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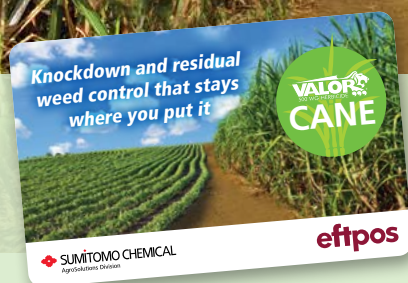
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COVER IMAGE: Mackay cane grower Steve Muscat is farming smarter to boost productivity. Read more on page 26.

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Harvest hasn't slowed Smartcane BMP accreditations

Smartcane BMP accreditations continue to gather pace with the industry-led program climbing swiftly past the 500 accredited enterprise milestone achieved in March.

As of 1 September, 585 cane farming businesses, accounting for 33% of Queensland's total cane-growing area, had achieved accreditation, with a further five currently awaiting the final audit process.

"In total, 80% of the Queensland cane industry is engaged in our program, including accredited and benchmarked growers," Smartcane BMP Manager Kate Gowdie said.

"This is usually a quiet time of the year, with growers busy getting their cane off and preparing for next year's crop, so it's pleasing to see accreditations continuing to tick over. We expect the pace to really pick up once the harvest comes to an end and growers have more time to prepare for audit."

There was more good news for the program recently, with Wilmar announcing the extension of its Smartcane BMP incentive payment scheme for Burdekin growers.

Growers who are already registered with the program will now have until July 2021 to achieve their accreditation.

Under the scheme, Wilmar will provide newly accredited growers a one-off incentive payment of 15c per tonne of cane, capped at 25,000 tonnes.

To be eligible, growers must achieve accreditation in the three core modules and provide Wilmar with a copy of their accreditation certificate. ■



Pictured: Smartcane BMP accredited Mossman growers John and Richard Padovan.

Strong support for Reef Regs petition

A CANEGROWERS Bundaberg e-petition calling on the Queensland Government to revoke the latest round of reef regulations had garnered well over 3,000 signatures by the time this edition of *Australian Canegrower* went to print.

With just two days remaining before the petition closed on 4 September, 3,303 people had visited the Queensland Parliament's website to lend the petition their support.

A second CANEGROWERS Bundaberg petition, which unlike the Queensland Parliament version allowed supporters outside Queensland to sign, had received almost 2,000 signatures by 2 September.

"This is not a whisper from the voting public – it is a roar, and the Queensland Government had better be listening as we head for the October 31 State Election," CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Manager, Dale Holliss said. ■

Crush closes in on halfway mark

Queensland's 2020 crush is fast approaching the midway point with some districts reporting over 50% of cane harvested by the end of August.

As at 29 August, Bundaberg and Tableland growers had cut 54% and 50% of the 2020 crop respectively, while Mossman growers were sitting at 49%.

In total 12.5 million tonnes of Queensland's estimated 29.3 million tonne crop had been crushed.

Wet weather through June and July hampered harvesting operations in a number of districts. But it wasn't just the rain causing headaches for harvesters.

In Herbert River, crushing at Wilmar's Victoria Mill came to a grinding halt on 25 August when a Brolga crashed into a power transformer, cutting electricity to the mill for half a day.

With a wingspan of up to 2.5 metres, the Brolga is Australia's largest flying bird. ■



Focus on farmers is the right direction

CANEGROWERS has welcomed, as a step in the right direction, the Liberal National Party's early Queensland Election commitment to restore a balance between measures to protect the Great Barrier Reef and their impact on farmers.

"Putting farmers in the middle of solutions for the environment will help turn the dial back from the current bureaucratic overkill with reef regulations to a sensible and cooperative future that allows for a vibrant agricultural sector," CANEGROWERS Chairman and Mackay grower **Paul Schembri** said.

"The LNP has been talking with us and made a commitment to work with us directly to map out a process for the review they have announced in a letter to all major farming groups.

"We believe the review should deliver a repeal of the 2019 ramped up regulations which are a bridge too far in red tape and government interference in everyday farming operations."

A CANEGROWERS analysis has found the current path of regulation will cost the Queensland economy \$1.3 billion over the next decade, yet do little to secure the health of the Reef.

"We look forward to the LNP's stated commitment to best practice being translated into ongoing government support for our voluntary industry program, Smartcane BMP, which has more than 70% of cane farmland engaged already," Mr Schembri said.

"But we do have reservations about an indication that an LNP government would legislate minimum farm practice standards. Day to day farm operations should not be enshrined in law – we've always said this is a pathway to stifling innovation and engagement with farmers." ■

The CANEGROWERS position on reef regulations has been strident and consistent.

We have been calling for the political parties to commit to these measures ahead of the 2020 Queensland Election:

”

REEF REGS

Repeal the 2019 reef legislation and regulations.

”

WATER QUALITY

Make water quality plans and programs realistic and credible.

”

SCIENCE

Overhaul the system that manages and scrutinises water quality research that is used to inform policy.

”

SMARTCANE BMP

Support the sugarcane industry best management practice program, Smartcane BMP.

”

GOVERNMENT

Move functions related to agriculture from the Environment Department to a revitalised Agriculture Department.

Telling your story with pride

CANEGROWERS has launched a fresh new video to proudly tell the story of the organisation and its members.

