, via the National Farmers Federation, has also given its support, calling for the Code to continue to operate. In its submission, the NFF says the Code 'addresses the imbalance in market power between cane growers and mill owners, acknowledging the weak bargaining position cane growers have'.

The Australian Sugar Milling Council did not attend the public hearings, instead it is having a targeted consultation meeting with the panel as is Queensland Sugar Limited. QSL is strongly supporting the continuation of the code while ASMC is calling for it to be repealed.

Public submissions can be read online at: <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/sugar-code-of-conduct-review> ■



The ACCC is currently investigating complaints against Tully Sugar brought under the Code of Conduct.

The Sugar Code of Conduct, introduced by the Federal Government in 2017, does the following:

- Enables competition in the provision of raw sugar marketing services by guaranteeing a grower's choice of marketing entity for the sale of the GEI sugar manufactured from the cane the grower supplied.
- Places an obligation on all parties to an existing or prospective cane supply or on-supply agreement to act in good faith - to act reasonably, fairly, honestly and co-operatively and not mislead, harass, intimidate or oppress.
- Provides arbitration as a process to resolve any deadlocks that may emerge in contract negotiations.

CANEGROWERS Regional round-up

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

Mossman

At Week 14 (week ending 8/9) Mossman Mill had processed a total of 501,419 tonnes of cane for a mill average of 13.04 CCS. A total of 157,977 tonnes of cane has been toll-crushed.

Some mechanical issues continue to cause interruptions in the factory but most weeks we are now achieving a decent throughput.

Ideal harvesting conditions continue and although conditions are quite dry, growers have been planting around the district.

We do remind all growers and contractors to remain vigilant for potential fires in these dry conditions.

Innisfail

Continuing fine weather has allowed harvesting operations to continue smoothly, with only some light rainfall experienced over the district during the week-ending 15 September. The mill was forced to have a 24-hour stoppage to undertake some preventative maintenance with the steam off, but overall milling operations continue to be smooth with only some short stoppages.

Daily CCS continues to hover around 14 units. However, the mill continues to struggle to process the higher sugar syrup. At a time when growers want to see as much cane as possible harvested while CCS peaks, crushing has had to be slowed down.

Planting operations have continued across the district. The light rainfall has raised soil moisture levels and is helping with good strikes, but more rainfall will be needed in coming weeks to help the young plants.

Cairns region

Once again the weather for farming activities has been good. Unfortunately, poor milling performance and the resultant delays in crushing continue to hamper those supplying Mulgrave Mill. The seriousness of the situation continues to escalate and growers remain extremely disappointed, particularly when some excellent CCS results are being achieved.

For those supplying South Johnstone Mill the situation is somewhat better. However, the poor performance at Mulgrave Mill is affecting the whole area as more cane gets transferred back south.

Following negotiations with CANEGROWERS, MSF Sugar has engaged with some larger groups in the Mulgrave area resulting in changes to harvesting rosters. The agreement, and associated monetary assistance offered, is aimed at reducing the season length.

Tully

The 1.5 million tonnes milestone has been reached and the sugar content and crop estimate is still holding. The weekly CCS has been over 14 for the past eight weeks, resulting in a season to date CCS of 13.8 - a full unit above the Tully long term average.

For Tully, it has been unseasonably dry and although some rain for the plant cane would be welcome, the forecast is for below average rainfall for October to December. Despite what may be a dry finish, crushing is likely to continue after the first week of December.

Herbert River

The weather has been generally ideal for harvesting, with the odd exception of patchy showers that delivered up to 30 mm in some gauges but zero in most. However, other events have limited throughput for our mills and prevented us from maximising the fortnight's effort, such as a troublesome shredder at Victoria Mill in Week 13 and a sugar unloading issue at the Lucinda Terminal on 14 September.

CCS improvement has been modest due to the rainfall. However, our five-yearly average has already been surpassed, which is a real highlight for 2018 season.

At the time of writing, our season is approaching 60% of the estimated crop for harvest, which has been downgraded marginally to 4.79 million tonnes.

Sugar Code of Conduct Review

A solid crowd of growers attended the consultation meeting convened on Wednesday 5 September at the Noorla Bowls Club, where they gave a very strong message to the Commonwealth Government's review team that the Code is needed in the long term for the stability and confidence it brings to communities such as Hinchinbrook Shire.

Growers told their own stories about the difficulty of dealing with a mill owner that hasn't been forthcoming with necessary information.

The extreme hurt felt by growers following the struggle to retain access to a competitive marketer other than Wilmar was also highlighted and contrasted with the experience of growers in mill areas north of Ingham who had Cane Supply Agreements offering choice of marketer long before the crash of sugar prices that impacted Wilmar suppliers.

WANT MORE NEWS, VIEWS
AND PHOTOS?

Find CANEGROWERS on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/CANEGROWERSAustralia

Burdekin

The Burdekin cane crush for 2018 continues to power on under ideal conditions, with almost 65% of the revised estimate having been attained as of Week 14 (week ending 15/9).

Season-to-date throughput for the Burdekin mills remains ahead of forecast and CCS continues to trend above budget with the weekly average topping 15 units for the sixth consecutive week. Invicta Mill had the highest weekly CCS of all the Burdekin mills with 15.65. The Burdekin season to date average CCS is now sitting at 14.66.

Just over 380,000 tonnes of cane were crushed across the Burdekin's four mills in Week 14, which takes the total crushed over the 5 million tonne mark.

The highest CCS sample for the week was 18.15 for a rake of KQ228 plant cane recorded at Inkerman Mill and in Week 13 a rake of Q240 at 18 was recorded at Invicta Mill.

The best performing variety in Week 14 on a regional basis was Q252 with 5% supply and 16.22 CCS, followed by Q183 at 24% and 15.71, then Q208 at 15% and 15.64 CCS. Q240 was the highest supplied at 35% and 15.53 CCS.

Wilmar has revised the Burdekin crop estimate down further to 8 million tonnes.

Proserpine

Proserpine Mill managed to crush another 180,000 tonnes over the last fortnight bringing the season-to-date total to 1,136,594 tonnes.

Throughput was slightly below budget due to No. 3 mud filter being taken out of service and an extended stop for roller arcing.

Average weekly CCS fell by 0.16 of a unit early in the fortnight before rebounding back to a weekly average

of 15.70 last week. The season-to-date CCS now stands at 14.58. The highest CCS sample last week was 17.26 from a rake of plant Q240 from the Waterson Productivity District.

With almost 70% of the harvest completed, the mill is currently reviewing the size of the crop with a further reduction anticipated. Should dry conditions continue to prevail, the crush should be completed before 18 October.

Plane Creek

Plane Creek Mill crushed just over 52,600 tonnes for the week ending 8 September.

Throughput was impacted mainly by a wet weather stop on 5 September. Rainfall totals varied across the district, ranging from very little in some areas to more than 100mm in others.

The only significant factory stop was earlier in the week when repairs had to be made to the cane carrier.

Crews also took the opportunity to do an evaporator clean.

The average weekly CCS increased slightly on the previous week. CCS for the week was 15.40 which was on budget.

