BIG DECISION

Grower shareholders to vote on Mackay Sugar rescue deal



Category D assistance for flood affected growers



SRA project taking the guesswork out of healthy soil



Everything you need to know about Cane Supply Agreements

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR AUSTRALIA'S SUGARCANE INDUSTRY

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25 February 2019



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COVER IMAGE: Farleigh Mill is one of three Mackay Sugar mills that would be saved by a proposed \$120m investment by German company Nordzucker AG.

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On every level, on every issue we need to be representative

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

A challenging few months for Queensland agriculture have seen parts of our industry struggle through the extremes of weather - floods in the north and drought conditions in the south.

At CANEGROWERS we extend our best wishes to all those affected. Regardless of their own loses, I think everybody in agriculture feels for the desperate situation being faced by graziers in the northwest of the state. Having spent years hand-feeding the last of their stock due to drought, seeing their cattle perish in the desperately needed rain is truly heartbreaking.

But challenges are not only coming from the skies. At international, state, and local level we all have our shoulders to the wheel, trying to position the industry for a sustainable future.

At the international level, the Australian Government is on the cusp of joining a coalition of sugar-producing countries to fight in the World Trade Organisation against exorbitant subsidies provided to the Indian industry to the detriment of our own farmers. International trade rules are established to provide a fairtrading environment for all. But rules are meaningless unless we ensure that all countries abide by them. CANEGROWERS has worked with our supply chain partners, federal politicians and allied countries to escalate this issue to the highest possible level. It now needs to be brought to a head.

Closer to home, the State Government is poised to introduce the next phase of what has been a 10-year evolution of its Reef Regulations to protect the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. This is a time when the politics can trump the science and at CANEGROWERS we're redoubling our efforts to point out some facts. It's ironic, not to mention disappointing, that these new regulations are set to be introduced at a time when farmers have shown enormous capacity and willingness to change. Over the past four years, adoption of Smartcane BMP has skyrocketed to such an extent that over one-third of the Wet Tropics cane-growing area is now accredited in the program. This has been achieved through the efforts of farmers, supported by a collaborative effort across the region. Meanwhile, what may have been considered rhetoric about the

slippery slope of regulation back in 2009 has essentially been proven to be accurate.

This State Government, as governments regularly demonstrate, cannot change gear. Despite the personal desire of some politicians, they cannot find the political strength to reconsider an old approach and modify it for the current circumstances. This regulatory model is unfair and does little in a policy sense to recognise the strong commitment and passion growers in this industry have shown to taking control of their own businesses and shouldering some of the responsibility for water quality improvements.

Finally, even closer to home, our districts across the state are involved in issues affecting the daily lives of cane growers. CSA negotiations are underway, disaster recovery and assistance is being negotiated, a pivotal time in the history of Mackay Sugar is evolving with the transaction with Nordzucker, and Northern Milling is developing into a real opportunity for regional development in the far north.

The next three to six months will tell the tale for each of these enormously important issues at the local, state, national and international level. CANEGROWERS is representing the interests of growers and the industry at each level. We do so with



"At international. state and local level we all have our shoulders to the wheel, trying to position the industry for a sustainable future."



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Grow a better tomorrow

NEWS IN BRIEF

SHADOW AG MINISTER BRIEFED ON SUGAR INDUSTRY

Shadow Agriculture Minister Joel Fitzgibbon has heard firsthand the grower position on key sugar industry issues.

Ahead of his address to the Rural Press Club in Brisbane, CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri and CEO Dan Galligan met with Mr Fitzgibbon.

"We discussed the Labor Party position in relation to the sugar Code of Conduct, trade policy and electricity costs and had a general discussion about prospects for the upcoming federal election," Mr Galligan said. "We also provided a broad industry overview of current issues and further opportunities and challenges."

In his speech, Mr Fitzgibbon outlined what could lie ahead, should Labor win this year's federal election.

His priorities included improving infrastructure and health, education and telecommunications services to drive regional economies and removing barriers to investment.

"Our food and fibre sectors are in desperate need of the capital required to drive scale and to build the on-farm infrastructure needed to lift productivity and to build resilience and diversity," he

Mr Fitzgibbon cited climate change and consumer demands as two challenges facing agriculture.

"We need to harness changing community attitudes and food preference and turn them to our advantage ... they'll want our product produced in a sustainable and ethical way," he said.

"As a wealthy and innovative nation, Australia is well placed to give consumers what they want. We have to accept that the status quo does not always look good or meet consumer expectations and as a result we risk losing the initiative.

"We need to swim with the rising tide and surf the currents of activism to a more sustainably profitable place," he



CANEGROWERS URGES EUROPEANS TO END SUGAR TARIFF

CANEGROWERS Head of Economics Warren Males was part of an agricultural delegation which met with European Union Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan in Canberra this month

During their meeting, Mr Males raised the issue of European tariffs and quotas on Australian sugar, pointing out that Australia imposes no barriers on the importation of European sugar.

"CANEGROWERS has ongoing engagement with senior European Commission Agricultural officials and EU agricultural industry representatives to make the case for the full inclusion of sugar in a future Australia-EU FTA." he said.



"An FTA provides an opportunity for the European Commission to remove the barriers that prevent European Union refiners competing with refiners in the Asia-Pacific for access to Australian raw sugar."

Mr Males also described the close ties between the Australian and European industries.

"European immigrants and capital provided the cornerstone investments in the Australian industry both on farm and in factories," Mr Males said. "The close cultural and family ties are ongoing. Finasucre has an ongoing investment in our industry and Nordzucker is currently looking to invest in Mackay."■

Pictured: European Chief Ag Negotiator John Clark, CANEGROWERS Head of Economics Warren Males and European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan.

Cat D assistance for primary producers - application simplified

Cane growers impacted by recent flooding events in some northern Queensland shires can now apply for grants of up to \$75,000 to assist with clean-up and recovery costs.

QRIDA Disaster Recovery Manager Craig Turner said the application process for Cat D funding had been simplified to help speed up the recovery operation.