Fronted by members of all ages, the video was filmed on farms across a number of districts. We're thankful for the generosity and cooperation of all of the growers involved.

The video aims to remind everyone of the huge role that our sugarcane industry plays in the social and economic fabric of our communities. Re-igniting that awareness will lay the groundwork for more issues-based messages over the coming months.

Over the coming weeks, the video will be broadcast on television with supporting spots on radio and news websites.

You can watch the video on YouTube here:

youtu.be/hRbAIBzAhcQ

Please do your bit to spread the word by sharing it with your friends and family.

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CANEGROWERS - our voice, growing Queensland ■



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WHAT WE ARE AFTER

Images that capture the depth and breadth of the Australian cane industry that we can showcase in a 2021 shed calendar.

From the people, to harvesting, to farming systems, to transport, to milling – we want your best photographs.

KUDOS

The top three winning entries will be published in a shed calendar for the 2021 year. Other entries to the competition may also be published in the calendar at the discretion of the judging panel. The competition is run by SRA.

This calendar will be produced as part of the Nutrient Management projects, currently being delivered in the Burdekin, Mackay, Whitsunday, Herbert and parts of Far North Queensland. These projects are funded by the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality Program and the Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy (Reef Trust).

HOW TO ENTER

Email your entries to photocomp@sugarresearch.com.au by midnight Friday September 30, 2020. Images should be a high resolution jpg, and your email needs to include your name, contact number, address, and a brief description of your photograph including when and where it was taken.

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DISTRICTS PULL TOGETHER TO SECURE FUTURE FOR MARYBOROUGH-ISIS GROWERS

Months of uncertainty for growers in the Maryborough-Isis region could soon be at an end, with CANEGROWERS representatives from both districts working around the clock, negotiating with mills, the State and Federal governments, and each other to achieve an outcome that will secure the future of the industry in both districts.

A decision by MSF Sugar to sell its substantial cane farm holdings in Maryborough sent shockwaves through the local industry in June, with the future viability of the Maryborough mill called into question.

"The MSF land, around 5400 hectares in total, accounts for about 30% of the mill's annual supply," CANEGROWERS Maryborough Chairman **Jeff Atkinson** said. "Without that cane the mill will cease to be viable. So, the announcement of that land sale caused a lot of concern among local growers."

The buyer, Canberra-based investment company Rural Funds Management (RFM), has since announced plans to plant more than 2000ha with macadamia trees over the next five years, casting further doubt on the mill's future.

While MSF Sugar hasn't confirmed the imminent closure of Maryborough Mill, the company will only commit to crushing the 2020 crop, despite having a Cane Supply Agreement in place until 2022, reinforcing grower fears.

"We're pretty resigned to the fact that the mill is closing, the only question now is when," Mr Atkinson said.

"Regardless of what happens in 2021, MSF has a Cane Supply Agreement with growers that they will have to honour, one way or another, and we'll be making sure they do just that."

But it isn't only in Maryborough where growers are facing an uncertain future.

Sixty kilometres to the north, the grower-owned Isis Central Sugar Mill is also in a precarious financial situation after a

planned \$35m merger with Pakistani company Almoiz Group fell through due to legal difficulties in Almoiz's home country.

In recent years, the Isis mill has struggled to maintain its cane supply, as more and more local cane land is swallowed up by commercial tree crops – but that could all be about to change.

"We've been working together with CANEGROWERS Maryborough and the mills to find a solution whereby Maryborough cane can be toll crushed in Isis in the event that the Maryborough Mill were to close," CANEGROWER Isis Chairman **Mark Mammino** said.

"Obviously it's not ideal to be transporting cane anywhere from 60-100km by road, but it's better than

Mitr Phol Group and MSF Sugar: Sell 5,409 ha of farmland plus equipment and 8,060 megalitres of water for \$81.1 million. Only guaran

Rural Funds Management: Purchases farms from MSF Sugar with

CANEGROWERS Maryborough and

Isis Central Sugar Mill: Looking for ways to reduce expenses and debt levels after ending a potential \$35 million investment deal with Almoiz Group.



*Pictured: Maryborough mill.
Photo by Graeme Wilson.*

"MSF has a cane supply agreement with growers that they will have to honour, one way or another."

the alternative which would almost certainly be the end of the industry in Maryborough and a very uncertain future for Isis growers also."

While negotiations between the mills are ongoing and government assistance may be required to ensure the long term viability of transporting cane from Maryborough to Childers, there is a growing sense of optimism that two local industries could be saved and the Isis central cooperative mill emerge in a stronger, more sustainable financial position.

"There are many hurdles to overcome, especially in terms of the transport situation," Jeff Atkinson said.

"Were Maryborough Mill to close, the cost of carting cane to Childers would obviously have to be borne by MSF for the remainder of the CSA period.