The highest CCS for the week was 17.20 from a rake of third ratoon Q208 from the Dawlish Productivity District and also a rake of third ratoon Q183 from the Main Line Productivity District.

Mackay

Mackay Sugar's three mills processed a total of 200,357 tonnes for the week ending 9 September. Individually the mills crushed:

Farleigh 58,858
Marian 90,028
Racecourse 51,471.

This week's throughput brings the season to date total to 2,980,140 tonnes, with PRS for the week at 15.28. The year to date average PRS is 13.57.

Bundaberg

The dry weather has been great for harvesting but is taking a toll on the crop estimate, which is continuing to drop as the standing crop suffers moisture stress. If we don't lose any time from wet weather and the mills continue to crush at the current rate, both mills should finish around 17 October.

Both mills are performing very well. There has been very little lost time from breakdowns over the last month. Some time has been lost from unfilled bins and from very poor bin weights. Their continued good performance has certainly contributed to an earlier than

expected finish date.

By our estimate Millaquin is running at around 90% reliability for the year and Bingera at 96%. Anything above 90% is acceptable. No doubt the dry weather has helped with this.

We are continuing to adjust the base CCS upwards. This week we have increased it to 14.60 at both mills. If we don't get any rain I would say we will be increasing it again next week.

We have received another progress payment from ORECO for trash supplied during the 2017 Season, this has been

distributed to growers. There is another payment due this month which will complete payment for 2017 trash.

The new contract with ORECO for seasons 2018 – 2020 provides for more timely payments, with the first monthly instalment for 2018 Season trash also due in September.

The new baling teams appear to be performing well with few problems brought to our attention at this stage.

Continues page 8 ►

CANEGROWERS Regional round-up



Pictured: (main) four generations of the Zappala cane-growing family, Concetto Zappala (90 yrs) still working every day, Sam Zappala (60 yrs), Anthony Zappala (33 yrs) and Max Zappala (6 months). The family operate cane farms at Bartle Frere, Wooten Creek and Garradunga, Far North Queensland. (Above left) Maryborough Women in Sugar Meeting, (above right) Krystal Golchert from Women in Sugar Bundaberg and Jeff Atkinson CANEGROWERS Maryborough Chairman. (Page 9) 85 year old retired cane farmer Geoff Downman and his 6 year old granddaughter Adelle Downman watch the cane harvester at work on their Maryborough farm.

Isis

The 2018 crushing campaign has continued to exceed weekly targets with the Isis Mill processing 70,047 tonnes of cane during Week 12. The Isis Mill has now processed 864,760 tonnes of cane (as at 17/09) with the current crop estimate indicating that there is around 1,200,000 tonnes available for harvest.

During Week 12, CCS rose to 15.31 units for the week and 14.23 units for the season to date. The cane variety Q240 continues to dominate the weekly supply, with 30,841 tonnes supplied.

The highest individual CCS recording for the week was attributed to a Burnett

River supplier from Wallaville who supplied the cane variety KQ228 Autumn Plant. This supplier has taken out the highest individual weekly CCS recording on four occasions during the 2018 season and holds the 2018 CCS record for the highest individual test, which was 17.56 units recorded during Week 8.

Spring planting is now in progress and clean cane plant distributions have been occurring across the region. Growers have responded very positively to recent communications about the continued need to source clean planting material from Isis Productivity Limited plots to

ensure that exposure to diseases such as RSD is controlled and does not impact yield potential. These clean cane plots are strategically located across the region to minimise travel distance for growers wishing to source clean planting material. The quality of the plant material is excellent and is a credit to the growers who make the land available and grow the crop under the supervision of IPL.

The district remains very dry and irrigation of the recently planted cane as well as ratoons is now essential to ensure that there are no crop failures.

Maryborough

MSF sugar has passed 61% mark, with 525,169 tonnes of a revised season estimate of 865,000 tonnes of cane crushed by the weekend of 8 September. Then something broke in No 2 mill.

The damage caused by a broken roller shaft resulted in no production for almost an entire week. The mill briefly resumed operation on the morning of Friday 14 September, before breaking a cable on the bagasse feed, which disrupted operations for a further five hours.

Fortunately, the season was running well before this event and we are unlikely to be behind in the season finish. Conditions are continuing to dry off and some decent falls will be needed this month to assist with plant activity.

A Women in Sugar meeting conducted in Maryborough was well attended by representatives from Bundaberg, Isis, Maryborough and Gympie. The group received a presentation on Smartcane BMP and market perspectives.

Maryborough held a presentation by Gasfields Commission Queensland on the potential impacts of gas exploration for this area.

In a very interactive discussion, the commission outlined that the licences issued by the government can't be cancelled unless decided by government. In the event of an exploration company handing them back, the government can then put them back out for tender.

The commission has learnt from the CSG gas activity in the west and been able to put in place several useful guides for dealing with gas activity.

It now has a staff of eight based in Dalby and Roma.

Exploration has been tried in the past in our southern region, and the possibility remains that as technologies advance the value of potential gas in the area would see some form of gas industry set up. It wouldn't happen overnight, with a five-year lead time from deciding to set up to commencing drilling.

Rocky Point

As at 16 September (Week 9), Rocky Point Mill crushed a total of 162,303 tonnes of cane at an average 13.52 CCS. CCS is rising, with many readings of 15 units being recorded.

District-wide planting is underway, and with recent rain, conditions are ideal.

The co-gen and mill are still performing reasonably well, however, a four-day co-gen stoppage for repairs in Week 8 was not ideal.

The crop estimate is holding at this point. Most of the standover has cut over-estimate, however not a large percentage of one-year-old cane has been harvested yet. ■

Money Matters

with AustSafe Super

TEMPORARY RESIDENTS: THEIR SUPER, YOUR OBLIGATIONS

When peak season hits, an extra pair of hands goes a long way. For many employers, temporary residents are a great resource. So what's required when it comes to their super?

You will need to pay a temporary resident the standard Superannuation Guarantee (SG) payments if they're:

- 18 years or older, and
- Paid \$450 or more (before tax) in a month.

If they're under 18 years, but paid the amount listed above and work more than 30 hours per week, you will also need to pay them super.

Once they leave Australia permanently they can claim back their super. This is called a Departing Australia Superannuation Payment (DASP). To be able to claim, their visa must be expired or cancelled, and they can't be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident of Australia.

Ex-employees can make a DASP claim at any time through the Australia Taxation Office's (ATO) online application at ato.gov.au. As long as they have their super account details and know their Tax File Number, there's nothing you need to do or provide.

For more information, visit austsafe.com.au/memberhub. We also have a Super for temporary residents Fact Sheet available at austsafe.com.au in 19 different languages, which you can provide to an employee where English is their second language. ■

Disclaimer:

This editorial is general information only and does not take into account your individual objectives, financial situation or needs. You may also wish to seek the advice of a qualified financial planner. Please also read the relevant AustSafe Super Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before making a decision in relation to the product available at austsafe.com.au. AustSafe Pty Ltd ABN 96 010 528 597, AFSL 314183 is the Trustee of AustSafe Super ABN 92 398 191 503



SMARTCANE BMP JOURNEY

DELIVERS ECONOMIC OUTCOMES*By Brad Pfeffer*

Herbert region farmer **Chris Bosworth** has been on the journey towards improved farming practices for more than 10 years, so he saw the next step to Smartcane Best Management Practice (BMP) accreditation as a logical progression for his business.