"Producers simply need to show they are an eligible primary producer, are within the declared disaster area, demonstrate they have suffered direct impact from the flooding and provide a simple estimate of clean-up and reinstatement costs," Mr Turner said.

"Producers should take photographs of the direct damage to accompany their application."

With the floodwater now all but receded in most areas, growers are beginning to count the cost of damage to crops and infrastructure.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River Chairman Michael Pisano said he expected to see a drop in sugar production this season as a result of the floods.

"We probably won't see a big drop in tonnage, but I'd expect to see at least a 10% drop in the sugar make," Mr Pisano said.

"We had a really good CCS last year, but I expect that will be down significantly as a result of all this rain."

In the Burdekin, most of the flood damage is in the Giru area, CANEGROWERS Burdekin manager Wayne Smith said.

"It's too early to tell if we'll see an impact on the crop, but if we do it will be around the Giru and lower Burdekin delta areas.

"There has been quite a bit of irrigation infrastructure damage and we're fielding a lot of calls from growers enquiring about disaster assistance."

Growers seeking more information about Category D assistance can contact QRIDA on 1800 623 946 or speak to their local CANEGROWERS representative. ■



Pictured: (left) At the time of print, the Burdekin Falls Dam was still at 111% capacity and releasing almost 57,000 ML per day; (below right) A satellite image of the Burdekin flood plume, which has traveled further into the Great Barrier Reef than in previous flood events.





BIG DECISION LOOMS

AS MACKAY SUGAR IS THROWN A LIFELINE

A \$120 million investment proposal from German company Nordzucker could secure the future of struggling Queensland miller Mackay Sugar, providing certainty to more than 800 sugarcane growers.

But the rescue package, announced by Mackay Sugar CEO Mark Day earlier this month, is a bitter-sweet prospect for growers who, as Mackay Sugar shareholders, stand to lose 70% of their equity in the company if the deal goes ahead.

"It's true that there will be some disappointment about a loss of grower equity," CANEGROWERS Chairman and Farleigh cane farmer, Paul Schembri said.

"But looking at it pragmatically, we are where we are and this deal offers the best possible opportunity to claw our way back from financial difficulty to a secure future."

"Uncertainty has plagued Mackay Sugar and its growers since the full extent of its financial plight was laid bare in 2016.

"I am sure that growers will be relieved, as I am, that a formal offer is now on the table. At least now we have an opportunity to secure the future for the next generation of growers."



In return for a 70% shareholding in Mackay Sugar, Nordzucker, Europe's second largest sugar manufacturer, will contribute \$60 million in equity and provide a shareholder loan of up to \$60 million to the company.

The funds will be used to undertake capital and maintenance works on the Farleigh, Racecourse and Marian mills, "significantly improving mill performance over the next few years and making the company profitable in the long term", a Mackay Sugar statement said.

2012

March - Mackay Sugar announces it is investigating a possible takeover of the Tully and Mossman mills.

July - COFCO acquires 50.1% of Tully shares. Mackay Sugar announces it is in talks with shareholders of Proserpine Mill about a possible takeover.

November - Wilmar buys Proserpine Mill.

April - Mackay Sugar acquires Mossman Mill for \$25.3m.

Under this transaction, the milling and related assets are acquired by Mackay Sugar through the issue of approximately \$12 million in Mackay Sugar shares and refinancing \$13 million in debt.

November - During an extraordinary meeting of shareholders, Mackay Sugar reveals a ballooning debt problem, with the company more than \$180 million in the red.



"As a grower-owned sugar company with 180 years in the industry, Nordzucker has a heritage very similar to Mackay Sugar, which will stand all parties well going forward."

The funds will also provide for a \$2 per tonne grower contribution to be repaid.

The controversial levy, which was introduced in 2017 to help shore up the struggling mills, will be repaid in two tranches, with the first to be paid within 30 days after completion of the transaction and the second payable 12 months later.

However, before the deal can go ahead, Mackay Sugar must first secure the support of at least 75% of shareholders.

A vote on the issue, originally scheduled for the first quarter of 2019, has been pushed back until at least April to allow the company more time to fully brief shareholders on the complex proposal.

Even if shareholders do support the deal, it is still contingent of a number of other factors, not least of which is the sale of Mossman Mill.

The transaction must also be approved by the Foreign Investment Review Board and an agreement reached with financiers for the restructuring of debt.

"The MSL Board unanimously recommends the proposal to our growers and shareholders," Mackay Sugar CEO Mark Day said. "

"It provides Mackay Sugar with a much more positive future and will allow us to restore the performance of the mills and local industry.

"Nordzucker is not only a leading sugar producer in Europe. As a grower-owned sugar company with 180 years in the industry, it has a heritage very similar to Mackay Sugar, which will stand all parties well going forward."

CEO of Nordzucker, Dr. Lars Gorissen said, "I am fully convinced that Nordzucker and Mackay Sugar fit together. Mackay Sugar has a tradition as a grower-owned company, experienced growers and the potential to deliver sustainable positive earning contributions, for growers and us alike."■

Pictured: Mackay Sugar's Racecourse Mill is one of three mills covered by the Nordzucker proposal. Marian and Farleigh mills are also covered, but the deal is contingent on Mossman Mill being sold.

2017

2019

February - Financial analysts Kidder Williams' recommend asset sales and a reduction in expenses to help tackle mounting debt. Their recommendations also include a, \$2 per tonne Mill Improvement Charge imposed on growers.

October - Mackay Sugar receives a non-binding proposal from German sugar manufacturer Nordzucker AG to purchase a 70% stake in the Mackay Sugar in exchange for a \$120m investment.

February - Mackay Sugar announces a binding offer from Nordzucker. The deal is subject to the approval of 75% of Mackay Sugar shareholders, as well as the Foreign Investment Review Board. It will also require an agreement with financiers for the restructuring of debt.



SRA committed to

SOLDIER FLY MANAGEMENT

By Dr Andrew Ward, Executive Manager, Biosecurity and Production

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) recently met with growers in the Central Region to provide an update on research into the soldier fly pest.