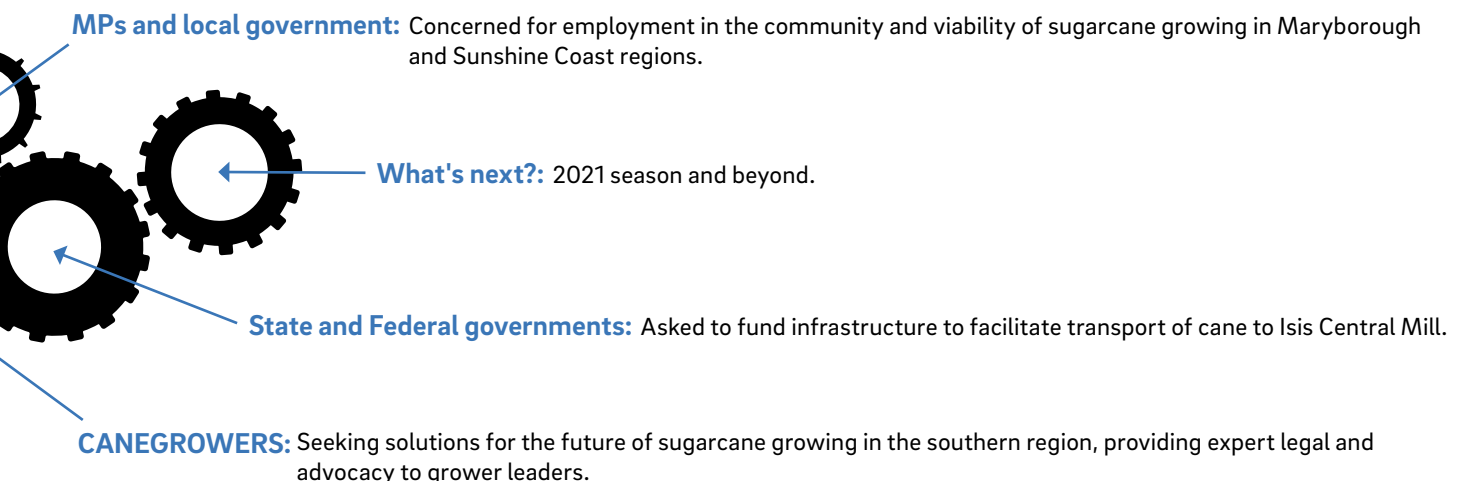
"But we would also need some form of government assistance to ensure we can get the correct infrastructure in place to make the logistics viable over the long-term.

Continues next page ►

ntee Maryborough Mill will operate for the rest of the 2020 sugarcane crush.

plans to convert 2,200 ha to macadamia orchards.

CANEGROWERS Isis: Advocating for a future for all members and the honouring of existing Cane Supply Agreements.



"If we can make it work and remain profitable for growers, then it might just leave the local industry in a more financially viable situation going forward."



"We need to ensure we have an appropriate fleet of trucks and trailers to get the cane to Childers in the first place. Then there's the issue that the Isis mill can't accommodate trucks, so some sort of transfer station would need to be established so that cane can be tipped into bins and transferred to the mill by rail."

"Those are the challenges, but there's plenty of motivation for the State and Federal governments to come to the table in partnership with our industry. After all, the Maryborough and Isis regions are heavily dependent on the cane industry for their economic survival, so it's in no-one's

interest to see these industries disappear and as an industry we are all working towards a genuinely viable future" he said.

Mark Mammino is also hopeful that the MSF decision may ultimately prove to be a positive for the region's cane industry.

"Look, I don't want to jump the gun, there's still a lot of work to do. But if we can make it work and remain profitable for growers, then it might just leave the local industry in a more financially viable situation going forward, this could work well for our industry and provide valuable stability to the local economy" he said. ■

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CEO COMMENT

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

CONFIDENCE IN OUR FUTURE IS THE PATHWAY TO A NEW REALITY

Resilience is a word that gets tossed about perhaps too liberally these days. However, farmers really do embody Australian resilience. Whether it's a cyclone, drought, flood or fire impacting on one of our districts, growers can call on the extended CANEGROWERS family and we pull together and find a way through.

We work to understand the impacts on growers, the risks to the supply chain, and we then inform and negotiate with government to deliver much needed assistance.

That assistance can be in the form of disaster recovery programs, on ground support officers, or insurance products and services.

In many respects, we're in the midst of another natural disaster right now. A disaster of the kind never experienced before.

Nine months in and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve as not only the biggest health crisis of our lifetime, but also the biggest economic crisis we have ever faced.

A remarkable constant in all of this has been the capacity for the primary industry sectors - mining and agriculture - to continue to operate.

Although that's not to say that times aren't tough, with a deflated world sugar price casting a long shadow over already overcast skies.

CANEGROWERS has continued to operate at full capacity, performing our core functions of providing representation, leadership and services and promoting unity in the interests of our members.

With the pandemic risking our whole supply chain, we took the initiative of establishing an Australia Sugar Supplychain Working Group with Sugar Terminals Ltd, Queensland Sugar Ltd, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and Sugar Research Australia.

This group has met regularly since March to identify and respond to the risks of the pandemic and together we have informed government policy and program development and worked together to identify and respond to risks that the pandemic places upon our industry. To date these activities have been successful.

While dealing with the challenges that 2020 has thrown up, we're also positioning the industry for the future, planning for the next five to 10 years.

However, to deliver on that future, growers need to have confidence that the profitability of their business is tied to the sustainability of the industry as a whole.

This industry is built on the courageous and innovative ideas of growers in partnership with industry stakeholders in milling, storage, handling, marketing and research.

Decades of insightful leadership built the foundations for our world-leading logistics, cane supply and management infrastructure, and research and development capacity that is the envy of many of our global competitors.