Chris, who farms 150 hectares supplying the Victoria Mill, felt strongly that there would be profitability and sustainability outcomes in improving and recording his farm practices.

With BMP accreditation now achieved, his adoption of the program and the associated practices has been the subject of an economic analysis conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) as part of a project funded by SRA.

Economists at DAF found that, since 2008, Chris' transition has resulted in an annual improvement in farm operating return of \$78/ha (\$11,305/year total). An environmental assessment completed on Chris' farm also indicated:

- less nitrogen, phosphorous and pesticide active ingredients being potentially lost to waterways,
- annual fossil fuel use (over the cycle

of sugarcane growing) reduced by 14%, and

- greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 15% annually.

Chris' main changes included widening his row spacing to 1.8m to match the wheel tracks on his contractor's harvester (to reduce compaction and improve soil health), moving from conventional to zonal tillage, planting in pre-formed beds, and adopting the SIX EASY STEPS nutrient guidelines. He also adopted banded mill mud application in ratoon cane, and uses a variable rate spray controller installed on his high-rise sprayer to improve the accuracy of his spray rate.

The economic study showed that some of the biggest savings came from the adoption of the SIX EASY STEPS nutrient program and using banded mill

mud (saving about \$92/ha). Wider row spacing, which reduced tractor hours, as well as zonal tillage, contributed cost savings in fuel, oil and labour of about \$35/ha.

Investments included a stool splitter, modifying a spray rig, purchase of ratooning discs converted to a bed-former, GPS guidance, and variable rate controller.

"Results of the investment analysis (includes capital expenditure costs) show that BMP adoption was worthwhile for Chris and has added value to his farming business," said DAF Agricultural Economist **Caleb Connolly**.

Pictured: An economic analysis of Smartcane BMP adoption has shown Chris Bosworth's transition to best practice has resulted in an annual improvement in farm operating return of \$78/ha.

As part of Chris' previous work improving farm practices, he had already been partnering with a neighbour to invest in gear and together they also bought equipment through the Reef Rescue program (as it was then known).

This Reef Rescue funding was not factored into the analysis, as the project team wanted to consider if the investments stood on their own merit.

"I firmly believe there is scope for smaller farmers to partner together with like-minded farmers to improve the efficiency of their investment," Chris explained.

"In our case, both my neighbour and I don't need three-row stool splitters sitting in our sheds for 49 weeks of the year, and nor could we both justify the roughly \$65,000 investment."

"There's a lot of scope for economy of scale, and it also proved to be a more efficient use of a government grant."

"However, it was important that the case study showed to people that while grants can help, you also don't have to have them to make it viable, which was the case for me."

Overall, Chris says he is glad he participated in BMP, not only because it has made him more profitable and sustainable, but it has made him a better farmer generally.

"Environmentally, it is also important that we continue to reduce our footprint," he said.

"The Great Barrier Reef is a critical part of our coast and we want to continue to protect it."

"It's quite simple. I'm paying for nutrients, whether it is in fertiliser or in mill mud. So why would I want it getting off the farm?"

The adoption of management practices that have been scientifically validated, such as Smartcane BMP, means that an adverse impact on production is unlikely. However, results of a production risk analysis did show that in this case study profitability was highly sensitive to maintaining yield. Growers are encouraged to consider their own circumstances and seek independent advice before making changes.

DAF's Farm Economic Analysis Tool (FEAT) is a free online tool to help growers consider the economics of their farming business. To access FEAT and explanatory resources, visit www.daf.qld.gov.au/plants/field-crops-and-pastures/sugar/farm-economic-analysis-tool.

The six project case studies can be downloaded from www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/best-management-practices-for-sugarcane. ■

"I firmly believe there is scope for smaller farmers to partner together with like-minded farmers to improve efficiency of their investment."

- SRA acknowledges the funding contribution of the Queensland Government towards this research activity.

CANEGROWERS representatives recently met with a delegation from Vietnam as part of the Australian Political Exchange Council. Matt Kealley (Senior Manager for Environment & Sustainability) and Burn Ashburner (Senior Manager for Industry) hosted the group and provided an overview of the Queensland sugarcane industry and the role of the CANEGROWERS organisation in representing growers.



Choosing the right marketer for you

Marketing Choice has sparked plenty of claims and counterclaims from sugar marketers regarding their products, marketing performance and pool returns. Even QSL sometimes struggles to unpick some of the claims of our competitors and understand just what their quoted prices or results include and how they compare with our equivalent products, so what hope does the average grower have in cutting through the spin in order to make the right decisions for their business?

In order to effectively compare marketers' results and products, QSL recommends that growers ask any prospective sugar marketer the following questions:

WHAT PRICE ARE YOU USING?

Make sure you know what the figure quoted represents. Is it a final pool result, an estimate of a pool's current value, an average weighted price calculated using a number of pools, or some sort of a default price for growers using that marketer?

These are all very different things, so the marketer should clearly explain just what the figure they have used represents. For example, a **pool price** is the return for sugar allocated to a particular pricing product, whereas a **weighted average price** is a single price reflecting the combined returns from a number of pools based on the total tonnage allocated to the pools by all users.

In our Annual Reports, QSL quotes a weighted average price which represents the combined returns from all of our managed pools. We do this to demonstrate our performance against a benchmark.

While no grower actually receives this price in their back pocket, it does allow you to evaluate the performance of QSL against the prices that were available during the season (the 'benchmark price'). The actual returns received by an individual grower will always reflect the value of the particular pools and grower-managed pricing products they decided to use.

WHAT DOES THIS PRICE INCLUDE?

Is the result quoted a gross price or a net price incorporating all of the deductions? Make sure you know whether things like finance costs, fees and charges are incorporated, or if they're factored in on top. And don't forget the US Quota. Has it been incorporated into the result, or is that a separate pool you need to consider?

IF A POOL PRICE IS BEING QUOTED, CAN I ACTUALLY ACCESS THIS POOL?

Even the most impressive pool return is useless to you if you can't actually use the pool, so start with whether your marketer makes this pool available to you and lets you decide if and how much you want to use it.

IF THEY'RE COMPARING RESULTS, IS IT A FAIR COMPARISON?

Different pools are designed to do different things, and as a result, can be managed across different time spans, have different levels of risk and use different pricing tools and strategies. It's important that comparisons between pools are made between similar pools run across the same pricing windows in order to get a true assessment of the marketer's performance.

For example, the QSL Harvest Pool is designed to help manage in-season grower production risk and therefore only a very limited amount can be priced before the season commences. Whereas our Actively Managed Pool has a known tonnage to price from the very beginning and therefore is focused on maximising returns. They have different goals and are

operated in completely different ways.

Comparing pricing products which have different operating parameters, purposes and pricing windows is like comparing a tractor with a Ferrari – they're designed to do completely different things, and while both have their place, it's not a worthwhile comparison. So when comparing pool returns between marketers, ask the question – is this comparing like for like? Do these pools aim to do the same sort of thing over the same period of time, or is this a Ferrari/tractor situation?