The meeting discussed the preliminary results from current trials looking at management of larvae using a range of chemical treatments.

Recent trials have shown some chemical treatments reduced larval populations by up to 50%, although there was still a large population of larvae in these treatments.

Work is continuing to analyse different chemical treatments regarding their efficacy and potential cost.

The meeting also discussed current investment by SRA in research at the University of Queensland led by Dr Kayvan Etebari. He is examining the relationship between larvae and cane plants.

This research is showing some promising results and is identifying a number of venom-like proteins that may be having an impact on the cane.

Variety trials in both the Central Region and Southern Region are also ongoing.

At the meeting, growers also expressed an interest in spray options for managing adult soldier fly populations.

In response, SRA will explore with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) a permit to enable this research.

SRA remains committed to developing management strategies for soldier fly.

Growers in the Southern Region will be provided an update at the SRA Southern Region grower update on 26 February. ■



Pictured: (above) soldier fly damage, (right) soldier fly larvae.

Always on guard to give grubs a caning.



Year in, year out.

Up to 4 years canegrub protection from one application... correct. Increased yield potential with less pesticide load in the environment over the crop cycle....yes! That's industry leading suSCon maxi Intel, the best you can get.



Policy Update

Environment with Matt Kealley

Industry with Burn Ashburner

ENVIRONMENT/SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

The final Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting for the current CANEGROWERS Policy Council term was held in Brisbane on 13 February. This committee, made up of an effective and engaged group of growers, has tackled some challenging issues over the past three years.

The big-ticket item is water quality and the Great Barrier Reef and issues covered in this area include reef science and what this means in the context of growing sugarcane; climate change and its influence on grower businesses; reef regulations and what government policy will mean for grower businesses; and engagement in programs such as Smartcane BMP and Reef Trust.

Other areas covered by the committee included sustainable sugar, vegetation management, biosecurity, pigs, rats, weeds, and the use of chemicals such as Shirtan, 2,4-D and imidacloprid.

Regardless of the individual issue being addressed, the core priority for the Committee has always been managing the industry's social licence – ensuring cane growers maintain the ongoing support of the community and the government.

This is the reason a lot of time is spent on reef regulations, water quality, sustainable sugar and programs influencing the Great Barrier Reef. It is also the reason why CANEGROWERS continues to champion Smartcane BMP and focus on projects that help our growers tell their story.

The Cane to Coast messaging on the CANEGROWERS website helps us do this, as does Smartcane BMP engagement and the Cane Changer project, which uses strategies to help set the record straight.

These issues aren't just discussed once and forgotten - they are a regular part of the agenda as the Committee develops policy positions and strategies for CANEGROWERS.

For example, since March 2016, reef regulations have been discussed at every meeting. Action and outcomes from these discussions have helped to inform CANEGROWERS

> submissions to the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce, provide advice back to the Queensland Government on proposed regulations, inform CANEGROWERS policy positions, and show that the industry is doing its share to support the health of the Reef.

Most importantly, the Committee has looked to the future. It has thought about what the industry may look like in 5, 10 and 20 years' time and what CANEGROWERS needs to consider to manage these

outlooks. ■

SLOW BURNING ISSUES

The CANEGROWERS Farm Input and Research Committee is currently addressing a range of issues and preparing recommendations for the CANEGROWERS Policy Council. These recommendations will inform the organisation's policy, strategic direction and actions.

ROAD ACCESS

The National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle Exemption Notice has reached a stage where all participating States and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator have agreed on the main conditions.

The Committee reviewed the draft Notice and associated guidelines to ensure that the sugarcane industry, at the very least, maintains the current level of access to the road network.

CANEGROWERS has the opportunity for direct input into this process through our membership of the National Farmers Federation. The next step is for the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads and local councils to provide final approval and detail (i.e. bridges with limited mass capacity). There will then be a process to inform growers of the changes.

BURNING

Another issue in progress is the review of the Commissioners Notification which allows cane growers to burn cane, tops and trash without a permit.

Again, the Committee has reviewed a draft Notice and provided recommendations. This is at an early stage and Queensland Fire and Rescue Services, with assistance from CANEGROWERS, will conduct several consultation sessions in the next few weeks to further inform the drafting of the Notice.

SRA UPDATE

The Committee received an update on issues facing Sugar Research Australia. Some of the issues covered were:

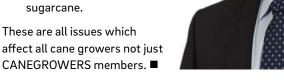
A possible change to the Federal Government matching funding to SRA, which was not considered to be in the interests of the sugar industry;

The implementation of the SRA adoption strategy;

The possibility of SRA providing research funding for marketing, diet/ health and biosecurity issues;

The options for SRA funding of research into alternative incomes from sugarcane.

affect all cane growers not just CANEGROWERS members. ■



Economics with Warren Males

SHAPING OUR INDUSTRY'S FUTURE

Earlier this month, CANEGROWERS Economics and Trade Committee held its first meeting for 2019 which was also the last meeting of the Committee before the CANEGROWERS elections. The Committee has worked on some challenging issues and it is pleasing to be able to record significant progress. Committee members can be rightly proud of their work.

MARKETING

In marketing, the new grower choice in marketing arrangements have been embedded across the industry. Growers can choose how their economic interest sugar is taken to market. Competition in the provision of sugar marketing services has given growers access to a wider range of pricing options than were previously available, some offered by the mill they supply and others offered by QSL.

In the Wilmar and Mackay Sugar supply districts, growers have access to the full range of pricing options offered by their marketer. They can also be paid directly by their marketer. The federal Sugar Code of Conduct should ensure innovation in marketing continues. It seems logical that it will be only a matter of time before growers in other districts have an option to deal directly with the marketer of their choice.

TRADE

There have also been strong achievements in trade. Australia's competitiveness in the supply of raw sugar to Indonesia has been restored, with the tariff disadvantage on Australian sugar removed. The Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as the TPP-11 agreements, increase the competitiveness of Australian sugar in the region, especially to Japan.