That capacity is needed again now. Our industry must continue to evolve, to embrace a culture of innovation and taking a brave approach to seeking new opportunities and ideas. We need to learn from our past, but not let it define our future.

Over coming weeks, CANEGROWERS will continue to play a lead role in this whole-of-industry conversation about the future vision for our industry.

A future that embraces the potential of the 400,000 hectares of stored energy that the farmers across the state grow.

It is a future full of opportunities that can only be realised if we embrace the spirit of honest collaboration that we have seen over recent months. ■



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Growers representing grower interests

AT THE HEART OF STL ELECTION BID

"I firmly believe a strong grower voice and focus should exist at the very top of all sugar industry bodies to ensure the interests of cane farmers are considered in any decision-making process," Babinda grower **Stephen Calcagno** told *Australian Canegrower* recently, when discussing his decision to seek a position on the Sugar Terminals Limited board of management.

A fourth-generation cane grower, Mr Calcagno is no stranger to representing grower interests.

In 2004 he was elected to the Babinda District Cane Growers Board of Directors - a position he held until the organisation merged with Mulgrave Canegrowers Ltd in 2010 to form the CANEGROWERS Cairns Region.

He then served as a director of the newly formed organisation until 2016 when he was elected Chairman, a position he has held ever since.

In 2019, he was elected to the QCGO Board where he has been heavily involved in negotiations and policy making on some of the toughest challenges facing the industry.

Despite those challenges, he's optimistic about the future.

"I've got a great belief in the industry and I'm committed to it. I know there's a lot of uncertainty around at the minute, but I really see a bright future for this industry and I just want to make sure that we make the best decisions possible for growers at all levels" Mr Calcagno said.

As the sugar industry's bulk terminal owner, STL plays an important role in maintaining Australia's reputation as a reliable supplier and exporter of raw sugar to the world market, Mr Calcagno said.

"That is our strength in the global market, so maintaining that capacity and reputation for the benefit of the whole industry must be the number one priority for the STL board.

"We must never lose sight of the fact our ports, the timeliness of delivery and our reputation for reliability are some of our biggest selling points on the global market, and ensuring we maintain this goes hand-in-hand with having a

successful company that can also return a dividend to shareholders."

Mr Calcagno also believes that growers have a unique viewpoint on many issues and said it's important these views are heard, just as the STL Board structure allows for, and that growers voices are not drowned out by other industry players.

"Grower views on certain issues might not always align with the views of other STL directors, whether they be from the milling sector or independent directors, but it's important that all views are clearly articulated and considered by the board to ensure the right decisions are made for the company and the industry as a whole."

In a show of confidence, the Queensland CANEGROWERS board voted last month to endorse Mr Calcagno's bid for the STL board position - the first time that CANEGROWERS has officially supported a candidate for the role.

"We've had CANEGROWERS members and even board directors in the past that

have taken up positions on the STL board and worked very hard to represent the interests of growers," CANEGROWERS Chairman **Paul Schembri** said.

"But this is the first time the CANEGROWERS board has officially endorsed a candidate. That's not just a sign of the confidence we have in Stephen to represent the best interests of growers, but also a desire to ensure we have a candidate that is strong and dedicated to growers, yet open minded and forward-thinking enough to work with other board members for the benefit of the whole industry and the company.

"I would encourage all STL grower shareholders to use their vote to ensure we have a strong grower voice in the management of our bulk sugar terminals and the best way to do that, is to vote for Stephen Calcagno," Mr Schembri said.

Grower shareholders can vote in person or by proxy at the Sugar Terminals Limited AGM on 21 October. For details on how to vote visit: www.canegrowers.com.au ■



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FROM THE CHAIR

By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS

As September starts we have around 42% of Queensland's sugarcane crop harvested and crushed. Some regions are more advanced than others, but as a whole we are fast approaching the midway mark of the 2020 season.

It is hard to generalise about the weather along the more than 2,000 kms of coastline that is home to the sugar industry - often rain is welcome in some regions yet cursed in others.

Generally speaking though, we need more fine weather than rain in coming months to get this year's crop harvested.

We are at a critical stage in the crush with Queensland's crop now sitting at around 29.3 million tonnes. Let's hope we get the right weather to make real inroads in the coming weeks!

World Sugar Price

On the price front, there has finally been some positive news for us.

In recent weeks, we've seen the world price burst through the US13c/lb mark and that has pushed the Australian sugar price past \$400 AUD per tonne of sugar, a benchmark of our costs of production.

Whilst the upward movement in sugar price is encouraging, the gains have flattened off, highlighting how fluid the market situation is right now.

So while the price movement of late has been far more constructive than it has been for some time, we are still far removed from the prices we need to really reenergise the Australian sugar industry.

It is, as always, impossible to predict where sugar prices might head.

Telling our story

During my years with CANEGROWERS, particularly since becoming Chairman, a common and passionate plea I hear from growers is, 'We need to tell our story!'

Our story is one of generations of farmers who have built a technologically advanced and environmentally responsible Australian sugar industry.

In years past, the sugar industry would have relied on its economic credentials to guarantee that its voice was heard.

While our economic credentials remain strong, we now know that it's other factors that the community, and governments in particular, judge us on.

This year's Queensland state election is also looming as one of the most critical in our history.

We need responsible policy-making from government that allows our industry to grow and reach its full potential and not be saddled bureaucratic regulations.