WHERE ARE THE DETAILS?

QSL believes marketers should provide details on how they operate each pool, its risk levels and its pricing window, so that you can not only make effective comparisons with their competitors, but so you also know exactly what you're signing up for when you use them.

WHERE'S THE PRODUCTION POOL ELEMENT?

All Queensland marketers require growers to allocate a portion of their GEI Sugar to manage production risk, in effect making you put aside part of your estimate to guard against an in-season crop failure and the potential pricing ramifications if you deliver less than originally planned.

QSL's production risk pool is the Harvest Pool and we make all growers allocate at least 35% of their estimate to this pool, effectively limiting how much they can price in our other products. So when looking at a marketer's pool results, make sure you know if the pool price quoted



incorporates this production risk element. If not, where does it sit and how does this affect returns? Who decides how much is used to manage this factor?

WHAT IS THIS MARKETER'S PAST PERFORMANCE LIKE?

Results vary from year to year and no marketer can claim that they will always outperform their competitors. While past performance is not a guarantee of future performance, it can be helpful to take a look at their track record. How did they perform last year? Are these results publicly available? Can you track the performance of their pricing products over time? And if not, why not?

WHERE CAN I FIND THE DETAILS I NEED FROM QSL TO ASSESS YOUR PRODUCTS AND PERFORMANCE?

QSL provides extensive information regarding its pools and their operating parameters in the Pricing Pool Terms available for each of our products and our QSL Grower Handbook. You can find these as well as our pool results for the past decade, and regular updates on current indicative pool values, net market

premiums, storage and handling costs, finance costs, marketing and shared services premiums, regional costs and the QSL Loyalty Bonus, on our website (www.qsl.com.au). Failing that, call one of our Grower Services Team for a chat – they're always happy to talk you through it. ■

QSL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Queensland Sugar Limited will hold its 2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM) at 10am on Thursday 25 October 2018 at the Christie Conference Centre, 320 Adelaide Street, Brisbane.

QSL Chairman Guy Cowan and QSL Managing Director and CEO Greg Beashel will both address the meeting.

QSL's 2017/2018 Annual Report will be available in coming weeks on the QSL website at www.qsl.com.au.

THE QSL ADVANTAGE



Owned by you, focused on you

We don't pursue our own commercial interests above those of the industry we serve.



Passing on the value

We're an income-tax exempt, pass-through industry service organisation. That means we pass on all net value created and don't 'clip the ticket'.



Pricing & payment options

Whether you want to make your own pricing decisions or prefer a managed pool, we offer a varied range of pricing and payment options.



Experienced professionals

Our Queensland-based marketing and pricing team leverages a range of global partnerships to serve our Members and their interests.



Above & beyond

Your dedicated QSL Grower Services representative is available to provide support and information when you need it.

Disclaimer: This article contains information of a general or summary nature only and should not be relied on to make any pricing or pool selection decisions. This information does not constitute financial or investment advice, and growers should seek their own independent advice before making any such decisions, in addition to reading the full Pricing Pool Terms which are available on QSL's website. Information about past performance should not be relied on as an indication of future performance, nor should anything in relation to this article be taken to include representations as to future matters.

MANAGING RUN-OFF

INNISFAIL GROWER TAKES ACTION TO MINIMISE OFF-FARM IMPACTS

By Wayne Griffin

Innisfail cane grower Bill Sinton is part of a growing community of farmers from across Queensland's World Heritage Wet Tropics who are taking responsibility for the management of their local waterways. Using Reef Trust III funding, Bill has raised creek walls and excavated a 10 megalitre sediment trap to capture and treat run-off before it leaves his farm and flows into the Moresby River and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef.

Bill Sinton has been working in the cane industry for over 30 years, operating a cane, banana and papaya farm at Martyville, just south of Mourilyan, with his wife Loretta and son Dean.

Originally purchased by Loretta's family back in the late 50s, the 120-hectare farm had only ever grown cane until Bill and Loretta took over the business in 1995.

"We could see at the time that the profit just wasn't there for cane, not for the area we'd purchased anyway," Bill said when *Australian Canegrower* visited the farm recently.

"So, we planted a few bananas and it was quite good. Well, up until a few years ago anyway, now there are just too many in the ground around this region."

"These days we've got about 34 ha of bananas, with the rest under cane, plus a couple of hectares of papaya, which can be lucrative, but are very finicky to grow," Bill said.

The economic viability of growing cane wasn't Bill's only worry when he took over the business. He also realised early on that environmental concerns, especially around run-off, were destined to become a major issue for the industry.

"We've been in farming long enough to have seen the problems develop over the years. When I first started working here in the 80s, run-off was not even an issue, it was never mentioned," Bill said.

"But over the years you gradually started to hear more and more about it and I realised quite early on that this was eventually going to become the biggest issue for farming in this region. And it is."

But it wasn't a fear of regulations or the industry losing its social licence to operate that motivated Bill to begin minimising the off-farm impacts of his operation, it was something much bigger.

"It was the Great Barrier Reef," Bill said, "it's as simple as that."

"When you really start getting into farming you realise that you have the potential to do a lot of damage to the environment if you're not careful, so we decided to try to do something about that, particularly in terms of water run-off into the waterways."

"When you looked at the water in the creek here, especially after a rain event, you could see that, as far as turbidity goes, it was quite dirty. It was carrying soil particles and anything that was in the soil as well, so herbicides, nutrients, whatever."





"When you really start getting into farming you realise that you have the potential to do a lot of damage to the environment if you're not careful, so we decided to try to do something about that, particularly in terms of water run-off into the waterways."

"We wanted to do something to ensure we weren't contributing to that."

Over the years Bill shaped and grassed his headlands to direct run-off to a single point on the farm.

Then, using Federal Government Reef Trust funding, he set about raising the walls of the Twalla Creek and constructing a 1 ha wetland to remove sediment and nutrients from run-off water flowing off approximately 50 ha of his farmland.

The wetland mainly captures irrigation run-off from the banana crop, however a large area of cane land also drains into the newly formed wetland.

In drier periods, the water evaporates, dropping its sediment and nutrient load in the process.

During high rainfall events (not exactly uncommon in the region) the wetland can hold around 10ML of water, with a spillway constructed of rock allowing drainage at a rate of 30L/sec (5ML/day).

This leaves around 700mm of water in the wetland, which is being planted with aquatic plants to purify the water before it exits the system.

In addition to installing the sediment trap, the family has also made a number

of changes to their farming system to ensure they're using good farm management strategies.

"We apply fertiliser subsurface, use a directed sprayer to apply herbicides and have both nutrient and weed management plans to tailor application rates to crop requirements," Bill said.

"The whole thing - the wetland, the farming practices - it's a work in progress, but I think it's very important and it's something we're proud to be doing."

However, Bill admits it can also be a little frustrating at times, especially when others in the region don't play their part.

"There's only so much you can do, you can only make changes on your own farm. Everyone needs to play their part," Bill said.

"For the most part I think cane growers are doing the right thing. Other industries and sections of the community need to make sure they're pulling their weight as well." ■

Pictured: Innisfail grower Bill Sinton has created a 1 hectare wetland to capture and treat run-off before it leaves his farm and enters waterways draining into Great Barrier Reef Lagoon.

