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## CSIRO App

The CSIRO has launched a phone app that can show the concentration of nitrogen in water in real time.

Called 1622WQ, the app is free to download. It shows data on nitrate concentrations from high frequency automatic sensors deployed in selected coastal catchments. It also shows rainfall so farmers easily see how the weather is affecting local water quality.

CSIRO agricultural scientist and project leader Dr **Peter Thorburn** said the app was co-designed with farmers to meet their needs.

"Sugarcane growers told us they wanted quick and easy access to water quality information, so they could find out what's going on with their crops and make better decisions," Dr Thorburn said.

"Although an app can appear simple, the smarts behind it are anything but. The chain of information between the water quality sensors in local waterways and what you see on your phone is complex and requires substantial innovation along the way."

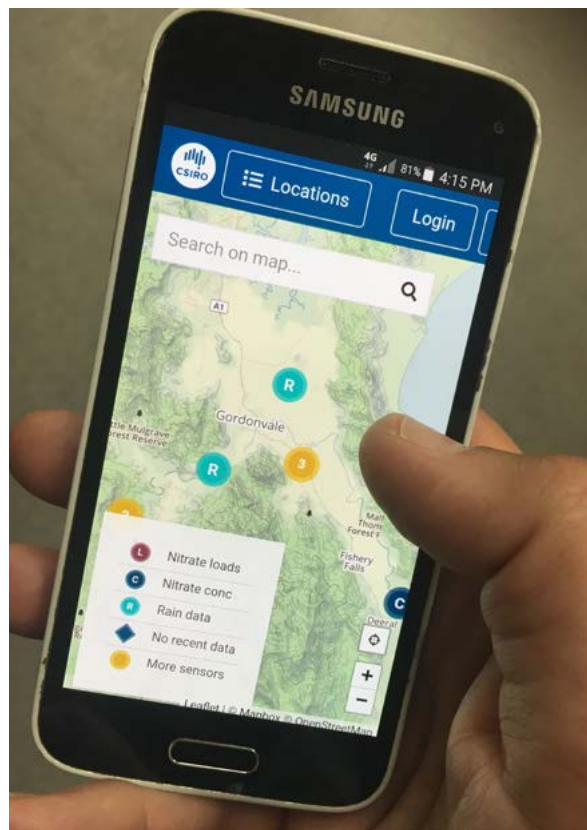
CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Chairman **Stephen Calcagno** says he's started using the app.

"This will be a great tool for farmers to see the impact of their farm management and help them improve their practices and the environment," Mr Calcagno said.

The name 1622 comes from the height of Queensland's tallest mountain, which is in the area where the initial app development work took place. WQ is for water quality.

"Sugarcane is the first farming system we've looked at, but we could deploy it in any area where real time water quality data could help inform agricultural practices," Dr Thorburn said.

The app can be accessed here: <https://1622.farm/> ■



## Rain...finally!

The New Year has brought some welcome relief to Queensland's cane growers, with much-needed rain falling on parched cane paddocks up and down the coast.

From Mossman in the north to Rocky Point in the south, many districts have recorded their highest rainfall total in months.

The Burdekin saw the biggest falls, with rain gauges in Ayr recording 320mm in just 24 hours over 28-29 January.

The deluge, which caused flash flooding in areas, brought the district's January total to 547mm (at the time of print), more than double the January average.

Mossman and parts of the Cairns Region recorded over 400mm, while Innisfail, Ingham and areas of Mackay (pictured) received falls in excess of 300mm.

"These falls will greatly benefit Mackay region crops," CANEGROWERS Mackay Area Committee Chairman **Joseph Borg** said. "The rain will go a long way towards boosting the moisture profile of the soil and replenishing groundwater supplies."



"Although crops are behind for this time of year, we expect growth to come on favourably after this rain."

Further south, in the drought-declared districts of Bundaberg, Isis, Maryborough and Rocky Point, the falls were more modest but welcome nonetheless.

More than 140mm fell in Bundaberg, while Isis and Maryborough each received over 70mm. Rocky Point beat its January average of 126mm, with 172mm recorded to 29 January. ■





## Paradise Dam Report

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg and CANEGROWERS Isis districts are working to build a region-wide picture of the impact that reducing the capacity of Paradise Dam will have on their businesses and community.

The local cane grower representatives bodies, along with the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Bundaberg Regional Council, have commissioned independent economic consultants Adept Economics and QEAS to assess the economic value of irrigation water to the region "to help justify the need to retain the entire nominal allocation that was held in Paradise Dam."

In September 2019, the Queensland Government announced the dam's water storage level had to be reduced to 42% for safety reasons and structural repair work could take five years to complete.

Building Queensland is currently reviewing the dam and there are concerns its full capacity may not be reinstated.

With more than 3,000 jobs and 15.7% of the economic activity in the region linked to agriculture, the chairmen of the three organisations said in a joint statement: "Agriculture plays such a critical role in our economy and as a region we need to understand exactly what it will mean if water security is not reinstated.

"It's not just about what we have now, it's the future opportunities that could be lost to the region due to a lack of water security.

"Few regions in Australia have a competitive edge like we do to generate agricultural produce, we should not let this edge go by allowing the dam's capacity to not be reinstated.

"This study will provide us with a platform to advocate for the reinstatement of the dam or an alternative solution that would provide the same level of water security."

Separately, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers have engaged an independent engineer to review and assess recent reports in relation to the dam and recommend options for remediation.

Both reports are expected to be completed in February and will be submitted to Building Queensland for consideration as part of its review of the dam. ■

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*Pictured: 80,000 ML of water were released from Paradise Dam in 2019 amid safety concerns about the dam's structural integrity.*



## Restrictions eased on 2,4-D buffer zones

At a time of increasing rules and regulations around farming practices, there was some good news for growers recently, with the easing of label requirements for the use of 2,4-D.

In 2018, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) announced interim measures from their review of 2,4-D which required, among other things, specific downwind buffer zones for sensitive vegetation and aquatic areas.

Unfortunately, the buffer requirements apply to all boom spraying and do not consider the use of droppers or directed spray equipment.

However, thanks to the efforts of chemical company Nufarm and CANEGROWERS, the National Working Party on Pesticide Application and the APVMA have agreed to amend the definition of a "boom sprayer" in relation to downwind buffer zones with application of products such as 2,4-D.

As a result, Section 2.2 of the recently updated Spray Drift Risk Assessment Manual lists the following as NOT requiring a spray drift risk assessment:

"application with specialised equipment in cropping situations where the nozzles are orientated below the horizontal of the top of the crop canopy and spray is released at a height below the top of the crop canopy (e.g. drop nozzles used to direct the spray to the furrows between emerged crops, or small booms used to spray inter-row areas in tree and vine crops)"



Therefore, the boom spray buffer zones listed on labels do NOT apply if droppers, such as Irvin Legs, are utilised in the

application of sugarcane pesticides (when used in accordance with the exemption above).

This is good news, as 2,4-D is commonly applied below the canopy to emerged broadleaf weeds and vines, and this change will allow spraying up to the edges of cane blocks.

Typical under-canopy spray setups include Irvin droppers and spray bars, side nozzles fitted to spay shields or hoods, and a range of other under-canopy spray bars/nozzle setups. Some dropper arrangements are adjustable and whether or not a buffer zone applies will depend whether the dropper nozzles are above or below the canopy.

This amendment should be reflected on labels as existing labelled stock is used up. Note that nozzles must still deliver no smaller than a VERY COARSE spray droplet size category. ■



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## Bundaberg Sugar cracks the Middle Eastern market

Queensland's Bundaberg Sugar has secured an exclusive retail partnership with LuLu Hypermarket to stock its products across the Middle East.

LuLu Hypermarket is the first retailer outside of Australia to stock Bundaberg Sugar, with products to be carried in its 185 stores across the Gulf region.

LuLu is the fastest growing retail chain in the Middle East and Asia, serving more than 1.1 million customers daily.

The partnership with Bundaberg Sugar was launched with a red carpet in-store event in Abu Dhabi, coordinated by Trade and Investment Queensland's Middle East division.

Bundaberg Sugar Group Chief Executive **Guy Basile** said LuLu's commitment to the company was exciting.

"LuLu taking our product on board and the way they launched it was significant in the sense of how they see relationships with direct suppliers of particular premium brands like ours," Mr Basile said.

"We expected the in-store launch event to be a little more low-key, but it was quite the opposite. The event launched Bundaberg Sugar while showcasing LuLu's entire range of Australian products, which was phenomenal.



"It has reinforced our strategy to build our brand presence in the region and partnering with a company such as Lulu is vital to achieving this." ■

*Pictured: TIQ and Lulu Hypermarket went all out for the in-store launch, with the red carpet event featuring an imitation cane train hauling bins of Bundaberg Sugar, amongst other attractions.*

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## Maryborough growers gain insight (and cherries) on Tassie trip

A group of 34 growers and industry representatives from Maryborough made the long journey south to Tasmania last month, as part of an educational tour of the state's agriculture sector.

The trip, which was partially funded through SRA's Sugar Industry Travel and Learning Award, examined the use of low pressure overhead irrigation and the diversity of cropping across the Bass Strait.

While the Apple Isle's lush green countryside is often viewed as an ideal setting for agriculture, Queensland growers were surprised to learn that their Tasmanian counterparts faced many of the same problems with irrigation, drainage and poor soil types.

"Tasmania is not the easy place to farm we all thought it was," said Maryborough Productivity Services Agronomist and tour-leader, **Yolande Kliese**.

"I think most of the group was surprised to hear annual rainfall numbers of 600mm in the Northern Midlands and that they also had challenging soil types like some of ours, with shallow top soils,

low water holding capacities and clay subsoils.

"Drainage was the highest priority of the farmers we visited and all felt getting this right first was essential.

"The Water for Profit project assists farmers to understand their soil types and readily available water. This has resulted in more water-use, as they now irrigate to supply crop demand and stress the crop less. They too had issues with pivot ruts and the majority of irrigators partially fill with soft gravel or sand and then pull dirt back on top."

It wasn't all work, though, with some much-needed laughs along the way. Growers also got to see a wide range of crops, including peas, potatoes, pyrethrum, raspberries, strawberries, lavender and clover pastures.

"Poppies, hemp and cherries were the favourite attractions," Yolande said.

"Howard from Legana Cherries was game enough to let us in his orchard. Plenty of boxes of the best cherries we have ever eaten came back to Queensland with us.

"Our Tasmanian guides kept telling us it was "hot" and they especially enjoyed it when we went to see the Mole Creek Caves and glow worms, as it was just 9 degrees in the cave.

"We are very grateful to Sue Hinton from the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture for organising all of the farmers for us to visit and for her commentary each day.

"Sue is an agronomist from Queensland who went to Tasmania to work in poppies and hasn't returned. She loves it down there." ■

*Pictured: (main) the group at Cataract Gorge, (bottom left) David Harris picking cherries to enjoy at Howard's Legana Cherries, (middle bottom) Cheryl Doyle with boxes of delicious big juicy cherries to bring home.*







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**Jack Russo, Farnsfield, QLD.**

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# CEO COMMENT

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By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS



## PROFITABILITY IS OFTEN DOWN TO TIMING

What a difference two months has made. Significant rainfall across the north of the state and a high in the market not seen for more than 12 months means we can look at 2020 with a greater sense of optimism.

Reliance on the weather is part and parcel of farming. But the fickleness of its impact is proof, if any were needed, of how crucial it is that we're fully informed of the broader market conditions and any profit-making opportunities the market may present.

This need is at the heart of the Marketing Information Service that CANEGROWERS provides to members. Through both face-to-face workshops and online information available through the Member Resources section of our website, we provide monthly updates on market movements and the trends behind the commodity cycle. This information, combined with a good knowledge of the costs of production, can put farmers in a better position when deciding on the best time to engage with your chosen marketer.

Stability in the sugar market is hard to find. However, with excellent risk management tools such as forward pricing, a competitive environment for the provision of marketing services, and robust, reliable and unbiased market intelligence, CANEGROWERS hopes that growers can be best placed to smooth out the commodity cycle. Through knowledge and insight, we can turn market volatility into an opportunity for profits.