To that end, CANEGROWERS has commenced a substantial public campaign spearheaded by a TV advertisement.

If we as cane growers don't sell ourselves, then no one else is going to do it for us and I thank sincerely all of the growers who've helped to pull this advertising campaign together.

The TV advertisement is the first stage of the campaign.

The next stage will spotlight the key messages for our industry in the upcoming State election.

Obviously this campaign is being funded by CANEGROWERS. Like most things in life, if it's worth fighting for it requires an investment.

The world is changing very rapidly and your organisation, CANEGROWERS, needs to be not only up to the challenge but also capable of telling our story in new ways.

I am proud of the campaign and what it is telling our communities about us and our industry.

Hopefully it will have the desired impact on voters and government. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. A. Schembri".

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Adrian and Tracy Darveniza with their family in Innisfail



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Global Sugar Market

Update and Outlook for 2020/21 season

With Australia's 2020 harvest well underway and winter turning to spring, it's a good time to reflect on the sugar price situation and outlook.

The double-whammy of a previously unexpected sugar surplus for the 2020/21 global crop cycle, largely thanks to Brazil and India, and a higher AUD/USD have not helped Australian dollar sugar prices. The wider economy has also been weakened, with COVID-19 impacting peoples' lives and livelihoods over the last few months.

"This year's sugar price volatility is a reminder that from time to time the sugar market offers good pricing opportunities."



By Warren Males
CANEGROWERS Head of Economics

Does that mean the outlook is all doom and gloom?

Although current market prices for the 2020 season which had been hovering around the AUD400/t mark have fallen below that level, when we look at the bigger picture, there may be cause for cautious optimism on a couple of fronts.

Firstly – across all marketers and districts for 2020 season, many growers took advantage of the price surge earlier in the year and did a relatively large amount of pricing in the range of AUD450-500/t range.

All marketers offered pools that were able to capture some pricing at the relatively attractive levels seen in February and March. Some even opened special pools specifically targeting the relatively attractive prices on offer at the time. This pricing innovation has helped to build value in many districts.

This year's sugar price volatility is a reminder that from time to time the sugar market offers good pricing opportunities. Taking advantage of historically good prices when they are available requires planning ahead. Taking relatively simple actions, like setting long term price orders at attractive levels directly with the marketer of your choice can pay handsomely.

Recent exchange rate movements are a reminder that Aussie dollar (AUD) sugar prices are not just determined by moves in the New York sugar market. Since the beginning of April, the world raw sugar price has gone from around US10.35c/lb to US12.65c/lb, roughly a 22% increase.

Over the same period, the AUD/USD strengthened from around 0.6050 to

more than USD0.7350, also gaining 22%, effectively negating the world sugar price rise when measured in Aussie dollar terms.

Secondly – COVID-19 was a large contributor to the switch in outlook for this year's global supply balance from deficit to surplus.

Stay at home policies around the world contributed to a collapse in demand for oil and sharply lower oil prices.

In Brazil, with less driving, ethanol consumption and prices both collapsed. There was a dramatic surge in sugar production as mills switched from ethanol to capture high sugar prices.

With a weaker Brazilian Real (BRL), much of Brazil's 2020 season sugar has been priced and sold. But it is yet to be shipped. With Brazil supplying more than half the world's sugar exports, a question remains whether COVID-19 will impact Brazil's export supply chain? Ahead of the Indian harvest, similar questions are being asked about its export supply chain.

Reflecting the supply uncertainty, over the past couple of months speculators have changed from being net sellers to net buyers of sugar. Let's hope global macroeconomic events don't conspire to encourage speculators to reverse these bought positions too quickly.

Thirdly – while there is some obvious concern about lower sugar consumption due to COVID-19, this has been offset by reductions in expected production in both Europe and Thailand.

Thailand is looking at its lowest level of sugar production in more than 10 years. The Thai crop outlook is especially important for Australia. Because Thai producers usually



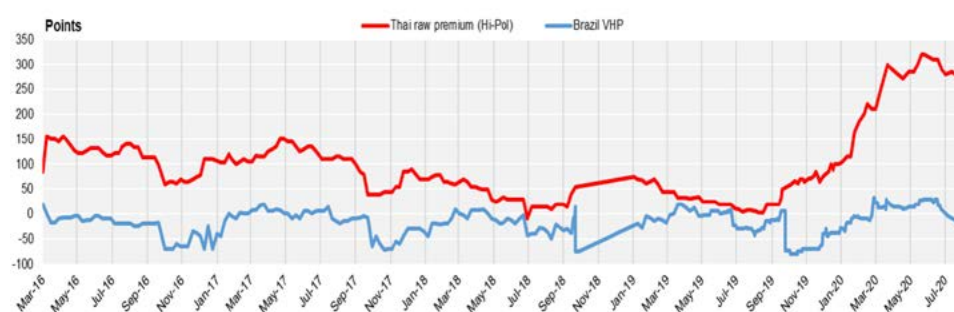
"Thailand is looking at its lowest level of sugar production in more than 10 years."

favour white over raw sugar production, the already tight physical market for raw sugar in East Asia is likely to become tighter and lead to higher regional FOB premiums for Thai raw sugar.

It means strong physical premiums, currently around AUD85/t FOB compared with the usual AUD25/t FOB, for Australian sugar can be expected to continue.