However, there is more to be done. Australia is negotiating several other trade agreements and CANEGROWERS is working to ensure sugar is included in each. Removing the barriers to trade makes our sugar more attractive to refiners and the increased demand increases competition and the value of Australian sugar.

ELECTRICITY

The Committee has worked hard to influence electricity policy settings and moderate price increases by highlighting flaws in the current framework. This work was reflected in the ACCC's review of electricity prices. Energy Queensland is trialling a control load tariff for use in irrigation.

CANEGROWERS also actively participated in the development of the AER's new Rate of Return guideline.

There is more to be done - CANEGROWERS is encouraging Energy Queensland to develop new network tariffs that will work for agriculture and the Queensland Competition Authority's review of irrigation water prices has commenced. CANEGROWERS is responding to ensure water is efficiently and cost effectively delivered.

There is a lot on the Committee's plate, but it's rewarding work that is helping to shape the future of our industry.

Money Matters

SUPERFRIEND IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Almost one in two Australians experience mental illness in their lifetime¹, while two in five workers believe employers lack the skills and training to address mental health and well-being issues².

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF MENTAL **ILLNESS?**

- Mental illness is the biggest barrier to workplace participation and collaboration
- 20% of your colleagues will experience a mental health condition in a year
- 90% of staff think mental health is an important issue for business, but only 50% believe their workplace is mentally healthy¹

AustSafe Super's workplace mental health partner, SuperFriend, is available to all AustSafe Super members with various support programs which can be implemented at your workplace.

WHO IS SUPERFRIEND?

SuperFriend is a national mental health foundation supporting businesses to build cohesive, high-performing teams with positive, psychologically safe environments.

To find out how SuperFriend could help your workplace, visit austsafe.com.au/regionalmanagers and get in touch with your local Regional Manager today. You can also check their free online resources at *superfriend.com.au/* resources.

AustSafe Super and Sunsuper will merge on 30 March, 2019, when two top performing funds become stronger together as one for rural and regional Australia. Sunsuper is one of the nation's most-awarded superannuation funds, with a profit-for-member model that puts members first, always. ■

¹ SuperFriend 2016 Annual Report

² SuperFriend Media: The right headspace

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 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.









Mackay marketing questions answered

Thank you to all those Mackay growers who have attended one of our recent QSL information sessions about the changes to your marketing and pricing arrangements.

If you couldn't make one of these sessions or have unanswered questions, we have a large team of professionals on the ground in Mackay who are available to have a chat.

You're welcome to drop in to our Mackay office in the CANEGROWERS building (Level 2), our Walkerston office (Dutton Street, near the bakery), or simply call 4967 4618 and we'll arrange an on-farm visit to answer your questions so you can make an informed choice.

Here's the answers to some of the most common queries we've received:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I was told QCS outperformed QSL by \$45/t in 2017. Is that right?

Sadly, this is a misleading comparison from QCS that doesn't compare apples with apples and quotes a QSL average figure that no QSL grower actually received. QCS hasn't provided details of what their claimed pool figure includes, but our research indicates it includes pricing done over a longer time period (i.e. forward pricing), so a more appropriate comparison is most likely to be with our 2-Season Forward pool, which made \$507/tonne of sugar net IPS in 2017. That's \$49 better than the QCS Short Term Pool return quoted. The chart on the opposite page provides a pool comparison for the past five seasons and gives a better indication of what QSL growers were actually paid and how QCS has fared in comparison.

I heard Mackay Sugar's domestic sales arrangement is very valuable and QCS needs my sugar for this.

Unfortunately, QCS does not publicly detail the net premiums it receives from this arrangement. The biggest cost for any sugar refiner is the cost of sourcing the raw sugar they require. It is highly unlikely that Sugar Australia would be willing to pay QCS a physical premium that exceeds the cost of sourcing raw

sugar from other mills in the region (i.e. Sugar Australia's majority owner is Wilmar - which has two of its own mills producing sugar locally).

Unlike QCS, QSL is not tied to a longterm supply arrangement with any one refiner, enabling us to use our extensive networks of long-term, blue-chip customers to sell your sugar to the highest-returning market – be that domestic or international. International sales offer the benefit of a regional premium, which is where QSL is able to charge our Asian customers more than the actual cost of transport from Queensland, as their next-best option for supply is often Brazil which comes with higher transportation costs. The difference in the cost of the ships QSL uses and what the customer actually pays us is reflected in our Shared Pool as the Net Premiums. You can find these on our website and in our Annual Report (visit www.qsl.com.au for details).

Do I need to give some tonnage to QCS to help support the mill?

Don't forget that your miller already receives around a third of the sugar produced from your cane crop in exchange for crushing your cane, and also has access to additional sugar produced by its own farms.

I don't want to do my own pricing. Does that rule QSL out of looking after me?

No. If you choose QSL you can make absolutely no pricing decisions at all and just use our default option, or pick from a range of QSL-managed pools where QSL's pricing team prices sugar on your behalf. Once a year we'll ask you what you'd like to do and then the QSL pricing team will manage your sugar under your instructions until the end of the season.

I already have pricing in place. Does that mean I can't choose QSL for 2019 or beyond?

No - You can still choose QSL as your marketer. Any pricing you have already done will be transferred to QSL at no cost and you'll be paid for the pricing achieved.



By Greg Beashel **QSL Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer**

I'm confused. Can I talk to someone about

Yes! Your local QSL team is happy to talk you through the Marketing Choice process and answer any questions you may have. You're welcome to drop in to our Mackay or Walkerston offices, or we can drop by your farm for a chat. Call 4967 4618 if you'd like to book in a time.

I've already submitted a marketing nomination form. Does that mean I'm locked in?