Meanwhile, with the year only really just getting underway, it has taken almost no time at all for the inevitable volatility of politics to become profound. If 2020 was a sporting season, the State election would be the grand final. But the local government elections being held on 28 March are a critical preliminary. Decisions made at the local government level have a significant and profound impact on our industry.

Whether it's around the right to operate our farms within community expectations of noise and machinery movement, or the decisions made around competing land uses and the encroachment of urban or non-compatible land uses.

The key to managing these issues is to ensure both existing and future agricultural production in our regions is secured within the knowledge and skills of elected local government representatives. It is essential that we have representatives on councils that have pragmatic and detailed understanding of the needs and direct benefits of agriculture to their communities.

With over 70 councils across the state, the issues of each jurisdiction will not get the attention of the statewide media. But the people elected to local councils have a significant role to play in your future and CANEGROWERS will be working with our 13 district companies to monitor the campaign and encourage agriculture issues to be at the forefront of the minds of councillors as they pledge to work for the future of their communities. ■



# Seeking Expressions of Interest QSL STUDY TOUR MAY 2020 – JAPAN

## Konichiwa!

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to be confirmed).

Visit sugar refineries and port facilities in the Keihanshin Region on Japan's South West Coast.

- **Osaka** – known as the Nation's Kitchen – look forward to delicious food. It is also known for its modern architecture, nightlife and hearty street food.
- **Kyoto** – the cultural capital of Japan and a major tourist attraction. It is home to numerous Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, palaces and gardens, many of which are listed collectively by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.
- **Kobe** – is famous for its beef and is considered one of Japan's most attractive cities. Kobe has been an important port city for many centuries.

A full itinerary will be available soon.

**Expressions of Interest close Friday 29 February, 2020**

Places are strictly limited, nominate your interest as it is first-in-first-served. Partners are included in this invitation.

To register your interest, contact Sonia Ball on 0418 978 120 or email [sonia.ball@qsl.com.au](mailto:sonia.ball@qsl.com.au)

**When:** Week starting 17 May or 24 May

**Cost:** Early estimated cost per person is around \$4500 each

*(This is an indicative cost only and does not include any domestic travel within Australia. Requirement: Must have a valid passport with at least six months validity. And participants must organise their own travel insurance for the duration of the trip.)*



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# TRIALS TO INFORM FERTILISER OPTIONS

By Brad Pfeffer, SRA

When **Kevin Mann** first began sugarcane farming in 1980 with his brother, **David**, one of the first things that they did was get soil tests, leaf tests and water tests.

They wanted to understand the limiting factors on the farm at Osborne in the Burdekin, and Kevin knew that it wasn't going to be a pretty picture.

"The water tests showed we had high rock salt in our underground water supply, and it wasn't suitable for growing cane. The soils showed salt as well, while the leaf tests showed that we were doing the best we could with the conditions," he explained. "So, we set about improving things by lasering everything to the right levels and improving the layout where we could."

Their water is sourced mostly underground, along with two pumps that can access some surface water, which he blends with the groundwater to bring the salinity down as best he can.

Kevin said he had made changes to irrigate with high inflow volumes of water to keep the water flowing, as well as shortening runs where he could, except in situations where he is restricted by deep gullies or a council easement on the property.

Kevin now farms with his son, **Max**, and they grow about 15,000 tonne each year on the 140-hectare farm. Max recently returned to the farm after working seven years overseas, as a fitter and turner and hydraulic specialist. This now comes in handy and allows the Mann family to do all their own on-farm maintenance.

Kevin said they faced a limited water situation in some years, which meant they had reduced ability to grow legume crops for grain on their fallow, although they have in the past grown cover crops such as dolichos lablab.

"We've made the decision to utilise our water for the cane," he said. "The surface water is mostly being used for blending with the underground water to make it more usable. At the same time, there have been years when we have had limited water for the cane."

"This year, we had floodwater across the farm at the beginning of the year



and it only lifted the underground table by about eight feet (240cm), and now in October after a dry year it is back to where it was last year.

"There is enough for the cane for two or three years, but we don't want to be pushing things too hard."

The Manns grow the popular local varieties KQ228A, Q183A, Q208A and Q240A and aim for an even split between these four. Crops are typically grown

as plant and three ratoons, with a short fallow before planting in April or May.

For the past two years, the Manns have been involved in a project called EEF60, which is assessing enhanced efficiency fertilisers at different application rates compared to standard urea treatments.

EEF60 is managed by CANEGROWERS and run in the field by Sugar Research Australia and local productivity services organisations.

Kevin said he had used slow-release fertilisers in the past, particularly on his sandy soils early in the season, as well as trialling different blends, all with the aim of improving production.

Results from the EEF60 project will be communicated throughout 2020 and 2021, as more data is collated from project sites across the industry, collecting information from different regions, local conditions, and seasons.

These trials will provide information on the effect of Enhanced Efficiency Fertilisers (EEFs) in terms of tonnes cane per hectare (TCH), commercial cane sugar (CCS), and nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) effect on grower profitability. Environmental losses (run-off and deep drainage) are being assessed at six of the 60 sites.

As well as being a keen trial collaborator, Kevin is also a strong advocate of the Smartcane BMP program and was among the first growers in the Burdekin to achieve accreditation. He now has a system where he records all his farm practices in a notebook during the week, and works with his wife, Amanda, who enters his notes into the computer.

"It's a simple system but it works well," he said. "I was doing it anyway, so the accreditation makes sense. We as farmers know what we are doing on our farms, but the Smartcane BMP process shows we are doing the right thing and now it's all recorded." ■

- The EEF60 project is a collaboration between CANEGROWERS, SRA, Burdekin Productivity Services, Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited and Mackay Area Productivity Services. It is funded by the Australian Government Reef Trust and Queensland Government Great Barrier Reef Innovation Fund.



Australian Government



Pictured: (left) Kevin Mann is looking forward to learning more about enhanced efficiency fertilisers through the EEF60 project. (Below) Kevin's grandson, Harrison (son of Max and Lisa) is already showing a keen interest in cane.



## BUMPER STICKER PHOTO COMPETITION



Want to show your support for the sugarcane industry and be in with a chance to win a great prize? Slap a CANEGROWERS bumper sticker on your ute, harvester, haulout, whatever - take a snap of it on farm and email it to us to be in with a chance to win.

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# FROM THE CHAIR

By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS

## POSITIVE START TO 2020

There is no better way to start a New Year than with a rally in world sugar prices. Since November 2018, world sugar prices have been floundering below the costs of production. The economic pain these low prices have exacted on the industry is well known and has been felt by all, but particularly by growers and millers.

In recent weeks, the March contract has been trading above 14 US\$/lb, reaching as high as 14.9 US\$/lb on 23 January.

No one single factor drives the sugar price, but certainly the recent downgrade of the Thai, Indian and Chinese crop expectations, plus the easing of trade tensions between the United States and China, has lifted the market.

More broadly however, the upward movement in price has been supported by market commentators pointing to a substantial deficit of production to consumption for the 2019-2020 sugar year. That deficit could be as high as 5 to 8 million tonnes of sugar.

We sometimes cop criticism from growers who believe that telegraphing better sugar prices works against us in the longer term, as it can convey a false impression that all of our problems are over.

However, the flip-side of that argument is just as important. We need to ensure that our external partners, such as investors, government and the community, know that the industry has a future. Unless we as an industry are optimistic about our

future, it's difficult to expect investors, government or policy-makers to be optimistic.

## MARKETING INFORMATION SERVICE

I can't stress enough how vital it is that growers inform themselves of the market outlook. While most growers are actively engaged in forward pricing, sugar price movements are notoriously volatile. That is why we at CANEGROWERS are investing so much effort into our Marketing Information Services.

The service is provided to members to ensure growers have a good insight into the market fundamentals and where sugar prices might be headed. After all, informed growers are more likely to make better pricing decisions.

I stress, we are not instructing growers as to what is the right price for them to support their farming businesses. Rather, it is more about understanding that stronger prices, in combination with forward pricing, can help make our farming businesses stronger. It is an opportunity we should take.

## WTO

Whilst sugar prices are improving, nobody believes our problems are over. Indian sugar production has surged based on high levels of government sponsored cane price support. This has been the single greatest influence weighing down the world price in the last few years.

It is our view that these subsidies are a blatant breach of WTO rules. So, despite

world prices improving, the Australian sugar industry will not be easing back on the throttle in our campaign to end Indian export subsidies.

The Australian Government submission is being finalised. Equally, our partners in Brazil and Guatemala, who are likewise initiating WTO action against India, are also in the final stages of preparing their submissions.

Let us be clear. The world price should be a reflection of the costs of efficient producers and not a measure of the rampant engine of Indian production subsidies. We need to bring this issue to a head in 2020.

## THE RAIN FINALLY ARRIVES

Hopefully most growers have had some much-needed rain over the last few weeks, although I'm certain there are areas that have unfortunately missed out. Recent downpours have been a combination of storms and general rainfall, but at least the rain has come, and most districts report the crop is growing reasonably well.

But these are still early days and there is a lot more weather yet to unfold. More importantly, for those areas that are yet to enjoy any rain, we hope the rain arrives soon.

Without doubt, there are signs of improvement in our industry outlook, albeit still early days. But nonetheless, they are the first green shoots of a recovery we have seen for some time. ■





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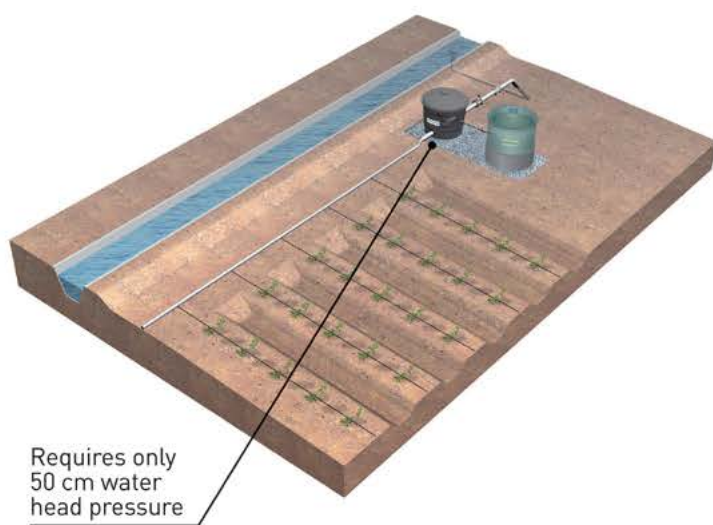
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# PUMPED

## Powerful combination slashing thousands off grower's irrigation costs

by Wayne Griffin

A leap of faith with a local start-up has led to some significant savings for Burdekin cane grower, Eric Barbagallo.

The third-generation grower is combining the cost-saving power of high efficiency pumps with the generation power of solar, to slash thousands off his quarterly bills and embark on a long-term upgrade of his farm's irrigation network.

Farming 320 hectares at Fredericksfield, just south of Home Hill, Eric had been investigating ways to drive down crippling power bills, when a chance encounter with a local agronomist kick-started a process that he hopes will ultimately revolutionise his irrigation system.

"I had to go into town to meet the local productivity board and I bumped into Jayson Dowie from Farmacist," Eric said when *Australian Canegrower* visited his Burdekin cane farm recently.

"As I was walking in, Jayson was walking out and he asked me how my electricity bills were going.

"I said they were off the charts, as usual, and that I was about to cover my shed with solar panels to try bringing them down a bit.

"That's when he told me that he had a mate starting up a new irrigation consultancy business and would I mind if he brought him out to the farm for a chat."

That mate was Chris Doblo, founder of local consultancy firm, Irrigation Efficiency Solutions (IES).

Following an initial meeting, Eric agreed to let IES conduct an irrigation efficiency report on three of the farm's 27 pumps.

"When Chris came out to the farm, I told him that I wanted to put 100kws of solar panels on the shed and he said, 'hang on a second, before you start going crazy on solar how about we have a look around at your pump efficiencies and see what we find', Eric said.

"So, I just let him loose really and he did his thing on the farm. He came back to me and said, 'your pumps are terribly inefficient, but I've got access to this new type of motor that I think would make a big difference'. So, I just let him run with it."