While not all shipments may attract that premium, these returns should provide a significant boost to the shared pools for all marketers. For most marketers, this additional revenue is likely to more than cover their marketing costs and mean the shared pool will add to a grower's 2020 season gross price. ■

The Thai raw sugar physical premium is over US3c/lb



Thailand sugar production has dropped significantly



Energy Savers audit helps boost efficiency and cut costs on Mackay farm

A cane farm at Seaforth near Mackay could see increased production yields and major energy cost savings, thanks to recommendations of an audit conducted by CANEGROWERS Mackay under the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension.

The audit is one of 180 farm energy audits completed on farms throughout Queensland under the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) program, funded by the Queensland Government.

CANEGROWERS Mackay Area Committee Chairman, **Joseph Borg**, said the energy audit program had been a great way for growers in the Mackay and Plane Creek regions to identify ways to reduce their farms' energy consumption and costs at a time when energy and water prices are continuing to rise.

"With the help of CANEGROWERS Mackay's agricultural economist, **John Eden**, and electrical engineer, **Ron Coomer**, the recommendations have been tailored to the needs of each

particular cane farming business and have included a mix of more efficient equipment, introduction of solar energy and a tweaking of farm management practices," Mr Borg said.

"Cash is tight in the industry at present because of low world sugar prices, and the cost of electricity and water, but some recommendations, such as checking that a pump is working efficiently or changing a tariff, are relatively inexpensive and can achieve impressive cost savings.

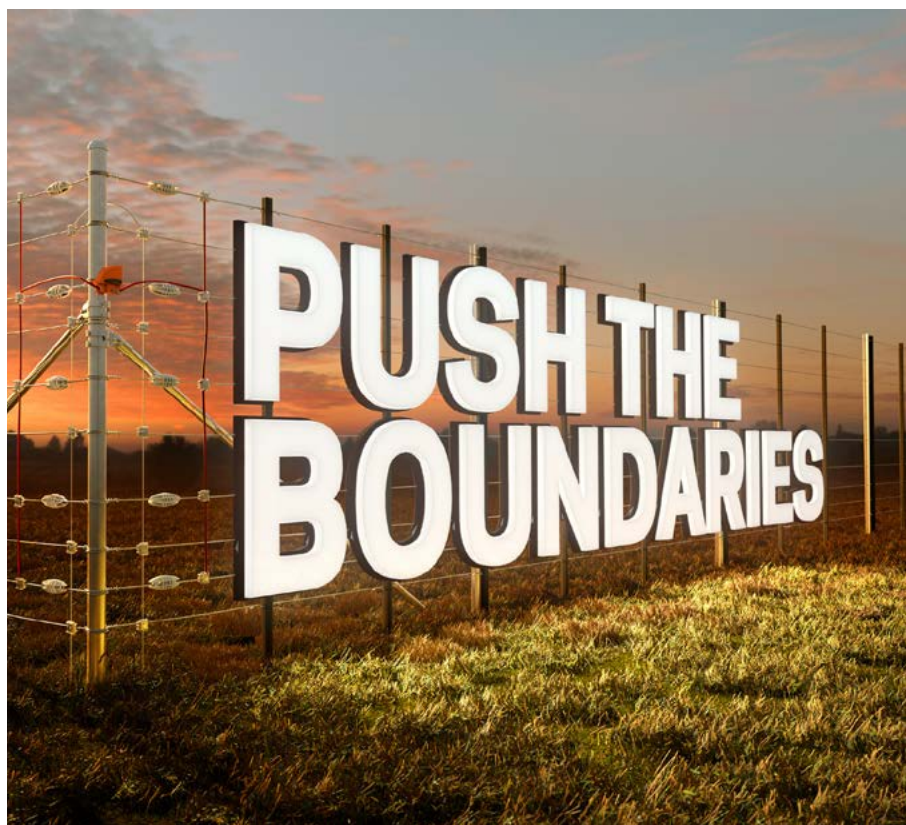
"Moreover, in this particular case, through purchasing new and second hand equipment and working to improve yields through more effective use of water and some farm management

changes – to increase returns, not just reduce energy costs – the payback period for the total investment can be reduced to under two years."

For more information about the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension program or how to improve your on-farm energy efficiency, visit:

www.qff.org.au/energysavers or contact the energy savers team by email: energysavers@qff.org.au ■

The Energy Savers Plus Program Extension is delivered by the Queensland Farmers' Federation with support and funding from the Queensland Government.



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MACKAY CANE FARM AUDIT

Harvesting 9500 tonnes of cane a year, the 144 ha Mackay farm is statistically above the zonal average for the region.

However, interrogation of the available farm data found that even though yields in this zone have remained consistent over the past 10 years, there has been a slight decrease on this particular farm due to the crop mix being weighted towards older ratoons.

Changes in rainfall distribution across the district in recent years have not helped, and the irrigation infrastructure on the farm has proved unable to meet crop demand at critical times.

The grower had been using a 10 cm (4 inch) winch irrigator driven by two dam pumps which delivers water at a constant high pressure.

The audit recommended introducing two variable speed drives (VSDs) on the pumps as well as replacing one of the pumps with a more efficient pump with a higher flow rate to enable the operation of two low pressure booms working in tandem.