You can change your marketing nomination for the 2019 Season by submitting a new form any time up until 5 March. You can download a new form from the QSL website, or let us know and we'll get one to you ASAP. ■

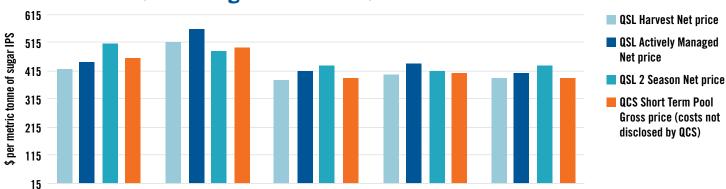
Disclaimer: This column contains information of a summary nature about QSL's Marketing Choice process for Mackay Sugar growers supplying Mackay mills. As such, it does not purport to be comprehensive or complete and given this, QSL makes no representations as to its accuracy or completeness. This column does not constitute financial, investment or product advice. You should seek your own financial advice before making any decisions in relation to pool selection and pricing as well as reading the full Pricing Pool Terms which are available on QSL's website. The information in the column is current only as at the date of the column (unless otherwise noted) and remains subject to change without notice.

\$45/T BETTER?



HERE'S THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE QCS SPIN

QSL Managed Pools vs QCS Short Term Pool



All QSL pool results referenced are net prices and sourced from QSL Annual Reports, available at www.qsl.com.au. Pricing Pool Terms for each QSL product referenced are also available on our website. All growers using QSL also receive an allocation from QSL's USQ Pool, not quoted above as this is derived from the ICE 16. The QCS Short Term Pool results quoted are gross in that they do not include an allocation from the QCS Shared Pool (which is also believed to include an allocation for QCS US Quota), and are sourced from Mackay Sugar cane pay statements dated 18.7.14, 17.7.15, 27.7.16, 1.8.17 & 24.7.18. QCS pool descriptions are not publicly available for the seasons referenced or the 2018 Season. Please note this information does not constitute financial advice, and past performance is not an indicator of future performance.

HOW QSL STACKS UP

	QSL	QCS
> Owned by all Qld growers and millers (including you)	✓	×
> Largest and most experienced marketer of Australian sugar	V	×
> Not-for-profit & income-tax exempt	✓	×
> Used by thousands of Qld growers	✓	×
> Multiple long-term blue chip customers	V	×
> Track record of publicly sharing results & product details	V	×
> State-wide sugar supply to manage weather & production issues	✓	×
> Access to all 6 Qld bulk sugar terminals	✓	×
> Choice of payment options, including pre-crush payment	✓	×

It's not too late to stay with QSL for the 2019 Season

You still have until 5 March to finalise your marketing nomination for the coming season.

The QSL team is available to answer your questions. Drop by for a chat at one of our local offices:

MACKAY: Level 2, Canegrowers Building, 120 Wood Street, Mackay

WALKERSTON: 5 Dutton Street (near the bakery)

Farm visits also available. Call 4967 4618 to book a time.

Taking the guesswork out of soil health



Soil health describes the physical, chemical and biological conditions of soil and its capacity to support a profitable and sustainable farm.

Soil is the foundation of a healthy and productive sugarcane crop. While cane is a hardy plant, it needs healthy soil to maximise its yield potential across the crop cycle.

Sugarcane soils can deteriorate due to intensive farming practices over several decades, especially from compaction of soil and reduced amounts of organic

Soil health reflects the whole farming system and is affected by almost all actions taken on the farm.

Science can help bridge the gap between good soil health and an effective, efficient, and profitable farming system.

Current work by SRA and its partners is developing data and tools that will give growers the confidence to adopt practices that improve both soil health and profitability.

The Sugar Yield Decline Joint Venture (SYDJV), which undertook research over the course of 10 years from 1993, provided sound advice on management

KEY MESSAGES FROM YEAR ONE OF THE PROJECT

- The fallow period matters legume cover crops resulted in increased labile (rapid turn-over) carbon, microbial biomass, fungal biomass, and microbial enzyme activity.
- Carbon inputs matter mill mud, cane trash, green manure all result in huge soil biology improvements.
- Mixed species cover crops seem to provide a longer benefit than a single species cover crop. Two sites, after mixed species legume fallows, had greatly increased soil fungi (and fungal: total microbial biomass).
- One constraint can undo all your good work – it is important to get everything right.
- The sub-soil is important and may be holding you back - this is often where a constraint lies.
- · Healthy soil does not guarantee you good yields. It is a foundation.
- Wide row spacing results in deeper rooting depth and more roots per plant.
- · How much did it cost to grow? Yield is not everything. We must understand the economics.

practices to improve soil health.

The four main practices were:

- inclusion of rotation crops;
- zonal tillage;
- controlled traffic;
- crop residue/organic matter retention.

However, despite the results of this research demonstrating the positive impact these practices can have on soil health and cane yield, adoption has been

To build on the knowledge gained through the SYDJV, a new project was developed to assist sugarcane growers with the adoption of these practices for improved soil health.

This five-year project, which started in 2017 at sites across the Burdekin and Herbert, will validate the impact of these practice changes on soil health.

The project is called Measuring soil health, setting benchmarks and driving practice change in the sugar industry and is led by SRA Senior Researcher, Dr Danielle Skocaj.

The project is one of a number which come under the umbrella of the SRA Soil Health Program, a ten-year commitment by SRA to work with growers to address declining soil health through practical testing and demonstration of practice changes.

Having an understanding of what a healthy soil is, combined with better testing and measurement tools, will allow changes in soil health to be more thoroughly evaluated.

One of the project outcomes will be a soil health toolbox of measuring instruments, which is currently being developed for extension providers and growers so they can make a quick assessment of paddock soil health.

This will enable the industry to quickly identify and address soil health constraints such as low pH, sodic horizons, compaction, and low labile carbon as well as understanding the impact of farming practices on soil health.

The project has a strong extension and demonstration focus. It features multiple project demonstration sites that are comparing the soil health, productivity and economics of different farming practices in side-by-side comparisons.

The sites compare practices such as mounding versus furrow planting, different break cropping systems, and 1.65 metre to 1.8-metre wide rows.