The IES report found that two of the units tested could pump a combined total of 91 L/sec at a cost of \$76.83 per ML.

However, through the installation of more efficient pumps and variable rate drives, the flowrate could be increased to 92.3 L/sec at a significantly reduced cost of just \$44.87 per ML.

"The first trial investigated only replacing the motor on pump 1 with a variable speed drive and mapping the changes in costs per megalitre," Chris Doblo said.

Continues page 18 ►



*Pictured: Burdekin cane grower Eric Barbagallo (right) and his son, Mark.*





"The optimal cost per ML was found to be \$23. This resulted in a 42% reduction in energy requirements, but the loss in flow was unacceptable – down to 25 L/sec.

"However, a 2 L/sec sacrifice - from 44 to 42 L/sec - saw a power saving of 32%, bringing the pumping cost down to \$27 per ML.

"It was made clear by the first trial that the correct pump had to be coupled with the motor."

The assessment of pump 2 showed the potential for even greater efficiencies and cost-savings.

"Pump 2 was the best site to retrofit a pump that would be better suited to the site," Chris said.

IES calculated the new system would increase the flowrate by 7%, up to 50.3 L/sec, at a reduced cost per megalitre

of just \$17.87 - an efficiency improvement of 52%.

"By addressing the inefficiencies of the pumps and lowering Eric's load profile we were also able to reduce his solar requirements by 63%," Chris said.

"Eric then used that saving on his solar outlay to offset the outlay on his 24hr solution. This was by far the best investment for his farm.

"It showed a complete return on investment after pumping just 2000 megalitres."

So far, Eric has upgraded one pump, with work on a second already underway and a third upgrade in the pipeline.

While his long-term goal is to modernise all of the farm's pumps, at roughly \$50,000 a time, it's not a cheap exercise.

However, thanks to significant savings per ML, he expects each





upgrade will pay for itself in as little as four years - possibly faster, when the cost savings generated through his 40kw solar system and the snowball effect of previously upgraded pumps are factored in.

"The solar used to run one and a half old pumps, but will run three of the new pumps," Eric said.

"I've really learned how to utilise the solar better. Once the cane is big enough, I pump more in the daytime. When it's small you can't really pump in the day because the evaporation kills you, but when you've got that canopy closure the evaporation isn't a problem.

"Solar gives you about six good hours a day. It'll start working at 7.30 in the morning but won't reach full power until about 10. Then you get to about 3.30 or 4 in the afternoon before it will start waning again.

"So, it's great when it's going at full power, but that's only for a short time each day. On the other hand, if you've got a pump that runs efficiently 24 hours a day, then you can save money day or night."

Eric has already noticed a reduction in his power bills, a trend that will only pick up pace as more upgraded pumps come online and he increases the size of his solar system.

"The bills are significantly reduced. Say you pump 4ML a day - on the old pump that was costing \$160 a day. With the new pump, straight away it drops down to around \$80. Then when you factor in the six hours of solar, it drops even further, to about \$60 a day," he said.

"The biggest bang for your buck definitely comes from the efficient pump, but the solar kicks in that little bit extra, so together

they can really get you some significant savings."

Amazed by the cost-savings he has achieved with IES, Eric is encouraging growers who want to cut costs to seek out efficiencies in their own irrigation systems.

"Chris and Jim from IES are the nicest guys in the world and they don't push a particular product. They just work out what is the most efficient system for your farm and that's what they'll recommend.

"The whole process has been really enlightening for me. I'd definitely encourage other growers who are struggling with power costs to look into what efficiencies they can achieve." ■

*Burdekin grower Eric Barbagallo is upgrading his farm's irrigation system with the help of IES consultants Chris Doblo and James Webb.*



# QSL MARKET NEWS



By Matthew Page  
QSL Trading Manager

## QSL HAS A PRE-CRUSH ADVANCE PAYMENT OPTION

Growers eligible for this QSL payment option receive an Advance payment for up to half of their GEI Sugar prior to the start of the harvest.

Growers interested in learning more about the QSL Pre-Crush Advance Payment can contact their local QSL Growers Services Team representative.

The QSL Pre-Crush Advance is available for nominations from 1 February 2020.

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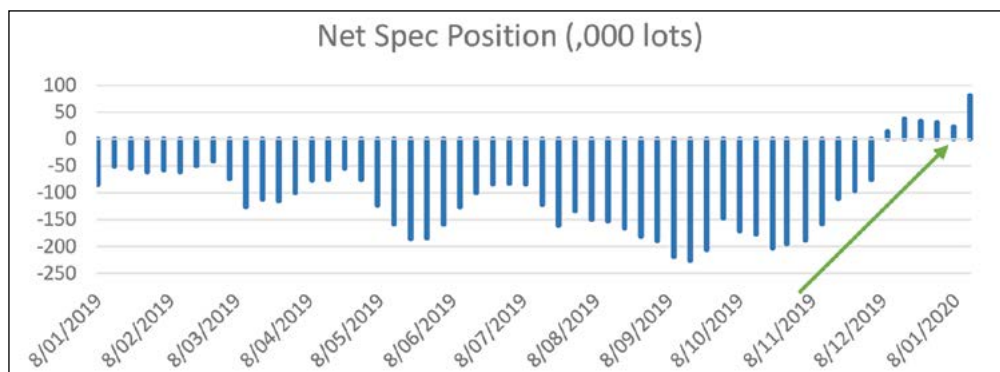
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## 2020 starts with a bang

Well, well, well. What a wild ride the first three weeks of 2020 have been. Sugar exporters will certainly be breathing a sigh of relief following two tough years with prices now at much healthier levels in the mid-\$400s following a significant speculator-led rally in the ICE11 market.

Buying momentum which began in late October when speculators commenced liquidating their near-record net short position has continued in style, with speculators now moving themselves into an 81,000 lots net long position.

What has motivated this rally is open for debate. Certainly the fundamentals are more constructive with a smaller crop in Thailand and the failure of the US beet crop. However, with 10 million tonnes of Brazilian sugar available to switch out of ethanol and into sugar at their next harvest and fill any supply gaps external factors are at play.



Several analysts are citing a more general re-weighting of investor portfolios, to be long agricultural commodities. Others are also pointing to a belated pick up in the global warming story and its anticipated negative impacts on agricultural supply going forward, but this theory is much harder to substantiate.

Regardless, the specs are here and in a buying mood so the market will be subject to periods of 'overshoot' as momentum lifts prices beyond fair value from a fundamental supply and demand perspective.

With estimates that the Thai crop could be as much as 4.5m tonnes lower than last year following significant switching to cassava and a loss of 6/700k tonnes in the US beet failure, it makes sense that the market is now above ethanol parity prices (currently around 14 cents) as we will need to encourage potentially up to 6 million tonnes of Brazilian sugar back to the market to 'plug the gap'. Once sufficient pricing/production is drawn out prices should trend back towards ethanol parity until further supply shocks and additional Brazilian sugar is required.

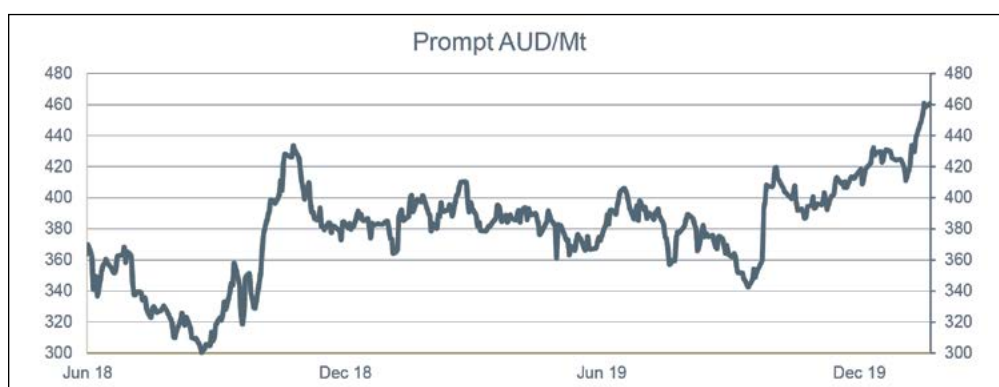
In currency, the late December strength was quickly forgotten as events in Iran rapidly stymied risk appetite over the first few days of the New Year. However, the geo-political risk appears to have died down for the time being and the local unit has succumbed to rudderless sideways trading either side of 69 cents as most participants await the RBA's next move in early February.

With the market only 54% priced for a cut next month it certainly has the look and feel of a live event that could push the market in either direction. And if we do see the RBA slash rates to 0.5% we are then only one step away from the stated trigger that will see us enter the uncharted territory of Quantitative Easing.

# QSL UPDATE



That said, the long awaited signing of the Phase 1 trade agreement between the US and China was a welcome event for both risk appetite and the AUD. Further out, as we enter the US election year and forecasts for recessionary pressures in the US increase the USD may come under pressure as we move into the second half of the calendar year.



So while there is much to be optimistic about, the upside will likely remain limited as significant time above ethanol parity will draw more and more Brazilian sugar out weighing down on the global supply and demand picture.

Furthermore, higher prices also make additional Indian exports increasingly viable again weighing on the global balance sheet and prices. Following a couple of years below cost of production it makes sense for those who haven't already, to consider this price rally an opportunity to evaluate their forward pricing options and lock away some profit margins for 2020 and beyond.

Expressions of interest are now open for the [QSL Study Tour May 2020 to Japan](#)  
See page 11 for more information.

## QSL KEY DATES

**01 Feb 2020:** QSL Pre-Crush Advance payment opens.

**14 Feb 2020:** Pricing Completion Date for the March 2020 Contract for Growers using the QSL 2019 Individual Futures Contract

**20 Feb 2020:** MSF Sugar Districts – Pricing completion date for the 2019-Season Target Price Contract

**20 Feb 2020:** Any 2019-Season QSL Target Price Contract orders unfilled beyond this date will be rolled to the May 2020 Contract and costs may apply.

**21 Feb 2020:** Pricing completion date for the March 2020 Contract for Growers using the 2019 Self-Managed Harvest.

More details visit [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au) or call your local Grower Rep.

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# EDUCATION KEY TO IMPROVING SOIL CARBON

by Wayne Griffin

PROSERPINE FARM MANAGER PAUL ROGERS BELIEVES A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE BENEFITS, BOTH IN TERMS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY, COULD BE THE KEY TO ENCOURAGING MORE GROWERS TO ADOPT CARBON-FIXING PRACTICE CHANGE.

While the 48-year-old has only been operating a cane farm for four years, he's been in the agri-business game for much longer, as owner-operator of farming supplies and services business FarmHQ in Proserpine and Sarina.

In 2015, Paul took over farm management of the 300-hectare cane farm at Glen Isla, five minutes east of Proserpine.

He manages the business on behalf Bowen graziers, Salisbury Plains Grazing, who purchased a number of small cane farms in the locality earlier that year.

"I had been doing much of the agronomy and application work for them through Farm HQ - so after a while they asked if I'd just take on full time management of the place," Paul told Australian Canegrower recently.

It was the beginning of a transformative experience for the fert-chem salesman, who up until then had only a passing

interest in carbon-fixing farming practices.

"These guys have added a different aspect to cane farming that I'd not seen much of in this area before. They really wanted to come at it from a sustainability point of view, which is the way they run their cattle business," Paul said.

"They've had cattle properties in Bowen that have been handed down through the family for generations, and one of the first things they said to me was they wanted to be able to hand this land on, but in a better condition than they'd found it.

"So, we basically embarked jointly on a journey of regenerative agriculture, trying to improve the state of the soil health, but without costing yield - and that's the juggle."

Given free rein to adopt a farming system in line with industry best management practice, Paul immediately set about



*"We don't do these things because we're obliged to do it by government regulation. We do it because we have seen the benefits to the soil and to the crop."*





*Pictured: Paul Roger's latest fallow was a nine-species mix of sorghum, oats, sunflower, tillage radishes, buckwheat, millet, rye grass, ebony cowpea and soybeans - each chosen for its specific soil health properties.*

widening row spaces to 1.8 metres, as well as introducing GPS controlled traffic and minimum till.