For a total investment of around \$47,000 to purchase two second-hand low pressure booms and install the VSDs, the estimated energy savings are expected to be 30,710 kWh per year at a cost saving of \$7,979 per year, paying back the investment in under six years.

In addition, the audit recommended a 30 kW ground-mounted solar system to provide an offset against running the pumps continuously on the grid and to increase savings because of the ability to irrigate during the day. The audit factored in the export of energy to the grid when the farmer is not irrigating, further lowering his energy bill.

This investment of around \$21,000 (after Small-scale Technology Certificate rebates) would be paid back within 3.5 years, thanks to energy savings of 60,000 kWh and cost savings of \$6,002 per year. The audit also recommended an immediate tariff change from T62 to a combination of T20 and T33, saving a further \$1,635 per year.

Due to the restructure of the irrigation infrastructure and improved efficiencies there is now the ability to increase water use from 159 ML to 265

ML. Water use efficiency has improved from 7.7 t/ML to 8.8 t/ML.

The grower has the added benefit of irrigating the crop up to the sixth ratoon profitably. This compares with the situation prior to the audit, when irrigation returns were negative after the third ratoon.

By following all recommendations of the audit, pumping costs across all systems would be reduced on average from \$117.73 per ML to around \$37.89 per ML, even with the increase in water use from 1 ML/ha to 2 ML/ha.

Best of all, thanks to the productivity gains, the expected payback period for the total estimated costs of all improvements decreases from 4.7 to 1.6 years, and with a Return on Investment of 64 per cent.

For more information about the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension program or how to improve your on-farm energy efficiency, visit:

www.qff.org.au/energysavers or contact the energy savers team by email: energysavers@qff.org.au ■



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QSL MARKET UPDATE

Current as of 31 August 2020.

Sugar



- > Sugar prices were able to break two technical resistance levels – 12.30 US\$/lb and 13.00 US\$/lb – achieving as high as 13.28 US\$/lb during the past month.
- > Speculative activity has substantially increased. The latest Commitment of Traders report showed a net-long position of 177,000 lots. This was considered a structural movement to commodities on the back of US Dollar weakness, rather than an isolated improvement in sugar fundamentals.
- > Chinese import policy changes have increased export potential into this market, but sales have recently far exceeded expectations. The market is now trying to determine if China is ramping up purchases above normal levels, or trade flows are just reflecting tonnages previously smuggled into the country from Thailand.
- > **ICE 11 trading range going forward:** 11.50 US\$/lb to 14.00 US\$/lb, although we're currently encountering technical resistance at 11.33 US\$/lb and 13.28 US\$/lb.
- > **Closely watching:** Weather, speculative activity, trading volumes, Chinese buying and overall technical indicators.

KEY INDICATORS

	31/08/2020	Monthly change
ICE11 Prompt (JUL20)	12.6 US\$/lb	+0.74 US\$/lb
Brazilian Real/\$US exchange rate	5.39 BRL	+0.27 BRL
Brent Crude Oil	\$US45.81/barrel	+\$US1.53
Ethanol/Raw Sugar Parity	9.6 US\$/lb	+0.2 US\$/lb
Net Spec Position	179,000 (net long)	+107,000

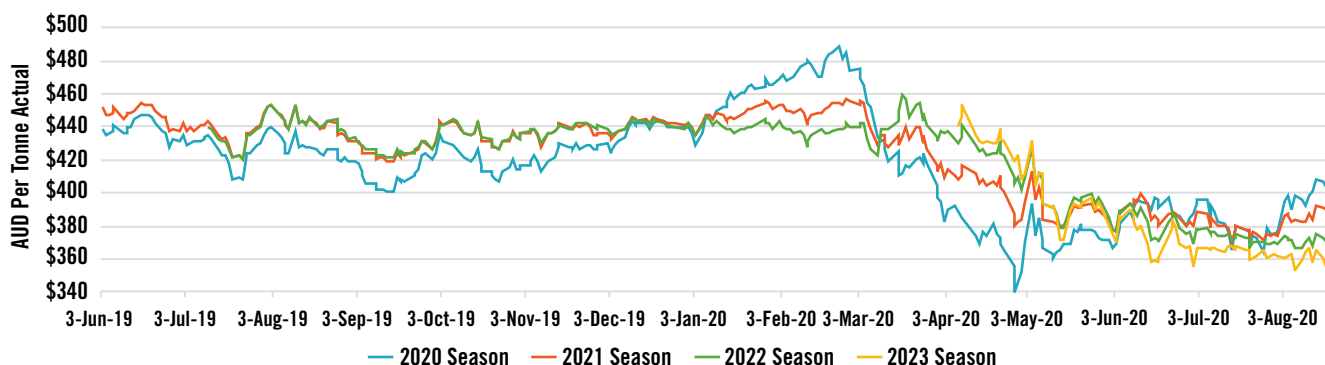
Currency



- > The Australian Dollar is still trading in one direction, remaining above 0.7100 against the US Dollar (USD) and reaching as high as 0.7360.
- > Broad USD weakness is still providing support to most currencies, while equities, iron ore, gold and overall commodities are enjoying bullish sentiment. The political and economic risk in the US means this upward trend looks set to continue, which will have a negative impact on Aussie exports and will need to be closely watched.
- > The US and China were due to review their progress in the Phase One trade agreement this month but this was delayed at late notice, causing concerns for the market. Officials suggested that the two sides were satisfied with the developments in the agreement, but other areas of the relationship have deteriorated and escalating tensions threaten to boil over.
- > **AUD/USD trading range going forward:** 0.7000 to 0.7400.
- > **Risks Ahead:** Second wave of COVID-19 in Australia, the US-China relationship, the next three months before the US Presidential election.