"During these trials, we will measure the nutritional, physical, chemical and biological levels within the blocks at various stages," Dr Skocaj said.

"The team conducts soil tests, root sampling, water infiltration, bulk density, penetrometer and gravimetric soil tests, as well as six-month biomass sampling of the sugarcane crop.

"Importantly, a full costing of the different farming systems is being conducted by economists at the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

"These sites will run for five years (plant and four ratoons). The purpose of the demonstration sites is not to say one system is better than the other, but to better understand the impact of different farming systems on short term soil health changes and farm economics."

The project is also testing soils collected from long-term paired sites. These sites are located on neighbouring farms (often only separated by a headland) where different farming systems have been implemented for at least ten years. The project team will measure the long term changes on soil health and farm economics arising from these contrasting farming systems.

SRA acknowledges the funding contribution from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries towards this research activity. The project is kindly supported by Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCSPL), Burdekin Productivity Services (BPS), Wilmar Sugar, University of Queensland and University of Southern Queensland.

Pictured: soil health images provided by Burdekin Productivity Services.



SOIL HEALTH IN SMARTCANE BMP

By Mick Quirk Manager Smartcane BMP

The physical, chemical and biological aspects of the soil interact strongly. For example, chemical and biological activity decline sharply where there is physical compaction of soil.

The soil particles are pressed together, reducing pore space between them. A compacted soil therefore has a reduced rate of both water infiltration and drainage.

The exchange of gases also slows down in compacted soils, causing an increase in the likelihood of aeration-related problems.

Further, soil compaction reduces root density and vigour, as roots must exert much greater force to penetrate the compacted layer.

SRA's current project on soil health is demonstrating the value of many of the practices already included in Smartcane BMP.

This is not surprising as BMP is based on industry research findings, including the long-term research conducted on yield decline.

Results of the SRA project will provide growers with more confidence about the value of these practices and their successful implementation.

Just as importantly, the soil health project is showing which of the newer ideas and options can further boost soil biology, and the benefits and costs of doing this. All this information will help shape the future content of practice standards within Smartcane BMP.

For example, aspects of soil health can be improved by mixed species fallows, and by the addition of products rich in carbon.

Knowing the benefits and costs of these options will help reveal the value of these practices to a farms' short-term and long-term performance. ■

Industry Spotlight sponsored by Smartcane BMP



TRIALS, RESULTS AND RESEARCH -THE DRIVING FORCE FOR ON-FARM CHANGE

Supplied by Vantage NEA

Burdekin cane grower George Henry has looked beyond traditional soil testing methods to identify and understand the limiting factors of his soils.

Precision agriculture has been a driving force to increasing efficiency for George, who has been operating on a controlled traffic regime since 1988 and a minimum till program since 2004.

Back in the 2000s, George was the North Queensland representative for Dr Allan Garside's study, "Managing yield decline in sugarcane cropping systems", a paper summarising the results from ten years of yield decline research in the sugarcane industry.

"Trials, results and research have influenced the way I farm," George said.

Yield variation was a key concern for George, who said he wanted to identify soil limitations in the lower performing areas of his farm.

His answer was to try Trimble Agriculture's Soil Information System (SiS), a unique soil surveying method that obtains over 50 layers of chemical and physical soil data from a surface and subsurface level (to a depth of 1200mm).

Pictured: Burdekin cane grower George Henry.



SiS uses electromagnetic induction sensing and the topography of soil, and processes soil maps using intelligent, targeted algorithms to pinpoint areas of variation within a paddock.

Vantage NEA precision agronomist, Bryan Granshaw, conducted two rounds of SiS analysis on George's property and identified acidity issues as the limiting factor of his surveyed paddocks.

These acidity issues were caused from low PH levels and toxicity, which in turn was caused by high aluminium levels.

Using the layer of data provided by SiS that reflected exchangeable aluminium, Bryan said they were able to discover the magnitude and extent of aluminium toxicity in George's paddocks.

"We were able to show exactly where the toxicity was occurring and the level of it," he said.

Since George has discovered what's causing the yield variability, he's established a field trial with the support of Charissa Rixon from T.R.A.P Services in Tully, to try to identify the best way to manage his soil issues.

George said having SiS analysis was clarifying, as it identified where in his paddocks there were issues and to what extent they were occurring, "It's firmed in my mind what my challenge is," he said. "Now I need to work out how best to overcome it."

Traditional soil testing methods in sugarcane involve taking samples to a depth of 20cm.

The fact SiS collects soil information to a depth of 1200mm has been beneficial for George, as his acidity issues were occurring at below the traditional soil testing depth.

Charissa said George is trialling the application of mill mud at depth, in hope that the high calcium load and organic

matter would improve the plant's growing environment.

"We're hoping the mill mud will raise the soil pH in the plants root zone and assist with plant establishment and the organic matter in the mill mud will help improve soil biology in the root zone and then slowly spread further into the soil, helping to address the soil pH" she said.

All of George's paddocks are on a dual row system, with two rows, 600mm apart, and wheel spacings at 1.9m.

He is trialling banding the mill mud at 25 tonnes per hectare, directly into the cane drill before planting.

In the future, George said he wanted to start applying mill mud via variable rate, using the SiS data to develop prescription maps in conjunction with other layers of farm data.

George and Charissa plan to assess the effectiveness of the mill mud application using future yield maps.

Charissa said she was also planning to overlay the SiS data with yield maps and satellite imagery of George's property, to further refine and identify the better and poorer sections of his farm.

"SiS has been a good tool in helping to identify issues in problem areas, as it provides information on things like water infiltration and compaction, as well as a nutritional break down of soil from depth," she said.

George said SiS has given him a good starting point to improving his farm's productivity.

For more information on SiS, please call Vantage NEA on 1300TRIMBLE. ■



SiS collects over 50 layers of spatially correct, 3D soil data to a depth of 1200mm

Use this data to improve your planting decisions



1300 TRIMBLE

Getting to the "Root" of better yields

Supplied by Martin Shaw - Stoller Australia FNQ Area Sales manager

With sugarcane planting season almost upon us, growers are looking for ways to maximise the yield potential of the varieties they plant. But to achieve maximum yield potential we must start with the roots.