However, it was in the area of fallow and nutrient management that he really discovered his desire to push beyond industry standards and make a real difference to improving the farm's soil.

In 2019, the business received Smartcane BMP accreditation, something Paul is ambivalent about. Not because he disagrees with the practices required by the program (if anything he believes they aren't progressive enough) but because he believes the auditing system should be more rigorous.

Today he says the business is "pushing beyond BMP".

"We're talking about practices like multi-species fallow crops, applying bio-fertiliser, things like that," Paul said.

"Under BMP it's not a necessity to do things like multi-species fallows. Many

growers do plant some type of fallow crop, but simply maintaining a trash cover on a fallow block is enough change to meet Smartcane BMP. But we want to do multi-species because we see the benefit.

"We make our own bio-fertiliser and our own compost to inoculate seed, whether it be fallow crop seed or cane seed.

"That may seem a bit strange coming from someone whose main business for years has been reselling and applying conventional fertiliser and chemicals, and I still have that business.

"The point I'm making is, we don't do these things because of some out-there belief in 'natural farming', or because we're obliged to do it by government regulation.

"We do it because we have seen the benefits to the soil, to the crop and the potential long-term benefits to the bottom line of the business."

*Continues next page ►*





Paul credits his use of mixed species fallows, coupled with his "homebrew" bio-fertiliser for the farm's ability to maintain impressive, above-average yields, while also reducing nitrogen inputs to just 50% of the Six Easy Steps recommendations.

Despite the drop in nitrogen, the Salisbury Plains farm has consistently cut 15 to 20 tonnes per ha above the district-average for the past three years and has also enjoyed above-average CCS results.

"We've brought the rate recommended by Six Easy Steps down steadily over the last three years.

"The soil sample says we need 160Kg of N per ha and we're down to 80kg this year and we've seen no decline in yield," Paul said. A saving of \$100 per ha annually.

"What we do is try to feed the microbes in the soil and in turn they break down the organic matter, they solubilise minerals into plant available nutrients. We do that using the bio-fert, humic acid, things like that.

"Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying bio-fert is a silver bullet at all. It's just one part of an overall system, in

*"At the end of the day, we're trying to reduce the negative impacts of high nitrogen rates. It's pretty well known that if you keep using high nitrogen rates you can't build carbon."*

conjunction with minimum till, controlled traffic, mixed species fallows, that work together to improve the overall health of the soil.

"And it's a system we're still working to perfect; it's a work in progress.

"I've had guys coming here wanting to buy the bio-fert and I've sold it to them, but they didn't take on board the message that it's just one part of a bigger system. Then after 12 months they just pack it in because they haven't seen the improvements they wanted."

Late last year, Paul travelled to the United States to take part in a regenerative farming course and was blown away by what he saw.

"It was amazing to see some of the positive things happening in that space over there. You could be standing in a paddock where the soil was a beautiful, healthy-looking dark brown, but just metres away, outside the fence line, it's just white sandy soil.

"Those guys have been using these improved practices for years to get to the point they're at, and that's what we want to do.

"Whether it takes eight or ten or 12 years, we actually want to do something





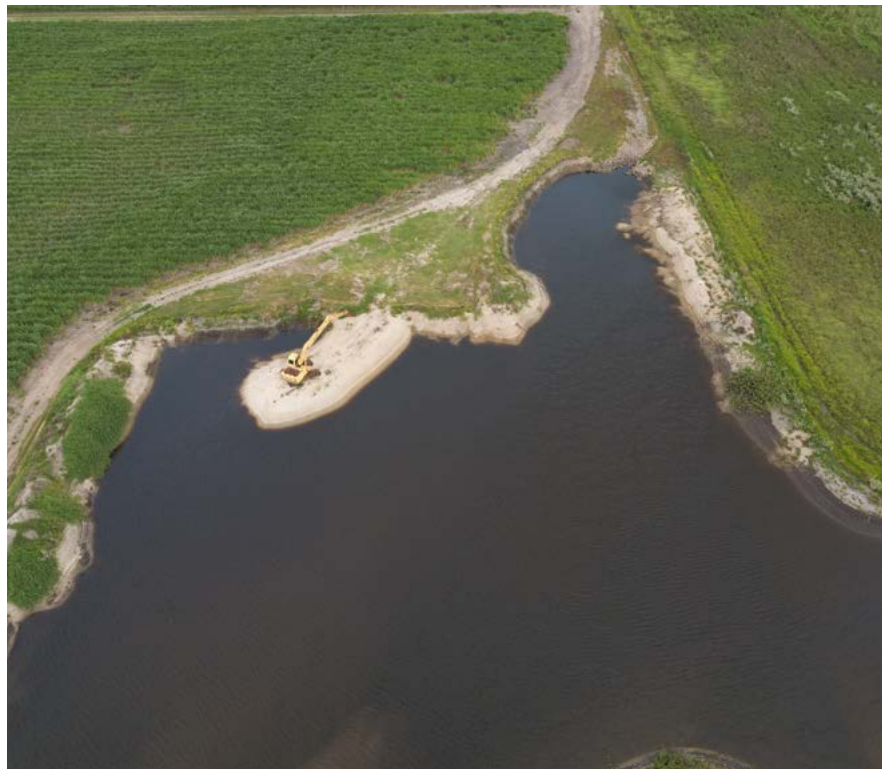
for the soil and our crop and the business, not just say we're doing it to keep some greenies or bureaucrats happy."

Paul's latest fallow was a nine-species mix of sorghum, oats, sunflower, tillage radishes, buckwheat, millet, rye grass, ebony cowpea and soybeans - each chosen for its specific soil health properties.

"The legumes are producing nitrogen (ebony cowpea, soybeans). Buckwheat, for example, is a phosphorous solubiliser, the roots host the biology that solubilises phosphorus," he said.

"We plant sorghum, oats and millet for their massive root systems and to provide large amounts organic matter. We want it to be photosynthesising well and putting carbon into the ground. They all contribute to improving the soil in their own way.

"Multi-species cropping is the key to building your carbon. We all thought that building your carbon was about growing a plant and burying that plant in the ground – stem, leaf and root. But it's got nothing to do with that. Sustainable soil biological function needs diversity of plant and microbes. Think about our community, would we thrive if we were all butchers? – No. We need the baker, the grocer, the fuel station, the doctor, the teachers. The same goes for our soils – it needs diverse plant species feeding diverse plant root exudates to feed diverse functional soil biology.



"That plant residue type carbon is fairly easily oxidised as soon as you work that paddock. You might as well not have done it. Building long lasting soil carbon is actually about a living plant in the ground, pumping liquid carbon exudates into the soil through photosynthesis.

"So, if we can have living green biomass on the ground the whole time, we can maximise our chances of improving soil carbon.

"If we take a crop out, we want something else back in there in the

shortest possible time, whether that's days, or weeks, or maybe it's planted before we even harvest.

"In the States, in many of the corn crops, what they do is go in about six weeks before the corn is harvested and inter-drill a fallow crop, so by the time the corn is harvested there's another crop coming through. The ground is never bare."

The Proserpine farm has reached a stage where Paul can plant directly into mixed-species fallow paddocks without working the ground.

*Continues next page ►*



"We can plant straight into that without disturbing it. Obviously, we have to terminate it first using Round-up, then we let it brown down for a couple of weeks, but when it's time to plant, we drill straight into that organic matter, using it as a trash blanket in our plant crop.

"We use the bio-fert throughout the season. Firstly on fallow crops, then at cane planting, then whenever we fertilise we put bio-fert with it, we also foliar spray it and we inject it through the flood irrigation.

"We try not to think of nutrition as just being NPK. What about all the other nutrients, the zinc, boron, calcium, cobalt, manganese, the whole lot. People couldn't exist very well on a diet of bread and milk. So why should we expect a crop to thrive if we neglect the wide range of nutrients it requires?

"At the end of the day, we're trying to reduce the negative impacts of high nitrogen rates. It's pretty well known that if you keep using high nitrogen rates you can't build carbon.

"Last year, we had a really good early mixed species fallow and you could definitely see the difference in the soil, even in things like worm-count, we went from having almost none to 200 worms per square metre in a four or five month period."

Paul is aware that many growers are skeptical about practices such as mixed species fallows and bio-fert, but he believes a better understanding of the benefits might change some minds.

"I don't think the education is there to empower growers to take the leap. I'll have friends who'll ask, 'are you making any money by doing that?' and the truth is, maybe not yet. But we're not losing money either and we're not losing yield.

"More importantly, we're improving the soil and once we've got the system nailed down, we will be cutting costs and maintaining or maybe increasing productivity, which is the holy grail of farming." ■



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# Versatile Tractors Now Trimble Powered

*Supplied by PFG Australia*

Versatile Tractors Australia has announced a partnership with Vantage NSW which will give Versatile customers access to Trimble's range of precision agriculture products on all 2020 models.

A subset of PFG Australia, Versatile currently offers a range of large articulated wheeled and four-track configurations, as well as conventional front-wheel assist tractors, with horsepower ranging from an earth-shattering 620hp down to 320hp.

PFG Australia Versatile product manager, **Jeremy Duniam**, said the deal was an exciting venture which ultimately offered customers access to the leading precision agriculture platform in the Australian market.

"We have listened to what the consumers of our products have asked for," he said. "Offering a Trimble solution means simplifying what some of our dealers were taking upon themselves.

"Now, we provide seamless Trimble product installations on our Melbourne production line and deliver the highest level of quality control in our facilities."

"We will make it easier for our dealers to attract a new customer base that has already committed to a Trimble precision agriculture platform in their farming operations. Australia is often described as one of the most mature precision farming markets in the world and offers some of the most innovative systems and farming practices.

"We understand that once a farming operation has committed to a particular brand of precision ag product, it is nearly impossible to move to another brand. We can now offer a solution to change the machinery brand while retaining the precision ag platform and the information that is associated with it."

PFG Australia is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Power Farming Holdings

Limited, a family owned company servicing the New Zealand and Australian tractor and machinery markets.

Vantage NSW general manager **Michael Casey** said Vantage NSW was a family owned and operated company which had acted as a Trimble authorised reseller since 2006.

"We're thrilled to announce our new relationship with PFG Australia," he said.

"It enables us to work with some of the leading equipment brands in Australia, alongside a family-owned, independent organisation that shares similar values and culture as our own.

"By improving access to the Trimble range of products we're also improving access for end-users to a whole range of aftermarket services and solutions available through the established Trimble reseller channel." ■

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ADVERTISING FEATURE



# Grower choice – How to make the most of it!

Remember 2015 and 2016? It was all hands on deck in the sugarcane industry to ensure Australian growers were not forced into taking whatever sugar marketing option their local monopoly miller chose for them.

CANEGROWERS, through the drive and dedication of its leadership, members and staff, secured a future which guarantees competition and choice and since then, the sugar marketers have responded with new products and services.

The next step for CANEGROWERS was to ensure members are well equipped to make informed decisions in this competitive environment – through providing independent education and information.

The CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service was trialled and launched with a series of district workshops and a web page in 2019.

CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman **Phil Marano** attended workshops run by Dougall Lodge in Ayr.

"I found them very interesting and informative, definitely worth the time spent and everyone who attended felt the same," he said. "I thought I knew a lot about the market and what was going on but there was more to learn.

"Whether you're experienced or new to making decisions about how and when to price your sugar, CANEGROWERS is providing a different and independent perspective and you'll get something out of accessing the service."

In 2020, there'll be more workshops across all cane growing regions. Keep in touch with your local office and this magazine to find out when one is being held near you.

In the meantime, log in to the web page using your CANEGROWERS membership number here [www.canegrowers.com.au/page/membership/member-resources](http://www.canegrowers.com.au/page/membership/member-resources)

Each week there are Market Notes on the key points of what's happening in the world sugar market with prices, and each month a new video to watch.