Bioreactors trialled in new reef program

By Terrain NRM



Landholders are leading the way in trialling bioreactors in the Wet Tropics, in an effort to treat nitrogen flowing to the Great Barrier Reef.

A denitrification bioreactor has been installed on a cane farm in far north Queensland as part of the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project – a \$15 million reef water quality initiative funded by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.

Bioreactors are strategically-positioned trenches filled with woodchips that work by converting excess dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) in groundwater into nitrogen gas. Proven internationally but untested in the unique landscape conditions of the Wet Tropics, they are one of a series of treatment initiatives being trialled to reduce nutrient, sediment and pesticide loads flowing to the Reef.

Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project catchment repair officer **Suzette Argent** said it was estimated the first bioreactor would remove 125 to 400kg of nitrogen feeding into the Reef lagoon each year.

"These are an 'on-farm' technology, but no land has to be taken out of production and they require little maintenance."

"This bioreactor is treating groundwater draining from a five-hectare paddock," she said.

"It follows months of community engagement, rigorous site assessments, topographical surveys, soil tests and design works. Willing landholders and correct landscape positioning are a critical combination for success, along with the right soil and groundwater conditions - DIN levels need to be evident in groundwater."

Excess amounts of dissolved inorganic nitrogen in the Reef lagoon impact water quality and reduce reef resilience. They have also been linked to increased outbreaks of the coral-eating Crown of Thorns starfish.

Ms Argent said sub-surface water flows through the bioreactor and, under the anaerobic conditions, naturally-occurring bacteria convert the DIN into a gas which is then dispersed into the atmosphere.

Basin Coordinator **Sandra Henrich** said it was challenging for land managers to know their relative DIN contribution.

"Current water quality monitoring aggregates water scores from a large area with lots of different users and land uses," she said.

"This makes it difficult to know what an individual farmer needs to do on their property, so an important part of the design of this project involves water monitoring to help with farm decision making."

"Monitoring bores placed at the bioreactor's groundwater entry and exit points will help determine if there has been a change in nitrogen levels as a result of the treatment. This helps us build a more comprehensive story both about nitrogen contributions and the effectiveness of different treatment systems."

Ms Henrich said that if successful, bioreactors could be implemented across the landscape as small-scale groundwater treatment systems.

"These are an 'on-farm' technology, but no land has to be taken out of production and they require little maintenance," she said. "Once a bioreactor is installed, it is business as usual for farming operations."

The Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project will also trial other treatment systems like wetlands and high efficiency sediment basins. ■

Pictured: A denitrification bioreactor being installed on a Wet Tropics farm.

Research partnership driving the future of Australian sugarcane

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) recently hosted the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, **David Littleproud**, at its Mackay research station.

The tour was an opportunity to show the Minister, for the first time, the innovative research, development and adoption activities being delivered for Australian sugarcane growers and millers through SRA.

CANEGROWERS Chairman, **Paul Schembri**, said that the visit to the Mackay research facility resulted in valuable interaction between the Minister and grower representatives.

"There were a number of presentations on the day that showed the Minister the type of research underway in the industry," said Mr Schembri.

"It was very helpful to sit down with the Minister. He is very much across R&D issues in the industry and wanted to hear about issues that involve Commonwealth programs where there was delivery programs on the ground."

SRA CEO, Mr **Neil Fisher**, said that the Commonwealth Government's partnership with SRA included investment of \$6.7 million in 2017/18 through co-investment with the statutory levy paid by sugarcane growers and millers.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government is also investing in SRA through a range of external grants programs such as Rural R&D for Profit and Reef Trust.

"The partnership between the Commonwealth Government, Queensland Government, and SRA is supporting vital activities that drive the profitability of the sugar industry in Queensland and NSW," Mr Fisher said.

"Locally at Mackay, this includes developing new varieties through the plant breeding program, improving productivity through R&D in agronomy and farming systems, plant genetics and entomology, and the transfer of technology to the farm and to the mill."

Mr Fisher said a flagship program currently underway through the Rural R&D for Profit program was improving harvest efficiency and putting revenue into the pockets of the value chain.

"This project includes practical in-field demonstrations that work collaboratively with growers and harvester operators to better understand where sugar and cane loss is occurring," Mr Fisher said.

"By understanding these losses, and what improvements can be made to harvesting parameters, this project is delivering practical, tangible outcomes."

"From trial results in 2017, the project identified that the industry has the potential to obtain a 5.5 percent increase in harvested tonnes with no cane land increase and a \$74 million increase in shared industry revenue if operating at harvesting best practice recommendations."

"This project represents a major cash investment of \$5.5 million in our industry over the life of the project, plus in-kind contributions from our collaborators."

Mr Fisher said that the Commonwealth Government partnership with SRA was vital to delivering profitability, productivity and sustainability outcomes for the industry.

"This includes our Mackay research station, where we have 19 permanent staff, and are in close contact with the needs of the Central Region," he said.

"On behalf of all SRA investors, I thank the Commonwealth Government for their commitment to sugarcane research, development and adoption." ■



Pictured: SRA Leader for Crossing and Selection, George Piperidis, CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri, Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud, SRA Key Focus Area Leader Barry Salter, Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry, and SRA Regional Coordinator, Phil Ross at the SRA Mackay Research Station.

WOMEN'S FIELD DAY

A SWEET SUCCESS

By Toneya McIntosh, Behaviour Innovation

Women from across the Cairns sugarcane growing region gathered recently for the Cairns Women's Field Day which focused on highlighting the important role of women in the industry and gave them the opportunity to find out more about local industry initiatives.

Sarah Standen, CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Manager, was a driving force behind the day and said it was fantastic to see the women getting involved and wanting to find out more about what is happening in their local industry.

"We covered many different topics throughout the day including water quality and the Great Barrier Reef," Ms Standen said. "We also looked at what our industry is doing to ensure it is sustainable, productive and competitive into the future through local initiatives like Smartcane BMP, nutrient management plans and the great work they are doing at our research organisation, SRA."

The day kicked off with a tour of SRA's Meringa Research Station, where the women heard from Principal Researcher (Water Quality) **Belinda Billing**.

"Around half of the staff at SRA's Meringa station are women and, while we certainly value the work we do with our local cane farming men, we are excited to share that work with the local women of Cairns cane farming community," Ms Billing said.

"We have been working with Cane Changer through our Cane to Creek project and were very happy to be invited to take part in this day, understanding the important role that families play on farms."

A highlight of the tour was the sugarcane variety breeding program. Senior Plant Breeder **Felicity Atkin** and Senior Technician **Vivien Dunn** took the women through the process of introducing a new variety into the industry, which takes 12 years, tens of thousands of seedlings and many, many hours of hard work.

Barb Ghidella, one of the women attending the Field Day, was extremely impressed with the breeding program. "I've been around sugarcane all my life and didn't know half of what we learnt here today - it has been a really great day," she said.

The tour then headed to the Cairns Aquarium for a guided tour. Attendees were taken through their local waterways and explored how water travels off land through creeks and streams, before heading through the mangrove flats and out into the coral reef systems and the Great Barrier Reef.