Root tips serve as the "brains" of the plant. They are growth control centre, regulating all plant growth processes and focusing on maintaining vigorous rootgrowth throughout the crop cycle.

Why is root tip growth so important?

Maximum yield potential is affected from the time the seed piece germinates and the plant begins to grow.

Through signals transmitted by calcium and certain proteins, root caps respond to the environment and signal the plant to absorb water and nutrients

Every 7-14 days root cap cells die and must be replaced by new cells.

Without this replacement process, there will be fewer roots and root tips with the capacity to synthesize plant hormones and control the cane growth.

Root hairs absorb nutrients from the soil solution. However, without a consistent availability of soil moisture to solubilize and transport nutrients, they will deplete the nutrient supply.

Since soil moisture conditions are rarely consistent, the cane plant must continuously grow new root and root hairs into areas of optimal soil moisture conditions.

Stoller-ClearStart 15KZ & 13KZ Liquid fertilisers plus Action10 or Bio-Forge applied in furrow at planting supplies a balanced package of available nutrients N, P, K, Zn Co, Mo - and importantly calcium - to achieve maximum root growth

throughout the growing season and produce high cane yields and quality.

For more information on the benefits of ClearStart and Action10 contact Stoller on 1800 337 845 or email info@stoller.com.



Pictured: Billet on the left treated with Stoller Clearstart 15KZ + Action 10 liquid in-furrow. Billet on the right had granular fertiliser only. Both planted into dry soil in the 2018 season.



NOBILI HEAVY DUTY MULCHER REMAINS MOST POPULAR

Supplied by Silvan

Leading Italian mulcher manufacturer Nobili has been exclusively represented in Australia by Silvan Australia for over 20 years.

With an international market and reputation for quality and innovation, Nobili regularly releases new mulchers that meet specific market needs.

The Nobili BK range of heavy-duty mulchers, which is designed to operate behind tractors with a capacity of 52 to 130 kW (or 75 to 175 horsepower), is the most popular choice sold in Australia due to its heavy-duty design, durability and versatility.

Available in three model choices, with working widths of 2.3, 2.7 or 3.2 metres, the BK range is ideal for grass, stubble or pasture topping, breaking down vegetable crop residues, or the reduction of green re-growth or prunings up to 90mm in diameter.

There is now a Nobili BK 230 (or with a 2.3 metre working width) model available as centre mount only option joining the standard BK 230 in the range that can be swapped between centre mount and offset.

Requiring a Category II three-point linkage with pto speeds from 540 rpm up to 1000 rpm for the two widest mulchers, the Nobili BK range will reduce vegetative materials or residues to a fine mulch for recycling or natural composting.

Standard heavy-duty oil-bath gearboxes with an over-running clutch, taper-locked pulleys and an electronically balanced rotor ensures reliability under heavy use conditions.

Each model also has maintenance free bearings with an opening tailboard and mulching bar that ensures the vegetative material is left as a fine mulch.

The BK range is fitted with two Y blades with a centre straight blade to produce a fine mulch, although, as with most Nobili mulchers, the blade pattern can be changed to the two Y blades only or heavy-duty steel hammer blades, making them the ideal solution to reduce all types of residues and leave a fine surface

The BK range uses adjustable skids for height control or they have the option of a rear roller or rear wheels, although the BK 320 (or with a 3.2 metre working width) are fitted with rear wheels as standard.

Silvan Australia's machinery specialist Gavin Wheatcroft says that as tractor sizes and available horsepower has increased, Nobili has responded with larger working width and heavier duty mulcher options.

"The Nobili BK range, now available nationally from Silvan Australia, is the ideal choice for larger scale or intensive farm properties, roadside maintenance or local government contractors, or any application where vegetative waste can or needs to be reduced to a fine evenly distributed mulch for breakdown or to add to future productivity".

For further technical information on the Nobili mulcher range including the new heavy-duty BK model choices contact Silvan Australia on 1300 SILVAN (1300 745 826) or email info@silvanaust.com ■



CANE SUPPLY AGREEMENTS

THE BASICS

WHY HAVE A CSA?

Current Queensland legislation (Sugar Industry Act 1999) states that a grower may only supply sugarcane to a mill if the grower has a signed, written contract with the mill owner.

WHAT DO CSA'S CONTAIN?

CSAs set out how the sugar industry's \$2.5 billion in revenue is allocated between growers and the mill owners. It also deals with matters such as crushing season arrangements, harvesting arrangements, starting and finishing dates of crushing, harvesting rosters and allotments, allowances and deductions.

Almost everything to do with the relationship between the grower and mill owner is dealt with by the CSA.

The CSA is the most important document or agreement for growers and mill owners.

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE **AGREEMENT?**

Each grower must sign a CSA with the mill. The CSA can either be an individual agreement or a collective agreement involving a number of growers.

By Chris Cooper, CANEGROWERS Legal Advisor

An individual CSA is one negotiated by an individual grower with the mill owner directly.

A collective agreement is a CSA negotiated by a bargaining representative for a group of growers.

By growers forming a collective group and negotiating together through their bargaining representative, it is hoped that the negotiation playing field is levelled.

Mills do largely enjoy a monopoly position and collective negotiations is adopted to try and improve the negotiation power of growers.

CANEGROWERS has used its experience and collective negotiating capacity to finalise collective CSAs with mill owners for nearly 100 years.

If a grower wants to be part of this collective agreement, they will have to appoint CANEGROWERS as their bargaining representative and also sign the CSA.

If a grower does not want to sign the collective agreement they don't have to. But if they want to supply cane they will have to negotiate their own written individual agreement with the mill owner. No signed agreement, no supply.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Bargaining representatives are authorised by the Sugar Industry Act to negotiate CSA arrangements with mill owners for a group of growers.