Please contact your preferred marketer for net daily price updates, forward price indications and to place pricing orders. ■

*"CANEGROWERS is proud to offer an independent perspective to members seeking to make the most of their hard-won sugar marketing services choice."*



**CANEGROWERS**  
MARKETING INFORMATION SERVICE



**Information & education**  
Workshops, videos and newsletter updates



**Expert insight**  
Price and production forecasting



**Independent service**  
Does not favour one marketer over another



*Pictured: CANEGROWERS Burdekin  
Chairman Phil Marano.*



# TECHNOLOGY AND FARM MANAGEMENT

By Kate Gowdie  
Smartcane BMP Manager

Pictured: Tableland Smartcane  
BMP grower Paul Murat.



Technology appears to have infiltrated almost every facet of day-to-day life. Some aspects of technology work in our favour, while others seem to conspire against us (like voice activated assistants and autocorrect on text messages). But regardless, technology is becoming more accessible, affordable and easy to use.

Cane farmers have access to a range of technologies that can support both operational and managerial functions of the business. This technology can assist in fulfilling business requirements including compliance for Smartcane BMP accreditation, regulations and supply chain obligations.

Some of the technologies being used in the sugar industry include; moisture probes, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), satellite imagery, Near Infra-Red (NIR), robotics and digital mapping. Technology can increase efficiencies, leading to increased profits as well as improved safety and a reduced impact on the environment.

Utilising technology for the management of precious resources, like water and fertiliser, can assist in attaining optimal irrigation rates while at the same time improving accuracy in the delivery of fertilisers and other nutrients.

Automated irrigation uses moisture probes to determine the amount of irrigation required and when to apply it. These systems have the potential to prevent over or under watering as well as increasing overall efficiencies because a grower can undertake other duties while the technology does the work for them. There is no need to spend time calculating volumes or timings as the system does this automatically. Some other forms of technology that you may or may not have considered include:

## DRONES

Apart from being fun, using a drone to capture real-time imagery over the top of crops can assist with a range of management decisions. Drone imagery can be used to identify areas of pest and disease within a crop as well as nutrient deficiencies. CANEGROWERS Herbert River recently purchased a drone for use in assessing flood damage.

There are restrictions on where and when you can fly a drone, so be sure to investigate the requirements in your area before use.



## HANDHELD GPS

On-board tractor GPS units are not the only option for when it comes to utilising Global Positioning Systems.

If you want to capture data in places the tractor just can't go, then an alternative may be a handheld GPS.

These units have increased in popularity and capability, while at the same time decreasing in price.

Many handheld units have one-step upload and download functions meaning you can transfer the information you

capture on the device to your computer with ease.

There are many models to choose from and each offer different capabilities. I have found models with inbuilt cameras are great for use with monitoring sites.

This allows you return to the same location (e.g. areas of waterlogging, weed burdens or erosion) and record visual changes over time.

Of course, many smartphones will allow you to capture an image and coordinates. However, the accuracy of the geolocation can be 10 to 30 metres or more. Handheld units can deliver accuracies as low as 1-2 metres.

Accessing technology does not always have to involve a monetary outlay. There are several technologies that are available to assist growers, free of charge.

Queensland Globe provides access to multiple layers of mapping including vegetation, biosecurity zones and watercourses, and offers the ability to capture block boundaries, drainage, roads and other infrastructure, all free of charge.

Block perimeter and area are automatically calculated using the "draw" function, making it a great planning tool. If you are interested in using a digital map as part of an overall farm management plan, then QLD Globe is one place to start. Visit: [qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au](http://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au)

Some useful apps I have seen being used across the cane growing region relate to weed and plant identification, chemical handling and storage, and recording keeping.

Of course, mobile phone-based apps are making access to technology more readily available and easier to use. The choice seems endless and with favourites like weather apps standard issue on most smartphones, there is no excuse not to utilise technology. ■



## Herbert region legume boost

There's been a spike in legume cover crops in the Herbert Region with more than 25% of the fallow area now planted.

Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) manager **Lawrence Di Bella** said the availability of a mounder legume planter for growers to try out on their own farms had contributed to the increase.

"We have gone from about 1-3% of the fallow area planted, to more than 25%," he said.

"The planter has been a huge success and we now have a couple of hundred hectares planted across the district."

The planter, funded by Enhanced Extension Coordination in GBR project, which is administered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and supported by HCPSL, has been available for growers to hire for a minimal fee since October 2019.

The planter allows growers to rip, mound and plant the legume or mixed fallow cover crop in one pass.

Mr Di Bella said rotational crops, especially legumes, performed better when planted on a mound over the wet season, when compared to planting the crop flat.

"The planter allowed legume crops to be grown in areas once considered to be too wet," he said.

DAF Manager (Reef Extension Coordination) Dr Niall Connolly said improved legume cropping leads to improved soil health, ground cover and reduced nitrogen application through budgeting of nitrogen contributions.

"This change in practice will allow some growers reduce sediment and nutrient loads entering the Barrier Reef Lagoon and freshwater ecosystems."

To hire the mounder legume planter contact Richard Hobbs from HCPSL on 47761808 or 0400544301.

Growers pay a small fee of \$10/acre to cover the cost of maintenance of the equipment. ■





# CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

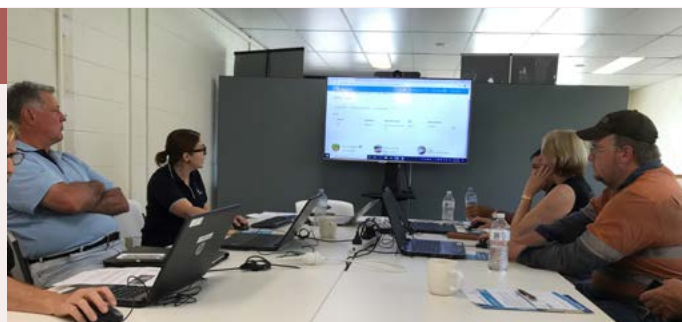
*Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices*

## MOSSMAN

Growers supplying Mossman Mill can now access QSL's online pricing tool, so to help them get up to speed with the system QSL representatives ran a number of workshops in December and January (pictured).

Growers learned how to activate their accounts and how to access and use key features such as nominating tonnes of sugar to pools and placing a pricing order. QSL's FNQ Grower Relationship Manager Daniel Messina and local Grower Relationship Officer Amanda Sheppard were on-hand to take growers through the sessions.

The Mossman coastal crop was looking much better in January thanks to some welcome relief in the weather. We aren't breaking any rainfall records, but in the later part of December and into January good showers have seen the crop respond well across all regional districts. Interspersed with some good periods of sunshine, the crop is growing quickly



and at this stage we would expect a better yield from the crop this crushing season.

A CANEGROWERS Mossman representative has been appointed to the Douglas Shire Council Economic Strategy Review Committee. The first of six weekly committee meetings was held on Wednesday 22 January. The Committee will look to identify economic challenges and opportunities for the Douglas Shire and develop a comprehensive strategy and plan to address them.

## CAIRNS

The good growing weather received across the region over the past month is certainly being reflected in the cane crop. Showers and sunny days have given the crop a boost and raised hopes for a better growing season ahead. The region's legume crops look particularly good, with a healthy crop of soya, mung, ebony, tillage radish and sunflower being photographed on Neil Maitland's farm in Gordonvale (pictured).

Project 25, a grower-driven water quality monitoring project, has advanced to another level with CSIRO launching their recently developed 1622™ WQ Water Quality App. This app has been developed to facilitate the access to and understanding of water quality data by farmer stakeholders. This was an exciting step for Project 25. Cane and banana producers who have been working in a collaborative group have been keenly awaiting this next stage.



## INNISFAIL

Planning is underway for the Innisfail AgExpo which will be held on Thursday 21st May at the Innisfail Showgrounds. The name-change from the Innisfail Agricultural Field Day was made as it better suits what the day is about.

The AgExpo will be well supported, with more than 100 exhibitors covering 148 sites, and is expected to attract in excess of 4000 visitors on the day.

CANEGROWERS Innisfail has been staging a local Field Day since 2012. AgExpo co-ordinator, CANEGROWERS Innisfail's Manager Wayne Thomas said that the response to invites

sent to previous and potential new exhibitors has been very positive.

At past Field Days we have had support from all the major tractors suppliers, local engineering firms, fuel suppliers, fertiliser and agricultural product suppliers, support services to the agricultural industries and financial institutions.

We expect to again see support from all over North Queensland and from other parts of the state, with businesses eager to display what they have to offer the agricultural sector.

## TULLY

The Tully crop for 2020 is responding to ideal growing conditions resulting from the 90mm of rain in late December and the follow up storm rain in January. The hot humid conditions are ideal for growth and growers are focused on the completion of spraying programs before the real wet starts.

There is a lot of activity on the Cane Supply contract front, with neighbouring mill owner, MSF, talking with existing Tully

suppliers about supply for 2020 and beyond. Meanwhile, CANEGROWERS Tully is preparing for arbitration under the Sugar Code of Conduct.

The rise in world sugar price is also adding to the confidence around the 2020 results after what was a terrible 2019 result in Tully, with a low tonnes per hectare and a low sugar price.

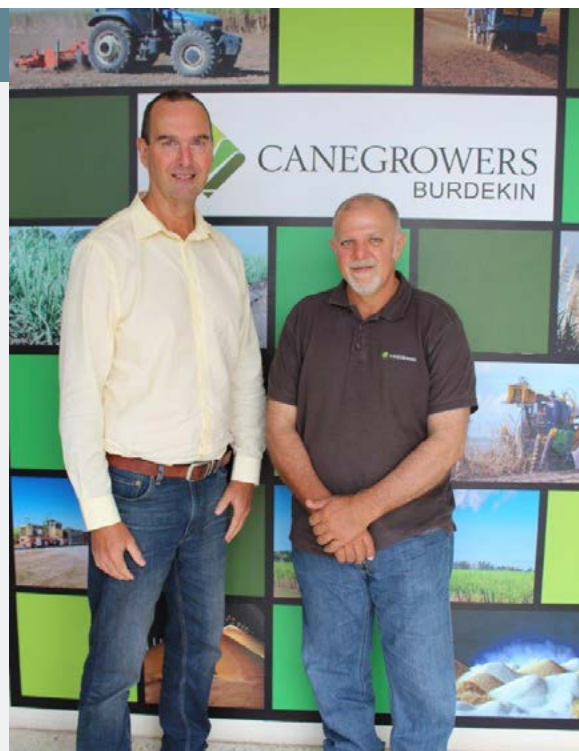


## BURDEKIN

Retiring CANEGROWERS Burdekin General Manager Wayne Smith completed a handover to incoming manager Greg Watson who commenced on 20 January 2020. Greg was previously the QSL Grower Relationship Manager for Burdekin and Herbert River and is familiar with the sugar industry and district. Greg is from Home Hill originally and is looking forward to his new role of assisting Burdekin members with their needs. CBL Chairman, Phillip Marano, welcomed Greg into the role (pictured).

For the Burdekin district, the continued dry weather has kept growers busy irrigating. However, the extended dry season and late receipt of rain has had an impact on the crop. Rain has only recently fallen in many areas. More rain is forecast and any decent falls that help the crop to grow and enable growers to turn their pumps off and reduce their irrigation costs would be a welcome relief.

The Burdekin is quite an active region with forward pricing and the recent rally in global sugar prices has sparked grower interest to review their pricing with their marketers.



*Continues next page* ►



# CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

## PROSERPINE

Proserpine's 2020 crop received some much-needed rain between Christmas and New Year, with falls of up to 200mm recorded in most parts of the district, giving some reprieve to irrigators.

The crop has responded quickly, and growers are cautiously optimistic about the prospect of improved yields, although much will depend on some follow-up rain over the next few weeks.

A fire broke-out in Proserpine Mill's main store facility in the early hours of Friday, 10 January.

Qld Fire and Emergency Services were able to contain the blaze quickly, however significant structural damage

was sustained and it is likely the building will need to be demolished and rebuilt.

Authorities are investigating the blaze however foul-play has been ruled-out.

As most of the building's contents were unsalvageable, Wilmar Sugar has instigated a recovery plan with the focus on identifying equipment crucial to the pre-season maintenance program.

While the fire has created some additional challenges, Wilmar remains confident that it will not impact the start of Proserpine's 2020 crushing season.

## MACKAY/PLANE CREEK

The central district enjoyed some good falls of rain during the Christmas break. Falls of up to 300mm were recorded in some gauges around Mackay with the outer fringes of the system only registering 30mm. Follow-up rain in the first week of January saw the crop respond with good growth rates.