"Over the last decade, through programs like Smartcane BMP, our industry has been extremely focused on ensuring that we are doing the right thing by the environment and by the reef," Ms Standen said.

"Women have played and will continue to play an important role in that. We thought it was important that the ladies in our area had the opportunity to see first-hand what they are working so hard to protect."

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Chairman, **Stephen Calcagno** rounded off the day by providing the women with an industry update and inviting them to take advantage of the resources and support provided by the CANEGROWERS Cairns Region office.

"Women help drive this industry and we believe it is crucially important to recognise the role they play on-farm and support them wherever possible," he said. "Our team is here to help, and we have a number of resources available through our office that can support





"Over the last decade, through programs like Smartcane BMP, our industry has been extremely focused on ensuring that we are doing the right thing by the environment and by the reef. Women have played and will continue to play an important role in that."

grower families interested in getting involved in local initiatives such as Smartcane BMP."

"We also have our local WTSIP extension officer who will work one-on-one with you to help build a whole-of-farm picture of your nutrient requirements through a nutrient management plan."

The Women's Field Day was supported by CANEGROWERS Cairns Region and Project Cane Changer.

Cane Changer is a CANEGROWERS Organisation initiative, funded by the Department of Environment and Science, that is working with growers and their families to help improve recognition of the industry's innovative history and pave the way for an even more sustainable future.

To find out more or get involved in upcoming events head to canechanger.com or contact your local CANEGROWERS Office. ■



Pictured: Women from across the Cairns sugarcane growing region.

Farm innovations showcased at **PRECISION AGRICULTURE EXPO IN INGHAM**

More than 160 farmers and industry personnel from the Herbert cane-growing region took part in a precision agriculture (PA) Expo on 7 September, where they had the opportunity to hear how leading growers are using a variety of farming equipment and technologies to achieve success in their businesses.

The event, a collaboration between the Society of Precision Agriculture Australia (SPAA) and the Herbert Cane Productivity Services (HCPSL) group, offered a combination of technical presentations and farmer case studies.

There were also practical sessions with nine PA businesses showcasing various technologies, such as UAVs, weed sensors, crop sensors, variable rate equipment, EM mapping, yield monitors, software and more.

"The importance of industry learning is central," SPAA Executive Officer, **Nicole Dimos** said. "With the application of PA tools and technologies rising locally, it was time to gain some valuable insights of where PA and other farm innovative practices can take them.

"Just as important was being able to see first hand the equipment. The knowledge sharing and networking between the farmers was integral, and has increased the confidence and got these farmers excited about adopting PA".

HCPSL Spatial Data Systems Officer, **Michael Sefton**, said the event was a huge success.

"The workshop showcased new technologies that will spearhead Australian agriculture ahead of its competitors now and into the future."

David Morselli, a local Herbert cane farmer, said the workshop was one of the best agricultural events he had ever attended in the Ingham area.

"The day provided a great snapshot of what technologies the cane industry should consider to make the industry more profitable and sustainable into the future," he said.

"The experience of other growers has shown that precision agriculture and sustainable and innovative farming practices are profitable and have positive benefits for the environment."

David said he hopes that cane growers across Queensland have increasing access to innovative technologies.

Michael Waring, HCPSL Board chairman said "It was great to see so many farmers interested in precision agriculture and what it has to offer."

"We (SPAA) hope to continue collaborative work together with the HCPSL to achieve catchment targets," added Nicole.

For more information on SPAA, visit www.spaa.com.au ■

Pictured: (main) farmers, students, advisers and researchers at the workshop, (below left) pharmacist staff discussing sensor technology with growers, (below right) students from Ingham High School who attended the workshop, (right top) HCPSL staff, (right bottom) David Morselli (Herbert grower) and Michael Sefton (HCPSL Spatial Systems and Data Officer).





Cane industry assists ant surveying

Joint efforts by the Wet Tropics Management Authority's Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program and the sugarcane industry have enabled widespread surveys for the invasive pest over the past three months.



Photo: Wet Tropics Images/Kate Thomas

Thanks to collaboration and support from MSF Sugar's Mulgrave Mill, the Authority has surveyed more than 40 train sidings as well as cane fields outside the existing infestation area.

Staff placed lures in a 10-metre grid across the area, returning after an hour to observe and report on the presence or absence of yellow crazy ants.

The Authority's executive director, Scott Buchanan, said the cane industry's support was an important part of eradication efforts.

"Thank you to the cane industry for your support. The cooperation of cane farmers, contractors and the mill has been vital to our recent surveying work."

"We're working hard with the cane industry to prevent the spread of this ant and avoid impacts on the industry and surrounding Wet Tropics World Heritage area."

Surveying of neighbouring cane fields will continue throughout the year.

These efforts cap a busy few months for the Eradication Program, which completed its annual taskforce in August.

More than 70 participants from local councils and Traditional Owners joined the taskforce, surveying 215 hectares and 35.5 kilometres of waterways in one week. The taskforce collected almost 18,000 points of data in this monumental exercise. ■

If you suspect you have yellow crazy ants please contact sugarcane industry engagement officer, Wesley Moller:
Telephone: 0436 613 383
Email: wesley.moller@wtma.qld.gov.au
www.wettropics.gov.au/yellow-crazy-ants





Burn Ashburner

CANEGROWERS Manager -
Industry

TRENDS IN SUGARCANE BORROWINGS

Contrary to expectations, total sugarcane grower borrowings with the major financial institutions have actually decreased since 2001. According to Queensland Rural Debt Surveys, the total borrowings went from \$1,180 million in 2001 to \$1,038 million in 2017. This is drop of a 12%.

The 2001 survey reported the highest debt level since 1994. This is understandable when you consider the hardship caused by the advent of orange rust, which took out the variety Q124.

Total borrowings then decreased from 2001 to 2007 (the surveys were only conducted every two years) by 34%.

This period coincided with relatively low sugarcane income per ha, which averaged \$2,223/ha at an average sugar price of just under \$300/tonne.

Thus, there was debt reduction despite relatively low sugarcane income.

The speculation is that growers were not borrowing to buy capital items (land or machinery) and were perhaps living on depreciation.

It was also a period when growers had access to funding through the government's sugar package to assist in restructuring the industry.

From 2009 to 2017 there was an increase in total borrowings of 17%, while the average sugarcane income was \$3,313/ha.

Thus, there was an increase in borrowings despite a higher average sugarcane income.

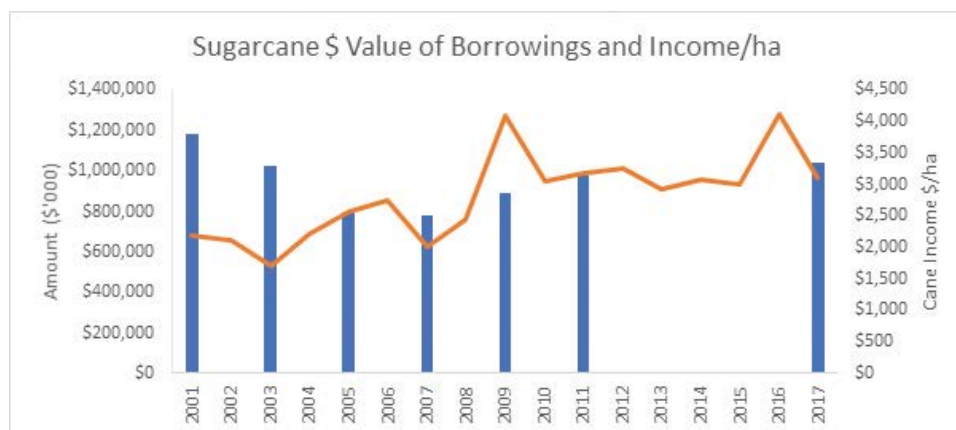
The reason for this is probably that growers were taking the opportunity to recapitalise, some of which would have been with borrowed money.