In addition, CANEGROWERS has been authorised by the Australia Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) with specific and comprehensive powers to collectively bargain on behalf of its members all necessary cane supply aspects including CSA, pricing and marketing agreements and any associated agreements.



CANEGROWERS negotiates for and on behalf of those growers who appoint it as bargaining representative which forms part of the membership of CANEGROWERS.

MAKING A COLLECTIVE CANE SUPPLY **AGREEMENT**

The negotiations for collective CSAs are difficult, complex and extremely time consuming for CANEGROWERS representatives.

Many hundreds of hours, over an extended period, are spent preparing, discussing and negotiating as grower representatives seek to reach a reasonable commercial cane supply agreement with the mill owner.

But the functions and services provided to grower members by CANEGROWERS in negotiating the CSA do not end with the signing of the contract.

The CSA, once agreed upon and signed, is usually a three-year rolling contract and will continue indefinitely until terminated by either the mill owner or the grower.

(In some cases it may be for a fixed term.)

The benefits of the CSA will continue for those growers who have signed it for as long as they remain a party to the contract.

CANEGROWERS monitors performance of the contract generally to ensure growers rights and entitlements under the CSA are delivered and that mill owners perform their obligations.

There are a variety of roles and functions CANEGROWERS performs under the contract. These are too many to mention in this brief article but include:

- overseeing the mill's performance under the contract
- ensuring growers are properly paid and GEI sugar is properly allocated to growers
- ensuring cane analysis and CCS determination is correctly carried out to protect growers payments and GEI determination
- representing and advocating for growers in disputes with the mill

- reviewing the terms of the CSA and continually seeking improved terms and conditions for growers in the
- participation in Operational and Equity Committees with the mill owner to oversee fair and equitable harvesting arrangements.

These are only a few of the many ongoing functions and services CANEGROWERS undertakes for and on behalf of its grower members under the collective CSA.

The ongoing provision of these essential services and functions by CANEGROWERS to preserve, enforce and enhance the rights and benefits of growers under the CSA, requires considerable time, effort, expertise, experience and resources, including financial resources.

These necessary resources are largely derived from the membership fees, paid by members.

It would be unfair and unreasonable to expect that CANEGROWERS should provide these ongoing CSA resources to growers who are not members and not making their fair contribution by way of membership fees.

OPT OUT REQUIREMENTS

While CANEGROWERS has a strong membership base, it would naturally prefer if every grower was a member. This would lead to an increase in bargaining power, as well as improved financial and negotiation strength during the ongoing dealings with large multinational milling companies.

CANEGROWERS is a voluntary organisation and growers are not obliged to become or remain members.

However, if a grower chooses to not be a member, then there are consequences to that decision.

That grower cannot fairly expect that the important functions and services provided by CANEGROWERS and funded by members, including those ongoing extensive services in relation to the CSA, should continue to them when they are not making any contribution towards the resources needed.

As a consequence of CANEGROWERS being a voluntary membership organisation and recognising that a member may resign, and as a consequence of the unfairness, unreasonableness and unacceptability of a situation where non-members who make no financial contribution might get to enjoy and receive the same benefits as members who are making a financial contribution, most CSAs make provision for growers to opt out of the collective CSA.

These opt out clauses mean that when a CANEGROWERS member who is party to the collective CSA resigns membership of the organisation, CANEGROWERS can require that grower to leave the collective CSA, forcing the grower to enter into an individual supply contract directly with the mill owner.

In these circumstances the non-member will no longer be part of or party to the collective CSA and will not enjoy the services, benefits, entitlements and protections afforded to CANEGROWERS members. ■

For further free advice and information about cane supply agreements or other legal matters, please contact CANEGROWERS Legal Advisor Chris Cooper on Free Call 1800 177 159.

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6 Tonne side-Tipper, older machine, rams resealed by Coopers Hyd's, with hy-flow pto pump, good working condition. Also some solid but used 23.1x26 tyres thrown in. \$6,600 inc GST or best offer. 2 Bonel billet planters (make 1 good one out of the 2). Wide elevators. \$4,400 for both. Hodge Ratoon roller \$1,100. Ajax pto pump 4x3, GC, \$1650. Ph: 0407 176 828.

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43

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Nambour

Ballina

Woodburn

Woongoolba

Murwillumbah



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The industry super fund for rural and regional Australia

489

330

428

377

306

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

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12

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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.

Call CANEGROWERS Insurance today (07) 3864 6417 to discover how WE CAN HELP YOU!

CANEGROWERS Insurance is a Corporate Authorised Representative (CAR No 429264) for National Adviser Services Pty Ltd t/as Community Broker Network | ABN 60 069 916 184 | AFSL 233750.

Registration Form



Women in Sugar Australia Conference 2019



NAMI	<u> </u>		
Postal A	Address:		
Email A	Address:		
Phone:		C .	
Organisation you Represent:			
Events Attending:			HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL
	Conference, Dinner & Bus Tour	\$70.00	SHIKE COUNCIL
	Dinner Only	\$40.00	
Dietary	Requirements:		
Partne	er Attendance:		
Name:		•••••	
	Farm Visits, Dinner & Bus Tour	\$70.00	
	Dinner Only	\$40.00	
Dietary	Requirements:		

Payment Methods:

Cheque Electronic Transfer Made Payable to BSB: 084629

Women in Sugar Herbert Account: 159982149

Ref: Your Name & District

REGISTRATION FORMS MUST BE RETURNED BY MONDAY 1 APRIL 2019

Women in Sugar Herbert P O Box 1574 Ingham Qld 4850

Email: rlbonassi@bigpond.com





















Invitation

Women in Sugar Herbert Invites you to the 2019 Women in Sugar Australia Conference

MONDAY, TUESDAY
APRIL 29-30
AT TYTO CONFERENCE CENTRE
INGHAM

Guest Speakers - Entertainment Gala Dinner - Bus tour of district

Contact Women in Sugar Herbert for a Registration Form:

Phone: 0418 787 055 (Leanne) 0402 902 887 (Sharon)

Email: rlbonassi@bigpond.com