Even though the crop is well behind where it should be at this time of year, it still has good potential if weather conditions are conducive and dry spells do not hinder growth during the growing season.

It is almost a year since marketing choice began in the Mackay region. As of 1 February 2019 growers supplying Mackay Sugar were able to deal directly with either QCS or QSL for marketing, pricing and payment services.

In addition, the CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service has enabled growers to keep abreast of movements in sugar prices. The first week of January 2020 saw a rally in sugar prices, briefly boosting futures prices above \$A 450/tonne for the 2020/21 seasons. These prices have not been seen for more than 12 months.

Growers in the Mackay region can now take advantage of good prices through forward pricing products. Information meetings are expected to occur in February to assist Mackay growers to use these facilities wisely.

With a Queensland State Election coming up this year, CANEGROWERS Mackay will be inviting members to have their say on the main issues from a district perspective. There will be a number of opportunities to speak to elected members about the impact of Government decisions viewed from on-farm, too.

**Note these dates for February/March in your diary:**

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
Eton Branch Meeting	7:30pm	Tues 4 Feb Tues 3 Mar	Eton Fire Shed
Racecourse Branch Meeting	8:00pm	Thurs 6 Feb Thurs 5 Mar	Boomerang Hotel
Hampden Branch Meeting	7:30pm	Mon 17 Feb Mon 16 Mar	Hampden State School
Marian Branch Meeting	7:30pm	Weds 19 Feb Weds 18 Mar	Marian Rural Fire Shed
Mackay Area Committee Annual Information Meeting	1:00pm	Fri 21 Feb	Mackay Turf Club
Finch Hatton Branch Meeting	8:00pm	Tues 25 Feb Tues 31 Mar	Catholic Church Hall
Koumala Branch Meeting	8:00pm	Tues 25 Feb Tues 31 Mar	CWA Hall
Plane Creek Area Committee Information Meeting		Thurs 5 Mar	



## BUNDABERG

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg, CANEGROWERS Isis and the Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers association have united to actively work together to address the recent issues surrounding Paradise Dam.

Whilst we are individually progressing industry specific views, our agreed advocacy/lobbying position is as follows:

- We do not want to see 1 Megalitre (mL) lost from the Bundaberg Irrigation Scheme
- We will outline the major economic impacts to the region and co-fund this work
- We will represent our members on the Paradise Dam Community Reference Group (PDCRG) providing the voice of irrigated agriculture and economic impacts
- We will be active participants in the Building Queensland Review

We acknowledge there is a lot happening in the Paradise Dam space and we eagerly await the Building Queensland report to offer some clarity on future directions. It is also accepted and understood that dam safety is the most important issue followed very closely by water security.

Dr Peter Ridd has advised CANEGROWERS Bundaberg that he has challenged previous findings by the Australian Institute of Marine Science regarding coral growth rates. CANEGROWERS Bundaberg will attend a meeting with Dr Ridd in February to discuss how this could be resolved. (Turn to page 41 for more on this issue.)

Amid growing concerns that the local sugar industry is aging and a career in agriculture is not always the first choice of many students, the implementation of a school based work experience program through a partnership with Bundaberg Christian College, the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network and CANEGROWERS Bundaberg has recently seen the placement of the first round of students.

Following a screening process for each participating business and ongoing mentoring support, the team were able to

identify employment opportunities within local businesses and provide on-the-job training to students looking at the industry as a career option.

Local student Cody Muller was recently employed by Bundaberg Sugar Services to undertake one weeks work alongside local Field Officers, Michael Turner and Caitlyn Killick. Cody is currently studying Ag Science at school and participates in the Hoof and Hook program. Experience in the Sugar Industry was of interest to Cody because it forms a large part of the local economy and he would like a career in agriculture upon completion of his schooling. Cody was able to gain experience in many field operations including RSD and YCS testing, inspecting Rhyparida beetle damage, smut whips, soil moisture probes and soldier fly blocks. Cody was able to dig out a cane stool, find soldier fly larvae and inspect them under microscope at the local SRA facility. Cody said "the past week has been enjoyable because I got to learn and try new things that I would not do at (school)."

We wish Cody well for his future career in agriculture.



*Pictured: Cody Muller undertaking RSD sampling and soldier fly monitoring.*

## ISIS

January has seen some Isis Mill supply areas receive good rainfalls, but unfortunately this has been patchy. Reports show up to 120mm fell in the Bundaberg/Isis area over 18-19 January, with high hopes for follow-up rain. These falls will give some growers a small reprieve from their intensive irrigation management and may see some growers plant rotational crops that previously would not have been considered due to the dry conditions.

Issues surrounding Paradise Dam, particularly long-term water security and implications for regional economic impact, are still very much at the forefront of growers' minds. CANEGROWERS Isis, as always, is continuing to be highly proactive and leading the regional cross-industry coordination

and advocacy in the region's agricultural sector. Action has included facilitating a joint agricultural industry alliance and associated messaging, progressing an economic impact analysis, representation on the Community Reference Group, and providing one-on-one updates for members to answer any questions in relation to actions taken and/ or specific queries.

Isis growers, did you know that we can work with you to design and implement an individualised productivity and nutrient management plan to meet your productivity and record keeping requirements? Our agronomic team is back from leave so call the office on 4126 1444 to get started – it could be easier than you think!

*Continues next page* ►



## CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

### MARYBOROUGH

The start of the new year has seen a brighter future in not just the sugar price but also some decent falls of rain throughout the district, although the amounts vary greatly depending on the showers you were under.

The timing is good, as the irrigation scheme has been shut down to all but high priority access as of early January, and the recycled water schemes are still operating under roster at present. The rain has meant an opportunity to plant soybeans and there is plenty of activity currently to get seed in the ground if not already planted.

Maybe the rain was brought back by the tour party of 34 growers who visited Tasmania from the 12 to 15 January (read more on page 8).

### ROCKY POINT

Rocky Point received some much-needed rainfall in mid-January, with up to 250mm in some places.

The crop is starting to recover from the dry and if we keep getting similar intermittent rainfall, we could be looking at a good crop. Soybeans are also looking good.

The district will receive further aerial fire ant baiting in early February. Previous rounds of aerial treatment appear to have worked well, with very few nests being reported for at least six months.

Smartcane BMP Facilitator Deb Telford will visit in February to hopefully sign off on Rocky Point's first Smartcane BMP participants.

## Building a family farm for the future

*Supplied by Project Cane Changer*

Babinda sugarcane farmers, **Rose** and **Stephen Destro** know a thing or two about growing cane. Both second-generation farmers, they grew up in the industry and helped out around their parents' cane farms from a young age.

"Stephen and I met back in high school and before you know it, we were married shortly after graduation," Rose said. "I was thrilled we both shared the same love for cane farming."

Fast forward more than 40 years, and their passion for the industry is still going strong. They've raised two sons, now in their forties, who have continued to carry on the family trade.

"I couldn't be more proud to have raised a third generation of cane farmers," Rose said. "I've always loved cane farming and it's clear our boys have the same passion."

"We're always learning new ways of doing things and exploring new opportunities in the industry."

The family currently farms more than 2,000 hectares of cane across six different properties and show no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

Like all Cairns Region growers, they're always changing their farming practices to improve productivity and protect the quality of the water leaving their farms.

"Over the years we've introduced trash blanketing, stool splitting, grassed headlands, wider rows, minimal tillage and fallow cropping," Rose said.

"We've seen a huge difference to our profitability and there's less runoff leaving the farm now.

"There's also a lagoon that runs along our property which acts as mother nature's filtration system in case anything does end up leaving our farm."

If all that's not enough, Rose and Stephen were also one of the first in Babinda to adopt Smartcane BMP – paving the way for many local growers to follow suit.

In less than three years, more than 40 farming businesses throughout the Cairns Region have jumped on board with the program to demonstrate their use of

practices that can improve productivity while also protecting their environment.

Although the record keeping component has been highlighted as a potential challenge for some, Rose had no problem working through the requirements.

"The workshops and resources that are provided by the local CANEGROWERS office are a huge help in improving the practices on our farm; especially when it comes to record keeping," she said.

"I've even been able to teach my daughter in-law how to complete records, and she's now using my tips and tricks on her own computer systems."

Rose's family are avid appreciators of wildlife - spending summers at local creeks and water catchments in Babinda.

"We love the nature that surrounds our farms and we're doing everything we can to see it continue to thrive," she said.

To Rose and Stephen, it's important that they continue to improve their practices and protect the environment to safeguard the industry for the next generation.

"We want to pass all this on to our children and grandchildren in an even better state than we found it," she said. ■



# 20/20 Vision in 2020

We've all heard the phrase "20/20 vision". This is a measure of visual acuity or how good your eyes are. My eyes have aged in recent years. As I was kindly told by my optometrist: "You're getting older Matt, so glasses will make things a little clearer." If only planning for the future was that simple.

Now that we're in the year 2020, the puns and dodgy newspaper headlines are flowing thick and fast. But joking aside, 2020 can be a year of clarity of vision – for our industry, for our businesses and for ourselves as individuals.

Being a goal-setter and planner myself, I have been reading articles (with my new glasses) on planning and goal setting. What I find fascinating about planning for the future is that it all comes down to your own purpose and what's most important to you. Once you know that, you plan for the future and roll with the present.

As part of CANEGROWERS' membership engagement strategy, I've created some questions to try to uncover the needs of growers, to find out to how they feel about being a member of CANEGROWERS, what they think the future holds, and to determine whether the current range of products, services and benefits meet their needs.

Recently, I tested these questions out on some CANEGROWERS members. The sample size was not big enough to be statistically valid, but it did generate some useful insights. A few of these questions with my summary and insights follow.



By Matt Kealley,  
CANEGROWERS Senior Manager -  
Membership Engagement & Innovation

## WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING YOUR BUSINESS?

The cost of production is increasing from rising inputs. Increasing the scale of operations to create efficiencies is not an easy decision, as finding suitable labour and upskilling has its risks. Government regulations are frustrating. The lack

of influence on the sugar price, mill performance and viability, and competition from alternative crops, make cane growing challenging.

**INSIGHT:** CANEGROWERS must continue to support business needs, and target the access to education and training, grants and tools that is currently provided.

## WHAT DO YOU SEE YOUR DISTRICT LOOKING LIKE IN FIVE YEARS?

This depends on district location and local pressures. The general thinking is most districts will be similar to now, however, land use change to other crops and urbanisation, and more leasing of farms

due to growers retiring, will start to shift the demographics, not to young growers but corporates.

**INSIGHT:** CANEGROWERS should focus on the demographic shift from retirement of growers and look at options to support people entering the industry.

## WHAT DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY LOOKING LIKE IN FIVE YEARS?

Contraction of industry; looking for diversification away from sugar to fibre from cane; more alternative crops; input cost increasing; rationalisation of farms;

further regulation but maybe there is a shift in recognition of the value of farmers from government.

**INSIGHT:** Similar to the previous question, with emphasis on diversification and costs of production.

## WHAT MEMBERSHIP PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND BENEFITS COME TO MIND THAT CANEGROWERS PROVIDE?

Cane Supply Agreements and Crop Insurance are strong benefits. Smartcane BMP and Marketing Information Services are also well regarded. The communications from CANEGROWERS is excellent through the *Australian*

*Canegrower* magazine, district newsletters, radio, meetings and social media, but does it cut through because everyone is busy?

**INSIGHT:** Getting people's attention is challenging and information needs to be available through video and infographics, podcasts, and written in short and long formats.

## IN YOUR VIEW, HOW IS CANEGROWERS RESPONDING TO YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS?

There was mixed views on how local CANEGROWERS and QCGO respond to needs. It was generally positive, with a feeling that good initiative was shown

through the products, services and programs offered to support growers.

**INSIGHT:** Relationships at the district and QCGO level are important. There is also frustration on some complex issues, such as regulations and electricity pricing, due to the time they take to resolve.