The other interesting thing the surveys show is that from 2001 to 2017 there was a decrease in the number of borrowers by 28% (2,751 to 1,981) and an increase in the amount per borrower of 22% (\$429,000 to \$524,000/borrower).

The assumption would be that this is showing the consolidation of farms using a level of debt equity.

If my speculations are correct this is what I would consider to be the good use of borrowed money. ■

"From 2009 to 2017 there was an increase in total borrowings of 17%, while the average sugarcane income was \$3,313/ha."



FIRST 5 LINES FREE* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

Book online anytime of the day or night at www.canegrowers.com.au or email us at ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au

Next deadline is **1 October 2018**.

* As a FREE service to CANEGROWERS members, *Australian Canegrower* will print suitable classified advertisements **UP TO 5 LINES FREE, FOR ONE ISSUE ONLY**. A charge of \$5.50 will apply for each extra 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 line incl GST. Only pre-paid ads will be accepted.

Mossman-Tully

John Deere 6620 7300 hrs Tyres 90% 24 Gears 40k Gear Box. Ph: 0407 162 514.

KSB Centrifugal Pump: Standard acid pump also good for pumping water, 200 x 150 x 400 shaft size 48mm, Flow @ 700 cubes per hr. Ideal for Sugar Mills, Paper Mills, Council, Alcohol Plants, Dewatering, Farm Irrigation, Stainless Steel Impeller. Brand new – asking 10k neg. Was 14k. Specs on Application. Ph: 0407 626 374.



Mackay-Proserpine

Irrigation pipes: Approx. 45 x 5" aluminium irrigation pipes with IBC couplings. 7 metres in length \$80 each; 12 x 4" aluminium irrigation pipes with IBC couplings. 9 metres in length \$80 each; Approx. 55 x 4" aluminium irrigation pipes with Ajax couplings. 9 metres in length \$100 each. Ph: Clarrie 0488 742 594.

Howard Crumble Roller, 4m long (bolts together at centre) brand new still in crate,

fits rear tool bar of Howard CH2365DT Rotary hoe, \$4,422 inc. GST. Ph: 0428 236 165.

Graham Twyford Machinery Sales Pty Ltd

Specialising in Used Cane Harvesting Equipment Sales

WANTED WHEEL AND TRACK HARVESTERS

Side Tippers BSM
Single axle units
23x1x26 tyres

one fitted with New Holland TS115A

CASE 7700 pump drive gearbox
Complete with eaton and vane pumps
2006 model

CUMMINS QSL 8.9L Eng.
325 HP @ 1900 RPM. 750 Hrs.

NEW! BILLET PLANTER 2500
Rubber belt cane feed
Immediate Delivery

VERSATILE TOFT Hi-Lift
7 tonne side tipping trailer
23x1x30 tyres single axle

TOFT 7 tonne Hi-Lift
Side tipping trailer
Hydraulic remote hydraulics
23x1x30 tyres on single axle

Used 10,000 series
Char-Lynn motors 40 cubic inch.

Used 2 x 6,000 series
Char-Lynn motors 60 cubic inch.

Whole Toppers 2 x CASE
as new one is complete.

OMNITRAC Full Track walking gear
complete with 24" rubber belts.
Hi-Track drive. 5 roller suit Case or JD.

NEW! 4 SLAT OPEN BUTT ROLLERS
Suit JD 3510/20 and CASE
Helps Drop Dirt. Enquire NOW!

IN STOCK NOW 12, 10, 8 & 6 BLADE
DIFFERENTIAL CHOPPER DRUMS
Suit '05 Cameco to JD 570. Tungsten
hard faced on wear areas. New seal
plates, clamping bars & dowels with kit.

Graham Twyford
48 Central Park Drive, Paget, Mackay
Mobile: +61 (0) 418 742 696
graham@gtmachinerysales.com.au
www.gtmachinerysales.com.au

Neil's Parts Australia

HIGH QUALITY TRACTOR PARTS

1800 463 457
AH 0417 662 137, 0408 735 148
www.neils.com.au

OIL BATH BEARINGS ASSEMBLY & PARTS
are available in wide range of sizes

3-4 and 3-5 International Disc Harrow, Bonel Napier

Call 1800 899 885

Convert Your Disc Harrow Into A Modern Day Machine

High Quality Bearings

Classifieds

Bundaberg-Rocky Point

One only Alliance Nylon Tractor Tyre. 14.9/13-28, \$300 + GST. Ph: 4121 3155 or Ron on 0428 788 131.

One only Alliance Powerdrive Radial HT Tractor Tyre. 14.9 R 38 \$400 + GST. Ph: 4121 3155 or Ron on 0428 788 131.

Two only Alliance Powerdrive Radial HT Tractor Tyres. 18.4/38. \$600 + GST. Ph: 4121 3155 or Ron on 0428 788 131.

Hodge Cane Sett Cutter. Always shedded. Hydraulic topper. \$1500 + GST. Ph: 4121 3155 or Ron on 0428 788 131.

Hodge heavy duty 28 plate offset disc, hydraulic gang shift \$20,000 + GST, item in very good working order. Ph: 0477 704 134.

Wanted

Wanted STL Shares. Ph: 0419 717 006.

Wanted International 1066 trike row crop tractor or similar. Ph: 0428 283 454.

Wanted Wheel Weights for a 1998 Fiat M 115 tractor. Ph: 0428 722 672.

Property

GLEN ISLA Cane Farms - Tightly Held Area. Approx* 334.82 acres in 8 FH titles with fertile alluvial soils. 2 equip irrig bores, mains & hydrants, 190ML allocation. Queenslander style home. Motivated Vendors looking to retire. Ph: Gary Johns 0427 241 250.

HOMEBUSH/OAKENDEN Cane Farm for sale in Mackay region. 100t/ha 5 year average 57 ha property. Fully laser levelled farm with a large bore and underground water mains throughout. Block has 2 deeds 90 acre and 50 acre which can be sold separately. This years crop, Machinery shed with 3 phase power and water, tractor, irrigation winch, some implements and tail water pit pump all included in sale. Siding on boundary, great soil and no rocks. Ph: Andrew 0428 597 324. Cane farm PROSERPINE 199 hectares total 155 hectares under cane. 2018 crop 10500 ton approx. 495megs of water. 2x hardhoses and half of the farm is flood irrigated. Farm comes with machinery. 3 houses on the farm

main house is fully airconed and has a large swimming pool. Ph: 0400 794 857.