The demographics are shifting, the world is getting faster, with more disruption which leads to change and opportunity. The management of change and planning for future challenges is needed in 2020. CANEGROWERS is well across this and is looking to the future so we can continue

to build on the legacy of the organisation to support your needs. Please get in touch if you have some insight or suggestions to share. I would love to hear your 2020 vision for CANEGROWERS. Please email [matt\\_kealley@canegrowers.com.au](mailto:matt_kealley@canegrowers.com.au) or call (07) 3864 6444. ■





# **WE'RE WORKING FOR MEMBERS**

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**CANEGROWERS POLICY UPDATE**



## Mick Quirk

Environment and Sustainability Manager  
CANEGROWERS

### Call for more coral data and a model review

We look forward to 2020 being a year of more inclusive, open, constructive and respectful debate on the science of farming, water quality and the health of aquatic environments. Time will tell.

The most recent call for a re-assessment of evidence relates to a study of coral growth.

This is seen in their rate of calcification, the process by which they lay down their calcium carbonate skeleton (<https://bit.ly/38xmA15>). A trend can be inferred from core samples, like trunk rings give insight into the age and growth of trees.

A study of coral cores by AIMS used samples from 328 colonies of porites coral to estimate growth rates from 1990 to 2005.

It showed the average growth rate declined by 11.4% over the 15 years (or by 0.76% per year), and the most likely causes were rising sea surface temperatures and ocean acidification. Water quality was unlikely to be a factor as the trend was observed inshore and offshore and from north to south.

Given the importance of growth as a measure of coral health, Dr Peter Ridd is recommending a study to measure trends since 2005.

Given the need for longer-term data for informing the condition of, and trends in complex ecosystems, the proposed new study makes sense.

#### APVMA REVIEW OF 2,4-D

CANEGROWERS preparation of a submission on proposed changes to label conditions for 2,4-D has been more difficult than usual, as the APVMA documentation has been short of detail on its justification for change.

For sugarcane, the proposed changes will restrict the time of year when certain rates of active ingredient can be applied. The restrictions are greater for the Mackay/Whitsunday and Mary/Burnett regions, presumably because modelling assumes any loss to waterways undergoes less dilution compared to higher-rainfall or fully irrigated areas.

It is possible that the APVMA has assumed conditions for their modelling which do not reflect modern farming techniques, especially management of soil cover. We will be asking for a review of the modelling and, if appropriate, a repeat of the analysis using realistic assumptions. This may result in more moderate changes to label requirements that still reduce the risk of losing 2,4-D in run-off. ■

“ We look forward to 2020 being a year of more inclusive, open, constructive and respectful debate on the science of farming, water quality and the health of aquatic environments. ”





## Burn Ashburner

Senior Manager - Industry  
CANEGROWERS

### Expectations for 2020

There is a lot to do in 2020 and the Farm Input and Research Committee has no shortage of issues to tackle.

Research, development and extension (RD&E) and how CANEGROWERS can play a positive role, is always one of the big challenges faced by the committee. Sugar Research Australia is the body responsible for most RD&E work in our industry, but in order to set its strategic direction it consults with stakeholders - funding providers including growers, millers and governments.

CANEGROWERS plays a significant role on behalf of our members while SRA also consults growers directly in each district. Pulling all the stakeholder input together, SRA determines its vision and direction.

We all want SRA to fire on all cylinders and provide RD&E that will help shape the industry in the next decade.

The Farm Input and Research Committee keeps up to date with SRA's progress and will be meeting in February to develop its own plan for 2020. Here are some of my personal expectations for some of the RD&E issues for 2020 and perhaps beyond:

- The Rural Development Corporations review will enable SRA to be part of more across industry collaborative projects (i.e. gene editing) without a significant drain on existing resources.
- SRA programs for plant breeding, cane harvesting, nutrient management and soil health will continue to develop, improve and provide a pathway for adoption.
- The industry adoption strategy will give productivity services and SRA clear roles in each district.

- The significant investment in extension outside SRA and productivity services is to some extent coordinated with the industry adoption strategy
- A Life Cycle Analysis will be updated and made ready for industry to use as required to demonstrate its environmental credentials.
- Alternate products from sugarcane will be monitored and research will be determined to meet new needs (i.e. high fibre cane)

I also have an expectation that:

- The National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Mass and Dimension Exemption Notice Operator's Guide will be updated to reflect the piloting conditions available through the Northern Notice.
- There will be an updated Cane Burning Notification to improve on the current one which has some issues.
- The cyclone parametric insurance and a Discretionary Mutual Fund for CANEGROWERS will be fully explored and a business case finalised for the benefit of members.
- That there will be training and tools available to growers to enable them to understand their costs of production and price risk management.

These are examples of some of the issues I hope will be addressed in 2020. I'll revisit them at the end of the year to see if my expectations were realistic. ■

" We all want SRA to fire on all cylinders and provide RD&E that will help shape the industry in the next decade. "

## Warren Males

Head - Economics  
CANEGROWERS



### A big agenda

The CANEGROWERS Economics and Trade Committee reflected on the many successes of 2019 as well as the new challenges facing the industry, when members gathered in Brisbane for their first meeting of 2020 on 31 January.

#### TRADE

Trade agreements with South Korea, Japan and Indonesia have improved Australia's access for sugar to those markets and delivered significant benefits.

Those three countries now top the list of export destinations for Australian raw sugar.

In 2019, reflecting the value of the TPP-11 agreement, raw sugar exports to Japan exceeded one million tonnes for the first time.

Australia regularly exports more than one million tonnes of raw sugar each year to South Korea and with Australia's export competitiveness restored, more than half a million tonnes to Indonesia.

CANEGROWERS efforts to improve the world sugar market are continuing. In 2020 we will see:

- The case taken in the WTO by Australia, Brazil and Guatemala against India proceed.
- Entry-into-force of a FTA with Peru.
- Work to ensure sugar is in the EU-Australia FTA.
- Opportunities with Brexit for Australia to re-open a raw sugar trading relationship with the UK.

#### MARKETING CHOICE

Competition in the supply of marketing services has seen the development of a range of new innovative marketing and pricing services.

It is pleasing to see growers reap the benefits and take advantage of opportunities to manage the price volatility that characterises the market.

In 2020, CANEGROWERS will continue its strong support for grower choice in marketing in this dynamic environment.

- CANEGROWERS independent information service assists members make informed decisions. Members can access the service at [www.canegrowers.com.au/marketing-information-service](http://www.canegrowers.com.au/marketing-information-service) using their member number. Growers can also attend regional workshops.
- CANEGROWERS strongly supports all districts in their negotiations with mills.

#### REGULATORY PRICING

On behalf of members, CANEGROWERS provides input to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) to inform and influence their deliberations and decisions relating to electricity and water pricing.

While electricity and water prices are too high, CANEGROWERS work has helped moderate the size of price increases.

In 2020, our work in this area is directed at ensuring regulators make pricing decisions that take account of farm business needs and do not require irrigators to pay for services that are not delivered.

CANEGROWERS advocacy on each of these issues is aimed at improving outcomes for growers. ■



“ New trade agreements with South Korea, Japan and Indonesia have improved Australia's access for sugar to those markets and delivered significant benefits. ”



# FARM MANAGEMENT



## OPTIONS FOR FARM MANAGEMENT

For a variety of reasons, growers sometimes discuss with me options for changing their direct involvement in the farming enterprise.

Some are interested in reducing their involvement and may be looking to retire, some are looking to alternative land uses and some are looking at selling.

Some just want to step back a little but still stay involved and connected.

Others are looking at expanding their operations and are facing various challenges as they head in that direction.

So what are the options?



By Chris Cooper,  
CANE GROWERS  
Legal Advisor

For growers looking to change direction, this article lists some of the options for staying involved or connected in the industry, but having less day to day management of farm operations.

## FARM MANAGER

A cane farm manager might be considered where the grower wants to keep control but delegates certain duties and supervises operations of the farm.

It is important to remember that a farm manager is an employee who works for and under the direction and lawful control of the farm owner.

Managers are entitled to all the usual terms, conditions and protections that apply to employees generally.

This will include arrangements around hours of work and employee benefits such as holiday leave, careers leave and workers compensation. Superannuation will also be payable in addition to wages and conditions.

Wages are a tax deductible expense for the farm owner and the owner enjoys the benefits of any trading profits and capital improvement of the farming enterprise.

As a general rule the manager as an employee does not share in the risks, benefits and profits and losses of farm ownership.

## SHARE FARMER

Share farming arrangements have not been all that common in the sugar industry but are often used in the dairy and grain industries.

Share farmers generally have a shared risk with the farm owner in the profits and losses and operations of the business.

A true share farmer will be usually regarded as an independent contractor, not an employee. In such cases employee benefits are not payable to independent contractors.

However, it is important to consider the proper status of the share farmer because there are many unfortunate examples of growers having a relationship with a person they thought was a share farmer and independent contractor but following a dispute has discovered that the person was properly construed as an employee and entitled to all employee benefits during the time of engagement.

A genuine share farmer, who would likely be regarded as an independent contractor, will usually provide not only labour, but also management decision making and often plant and equipment as well.

They would share in the profits and losses of the farming operations with the owner.

They would also have some control, with consultation, over day-to-day management decisions.

The farm owner continues to be regarded as a primary producer for taxation purposes.

## LEASE

In a lease situation, the lessee or tenant takes possession and control of the farm from the farm owner.

Whilst the farm owner (lessor/landlord) continues to own the farm, usually the lessee has complete control, possession and occupation of it and decides, without interference from the owner, how to carry out the farming operations.

From a taxation perspective, the owner who leases their farm may not be regarded as a primary producer (subject to their particular circumstances). Income received from rent payments is likely not to be regarded as primary production income.

## SUMMARY

There are numerous considerations for each of the above arrangements and the risks and benefits vary according to the model to be adopted.

It's worth remembering too that the arrangements outlined above are not the only forms of ownership/management that could be considered.

Growers should give careful consideration to any proposal and obtain experienced financial and legal advice.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

To check out the new Legal Services page on the CANEGROWERS website containing a member-only archive of legal articles on topics of interest visit: <https://bit.ly/2MlyAUv>

Any member wishing to discuss aspects of farm management or any other legal matter should contact their local CANEGROWERS office or call me on Free Call 1800 177 159, for free initial legal advice. ■



# Classifieds

## FIRST 5 LINES FREE\* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

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Next deadline is **23 February 2020**.

\* 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.

### Graham Twyford Machinery Sales Pty Ltd

Specialising in Used Cane Harvesting Equipment Sales



2012 John Deere 3520 Track Harvester, 9 litre engine, 8 blade chopper standard toppler. Greenstar GPS. Well maintained.

2006 CAMECO 3510 Track Harvester JD 8.1 Litre. 8 blade chopper, standard toppler. Good condition for age.

2005 CAMECO 3510 Wheel Harvester, JD 8.1 Litre new engine, 3,500 hrs. SAI chopper motor conversion 8 blade chopper.

1997 CASE Track Harvester Komatsu 325 HP engine 6,000 hrs. 15" x 8 blade, raised cab with tilt kit, standard toppler.

1995 CAMECO Track Harvester 325 HP CAT engine 1,500 hrs rebuilt engine. Very good condition for age.

BSM 6 Tonne Side Tipper, Single axle unit 23x1x26 tyres.

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[www.gtmachinerysales.com.au](http://www.gtmachinerysales.com.au)

### Mossman-Tully

MF35 4 cylinder with break pusher will separate. Cummins parts block, head and other. Ph after 6pm: 0401281262.

2004 Cameco Harvester VGC \$150,000; Fert Box 3T Side Stool Dresser \$4,400, Draw Bar on Wheels. GST incl. Ph: 0427655168.

2009 Ford ranger xlt dual cab dropside 4x4 bull bar tow bar spot lights uhf radio 270,000km good condition RWC \$11,000 ONO. Ph Rodney: 0429984920.

2 of 7810 John Deere articulated with 14 tonnes Carta bin \$100,000 + GST. 6175m John Deere articulated with 14 tonnes Carta \$175,000 + GST. Ph: 0408713854.

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E: [admin@iftengineering.com.au](mailto:admin@iftengineering.com.au)

[www.iftengineering.com.au](http://www.iftengineering.com.au)

3x 2009 John Deere 7630 Articulated Tractors with 14 tonne Carta Elevator Tipplers. Will consider selling Elevator Tipper separately from Tractor. Tully Area. Ph: 0418 181646.