Cane farm Tarakan Road ABERGOWRIE 270 acres freehold Genuine enquiries pls. Ph: 07 4777 4633 or 0408 608 664.

Tropical Paradise Cane Farm/Equestrian Training Property, 96 acres 6klms to PORT DOUGLAS. All farmable land, 70 acres producing quality cane, 25 acres set up for horses. Easy farm to maintain. Ph: Mandy 0408 880 724.

WANT MORE NEWS, VIEWS
AND PHOTOS?

Find CANEGROWERS on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/CANEGROWERSAustralia

Rainfall Report

brought to you by AustSafe Super

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Year to date	Average rainfall (mm) January–September
	7 days to 9am 10.09.18	17.09.18		
Mossman	0	2	2119	1834
Mareeba AP	0	0	652	736
Cairns	0	0	1967	1689
Mt Sophia	0	6	3251	2800
Babinda	0	0	1667	3641
Innisfail	4	12	2908	3052
Tully	0	1	3179	3548
Cardwell	2	0.2	1606	1754
Lucinda	3	3	1460	1790
Ingham	Tce	12	1640	1671
Abergowrie	0	6	1690	1522
Townsville	0	3	756	908
Ayr DPI	0	0	601	752
Proserpine	3	0	819	1098
Mirani	18	0.4	641	1211
Mackay	17	0	680	1256
Sarina (Plane Ck)	26	0	799	1368
Bundaberg	6	0	468	722
Childers South	6	0	603	618
Maryborough	9	0	632	865
Tewantin	22	0.8	957	1334
Eumundi	6	0	982	1288
Nambour	14	0.2	844	1270
Woongoolba	30	0	735	1006
Murwillumbah	28	0	604	1196
Ballina	212	6	1283	1411
Woodburn	55	0	754	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 Energy and Resources Program, Brisbane.

JOHNNY FARMING COMPANY

New Hydraulic Heavy Duty OFFSETS

3 metre width, 28 discs,
All bath bearings
\$12,000 plus GST (\$13,200 incl GST) Other
size offsets available are 1.8m, 2.2m, 2.5m,
3m & 3.4metres.
3 point linkage offsets available also

New Heavy Duty SLASHERS

2.1 metres width \$3,300 incl GST
Other sizes available are 1.2m, 1.5m & 1.8m

Johnny Farming Company
Phone (07) 4952 2577 or 0412 535 887 (John)
or 0407 638 674 (Andrew)
133 Schmidtke Road Mackay Qld 4740

Spotted anything unusual?

NOTHING WILL PROTECT YOUR CROP BETTER THAN A GOOD HARD LOOK

Growers have an important role in keeping watch for exotic pests, diseases and weeds that could devastate the Australian sugarcane industry.

Early detection and reporting is the key to protecting farms, industries and the communities that rely on them. Every moment lost harms our chance of successful eradication.

If you spot anything unusual in your crop please call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. The call is free (except from mobiles).

Visit phau.com.au/industries/sugarcane for further information and a list of the top priority cane pests.



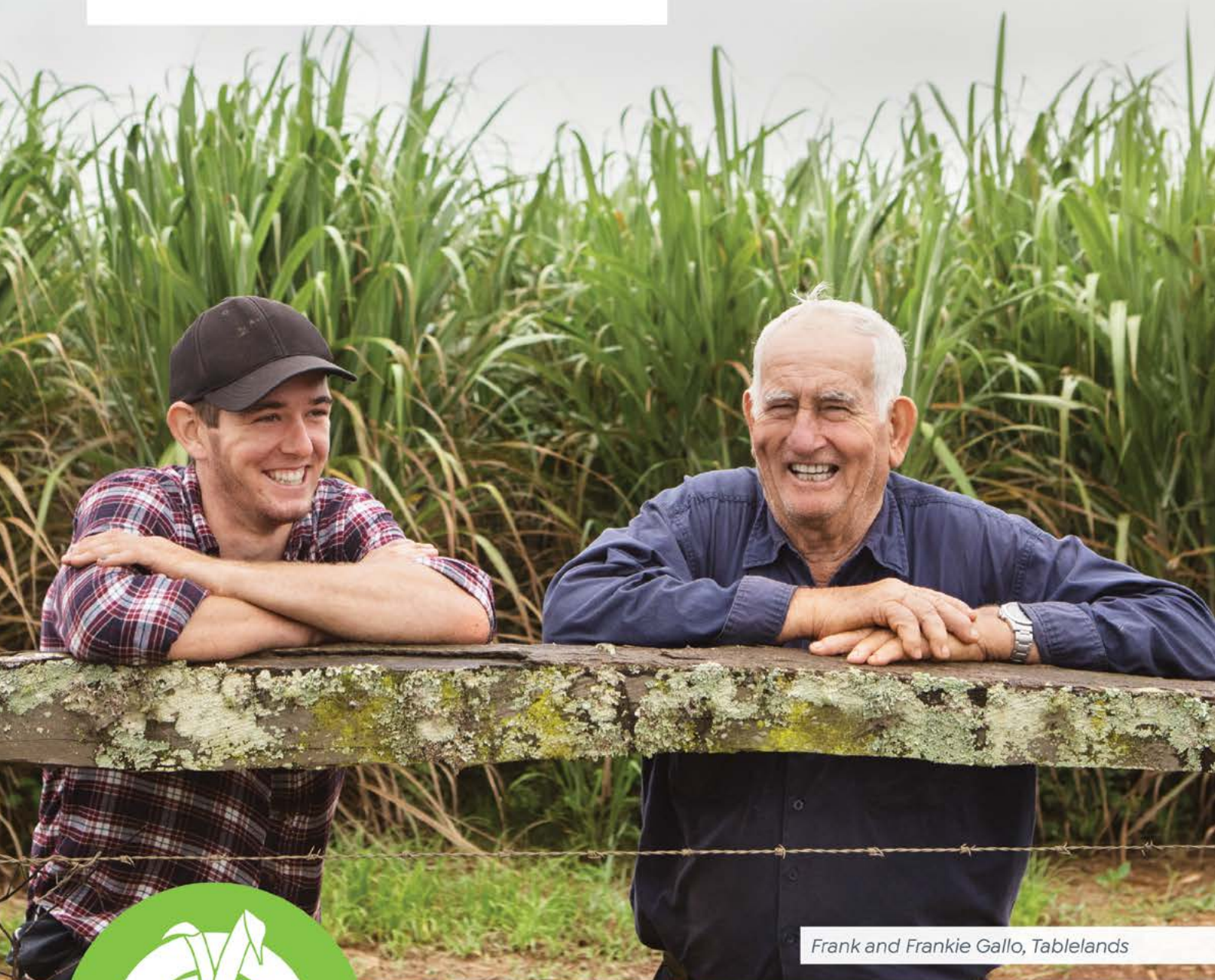
Look, be alert, call an expert

ACCREDITATION'S THE GOLD STANDARD

Let's show off the great work you're doing.

The destination's the same, but the journey's
different for everyone.

Contact your Smartcane BMP district facilitator to
discover what accreditation could look like for you.



Frank and Frankie Gallo, Tablelands



Contact your district facilitator to find out more.