1x Massey Ferguson 6475. 1x Massey Ferguson 5465. 6 tonne side tipping haulout tractors. VGC. Ph: 0740562063.

### Herbert River-Burdekin

2x new 600/65 R28 tires \$1400 ea. New 23.1-26 tire and rim \$2600. 2x telescopic rams for 14t Carta Tipper \$1300 ea. Primary hood liner 5ft \$600. New slew wire rope and 2 pulleys \$1000. Bonfiglioli hub done up \$2000. Delta 1982 3t tray back Truck. Ph: 0417077343.

JCB 3220 2005 mod & 10t newton tipper 99 mod, GC. Ph: 0427655018.



### 2008 NEW HOLLAND T8040

336hp Turbocharged Intercooled Engine, 7,400hrs, 19 x 4 Full Power Shift Transmission, 4 x Remotes Closed Centre, 480/70R34 Fronts & 480/80R50 Rear Duals, Set Up For 2 and 4 metres, Trimble GPS System, Front Weight Pack, Well Maintained and Good Condition.

### 2008 McCormick CX105

102hp Turbo Diesel Engine, 2859hrs, Air Conditioned Cab, 'Trima Plus' Loader with Euro Hitch, GP Bucket & Forks, 2 Sets of Rear Remotes, Good Tyres. \$39,900.

PLEASE CALL FOR OTHER USED MACHINERY

### CONTACT DETAILS:

Andrew Baker - 0477 037 437  
Quintin Maclean - (07) 4926 1414  
396 Yaamba Rd, Nth Rockhampton  
[www.farmandgarden.com.au](http://www.farmandgarden.com.au)

Ford TW15 4x4 145 Hp 5000 hrs, new tyres, always in shed, good Kab seat. Ph: 0458774570.

1x JCB 3230 with 14ton Carta tipper. JCB 2015 model with 6700hrs Tipper 2009 model. Tractor has new tyres all round and unit is in excellent condition. Ph Joe: 0417611539.

2013 John Deere 3520, 2500hrs on engine upgraded hydraulics Twyford 10 blade choppers extended barrel new HD track chains & rollers at the start of the season modified spirals & front rollers 24 ¾ elevator extension VGC. Ph Rob: 0407167716.

## Mackay-Proserpine

95' single axle, 10 tonne Carta double door elevating bin. VGC. New Tyres. \$45,000 +GST. Ph: 0417427480.

1x Ford 8700 with Charlie Galea built 6 ton Tipper Bin with apron \$25,000 inc GST. 1x Ford 8700 & 1x Ford 8210 with Charlie Galea built 6 ton Tipper Bins with apron \$20,000 each inc GST. Ph: 0428969651.

Howard AH Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned - 1x 100", 1x 90", 1x 80". Howard AR Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned - 2x 80". Also available S/H AR Howard 90". Parts available for Howard AR & AH Rotary Hoes from \$50 to \$500. Chisel plough (Graham Plow Yeomans) 3350 wide or 11' 2230 deep or 7'6", 11 legs (+4 spare legs) with leaf harrows. \$3850. Ph: 49595883 or 0407643441.

Hodge Multicultivator, purchased 2012 new, well maintained, GC \$14,330. Hodge

Billet Planter, near new condition purchased 2010 carries 1400L of water on board, holds 4t of plants \$77,000. 4t high lift tipper bin, GC, new tyres \$6,600. Toft 6000 series 3 swinging knife plant cutter \$11, 000. Ford 5000 \$3,300. All prices incl. GST. Ph: 0408585161.

Massey Ferguson 35, 3-Cyl diesel. 4 new tyres & has been restored. Ph: 0407733030. 12T self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder. Very good condition. Ph: 0438606578 (Mackay). 6t side/tipper on Leyland tandem. Good condition. Ph: 0438606578 (Mackay).

Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Ph: 0438606578 (Mackay).

Celli Tiger spike hoe, 2.5m wide with hydraulic crumble roller and oil cooler. Very good condition. Ph: 0438606578 (Mackay).

6t side tipper Ian Ritchie, Excellent condition \$15,000 + GST. Ph: 0478719294.

2015 Case Track Harvester 8800, Trimble GPS, shedder topper, hyd. adj. fronts 1.5m to 1.85m. Balance valve fitted front suspension; iFit engineering chopper drums; Glenella Engineering taper locks on chopper gears; Blackey Bisalloy elevator floors; greasing system; Tungsten on front shoes; floating side walls & base cutter discs. Track transporter; 2x6t side tippers; V10 Mercedes motor; Robot running gear. All GC. Ph: 0427617807.

## Rainfall Report

brought to you by Sunsuper

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)			Average rainfall (mm)
	Month prior (Dec 2019)	Month to date (1 Jan-29 Jan)	Year to date	January
Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman)	110.4	423	423	520.6
Mareeba Airport	28.8	175.2	175.2	210.8
Cairns Aero	69.6	418	418	398.8
Mt Sophia	153	445	445	546.5
Babinda Post Office	231.1	152.8	152.8	643.1
Innisfail	96.8	392	392	512.4
Tully Sugar Mill	89.2	255.9	255.9	603.6
Cardwell Marine Pde	76	350.4	350.4	438.3
Lucinda Township	63.1	279	279	376.7
Ingham Composite	93.8	324.3	324.3	383.9
Abergowrie Alert	35	168	168	250.3
Townsville Aero	3.0	169.6	169.6	269.2
Ayr DPI Research Stn	30.4	547.4	547.4	216.4
Proserpine Airport	243.8	159.8	159.8	297.2
Mirani Mary Street	161.8	222.7	222.7	288.6
Mackay M.O	232.6	272.4	272.4	275.5
Plane Creek Sugar Mill	185.8	276.6	276.6	365.3
Bundaberg Aero	11.6	141.8	141.8	171.4
Childers South	5.4	71.4	71.4	126.3
Maryborough	40.2	71.2	71.2	162.8
Tewantin RSL Park	34.8	168.8	168.8	138.3
Eumundi - Crescent Rd	40.8	185.2	185.2	228.6
Nambour Daff - Hillside	55.8	199.4	199.4	239.8
Logan City Water Treatment Plant	62.8	172.3	172.3	126.4
Murwillumbah Bray Park	85	263.9	263.9	204.1
Ballina Airport	96.6	170	170	167.3
New Italy (Woodburn)	69.8	209.2	209.2	143.9

 sunsuper

dream with  
your eyes open

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](http://www.bom.gov.au). Weather report sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology Recent Rainfall Tables.

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3 metre width, 28 discs,  
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2.1 metres width \$3,300 incl GST  
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or 0407 638 674 (Andrew)  
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# Classifieds

2016 Case 8800 Track Machine, 2200 Hours, EHS 8 Blade Choppers, Trimble GPS, Blackey Bisalloy elevator floors, Standard Topper, 2 speed wheel motors, Pro Rata Engine Warranty. Very tidy machine. Ph: 0428182464 or 0427541030.

## Bundaberg-Rocky Point

Toft 6500 Ser 3 harvester rotary chop good plant cutter + double bin planting tipper \$25,000 inc GST will separate. 2 x 90" Howard rotary hoes + 3 furrow howard square plough. 4 wheel trash rake + 3 row stool rake + heavy duty brake pusher + 5 tyne Delta ripper. Ph: 0410634049.

Old grey bonel 3 furrow disc plow. Criton Mark 2 Harvester with 135 Massey

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**Fertile Agricultural Land,  
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This highly productive farm in the Tully (Qld) area is for sale by tender.

Currently under sugarcane, in an area with substantial rainfall, Tully River boundary plus other water sources, this clean, tidy property shows good income return.

- 530.94Ha, 2 titles
- Net cane production area 439.54 Ha (61.11 Ha currently under fallow)
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- Irrigation licence 990 mgl
- Currently BMP accredited cane farm
- 2 Machinery sheds, mains power
- List of machinery & equipment included in sale
- Bitumen road access

Successful history of beef cattle & banana production which could be re-established or developed into other agricultural industries

Sold as a going concern no GST applies.

**Genuine inquiries only**

**Ph: 0417 180 378**

**Email: farmtender1@gmail.com**

**Tender closes 5pm 3rd April, 2020**

Ferguson Tractor attached. 2x 6000 Austoft Harvester Elevator SLEWS and 1 Ram. Quantity of elevator flights to suit Austoft Cane Harvesters 4000 & 6000. Hydraulic Wheel Motor to fit Austoft Cane Harvesters 4000 & 6000, as new condition. Quantity of commercial pumps and motors to suit Austoft Cane Harvester 4000, 6000 & Mark 1. Diff and Episicals to suit Austoft Harvester Mark 1 and Mark 2. Dyna Power motors and pumps. Quantity of 5 inch irrigation pipes. Topper to suit Austoft Harvesters 6000 & 7000. Ph: 0427598333.

## New South Wales

Case billet planter 2003 duel row 1.8m 1000L front chemical tank, 100L Lawsban tank, 2 cameras \$50000+GST. Also available 2 rear tipping bins and 3 row roller. Ph: 0412825940.

## Wanted

Hard hose irrigator, 400/450m length or space on the reel to extend the poly to 400/450m. Ph: 0490029387.

Wheel harvester with rotary chop suitable to cut plants. Ph: 0412964155.

1100 series massey ferguson. Ph: 0417190612.

2 Tyres 12.4 x 24. Tread wear is not an issue. Ph: 0428761549.

Double disc opener side dresser fert box. Howard 80-90" rotary hoe with ripper legs. Bed renovator. 4WD tractor 100-160hp. GPS prefer John Deere case. Ph: 0419788376.

Don Gough stick planter in any condition with or without fertiliser boxes. Mareeba area. Ph: 0407963040.

Sugar Terminals shares wanted. Ph: 0408448227.

## Positions Vacant

Rapisarda Farms are looking for a motivated individual to operate and maintain a John Deere 3520 for the 2020 season and beyond. Clare North QLD, 100,000 tonne, one-farmer group. Tractor push break, 6 day roster, full-time work available in slack. Full remuneration package available including rental property. Email resumes to sib@rapisardagroup.com. Ph Sib: 0428 771 645.

Full Time Farm Position. Cane Farm/Broad Acre Cropping/Bailing/Irrigation. Experience with modern farm equipment, HR License, good communication skills. Tully area. Email

Damien.rigato.office@bigpond.com or Ph: 0407960575.

Haulout driver required for 2020 season 90000 tonnes, 5 day roster, Home Hill close to town, Volvo trucks roll on roll off. Possible full time position for right applicant. Ph for more info: 0407122460.

Relief Harvester/Haul out driver position & haul out position available for the 2020 season. Must be motivated with good machine maintenance knowledge. 80-90,000t run. Condong mill area. Email westtweedharvesting@gmail.com.

## Work Wanted

Cane harvester and haul out operator for the crushing season 2020. Can do farm work repairs and maintenance, case 7700-8800 and other farm machinery. Ph: +230-57523057.

## Property

Pleystowe cane farm. On 2 Lots. Approx 190 acres all up. Teemburra water, 2 pumps & licences, plus 32,000 gallons an hour underground bore. Machinery/irrigation shed. 2x 4" soft hose irrigators, farm lasered, underground main throughout. 2 sidings adjoin farms. Access to farm from Pleystowe School Rd & Formosa's Rd. Does not include 2019 crop. Selling due to health reasons. Ph: 0408733793.

Cane farm, Silkwood area. 27.82 ha total, 27.62 under cane on 1 freehold title. 5 yr av 97 t/ha. 7.5 kms from Kurrimine Beach. Shed and bore water. Ph: 0417647002.

Cane farm Tarakan Road ABERGOWRIE 270 acres freehold Genuine enquiries pls. Ph: 0747774633 or 0408608664.

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 0408880724.

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 Ainsley Gatley | **Conference Coordinator**  
[nextgenfarmers@gmail.com](mailto:nextgenfarmers@gmail.com) | 0488 197 400

 Gerard Puglisi | **Next Gen Officer**  
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ACFA: Harvesting the Next Gen



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