	31/08/2020	Monthly change
\$AUS/\$US exchange rate	\$US0.72685	+\$US0.0131
\$US Index	92.37	-2.6070
Chinese Yen/\$US exchange rate	6.87 CNY	-0.1347 CNY
S+P 500 Index	3,508.01	+231.9900
RBA Overnight Cash Rate	0.25%	-

RAW SUGAR PRICES



This is a whole-of-season ICE 11 price chart, based on the Target Price Contract's current 3:2:1 pricing ratio for the 2020 Season and 1:2:2:1 pricing ratio for the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Seasons.

Disclaimer: This report contains information of a general or summary nature and is based on information available to QSL from many sources. While all care is taken in the preparation of this report, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial, investment advice. You should seek your own financial advice and read the QSL Pricing Pool Terms, which are contained on QSL's website. Nothing contained in this report should be relied upon as a representation as to future matters or that a particular outcome will be achieved. Information about past performance is not an indication of future performance. The information in the report is current as at the time of publication and is subject to change, as the information is based on many assumptions and is subject to uncertainties inherent in any market. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this report.

QSL GROWER PRICING UPDATE

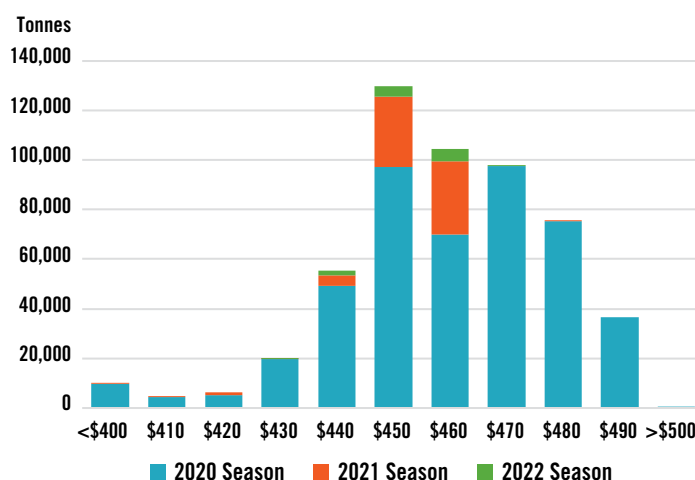


Grower Pricing



- > A recent rally brought 2020-Season prices above \$A400/tonne.
- > Forward pricing limits for the 2021 and 2022 Seasons have been raised to 70%.
- > QSL growers can now access the Defaulting Target Price Contract. This new pricing option lets growers place a forward pricing order that is automatically cancelled and defaults the tonnage to the Harvest Pool if the target is not reached by 15 April in the year of delivery. See your local QSL representative for details.
- > The Pricing Completion Date for the OCT20 contract in QSL's Individual Futures Contract and Self-Managed Harvest pricing options is 15 September 2020. Any tonnage allocated to this contract that remains unpriced after this date will be priced by QSL at the next marketing opportunity.
- > The 2020 Target Price Contract rolls on 21 September 2020. Check QSL's website and daily price email for details of the indicative roll adjustment.

QSL GROWER-MANAGED PRICING FILLS – 2020, 2021 & 2022 SEASONS



This chart captures all pricing achieved to date using QSL's Target Price Contract, Individual Futures Contract and Self-Managed Harvest products. Prices quoted at AUD/tonnes actual gross.

Brazilian Crop Update



Brazil is well known for its ability to produce either sugar or ethanol, and the impact its production can have on world trade flows. The current harvest has been closely monitored by the sugar industry, as Brazil was expected to maximize its sugar production, primarily due to disruptions to domestic ethanol consumption caused by COVID-19 at the beginning of the year. Major Brazilian cities have been through lockdown, causing economic turmoil and weakening the currency to new highs against the US Dollar.

This low exchange rate has encouraged Brazilian sugar producers to price their crop, and as a result, it is believed there is not much Brazilian sugar left unpriced this season.

On 1 August the Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA) released their crop update, indicating that 55% of the Brazilian harvest had finished, with 261 mills still in operation.

The main reasons attributed to the maximum sugar production were:

- > dry weather;
- > sugar prices and currency devaluation;
- > the drop in domestic demand for ethanol;
- > higher total recoverable sugars (ATR); and
- > improved harvest logistics.

The market anticipates that Brazil will continue to maximise sugar production for the rest of the season, resulting in sugar production between 36 and 37 million tonnes.

	2 nd half July 2019	2 nd half July 2020	Accumulated to 1 August 2019	Accumulated to 1 August 2020
Sugarcane (millions of tonnes)	49.9	50.5	309	326
Sugar (millions of tonnes)	2.481	3.416	13.363	19.728
Total Recoverable Sugars (ATR)/ tonnes of sugarcane	141.25	148.12	128.75	135.25
Sugar mix (% of cane used to make sugar)	36.94%	47.94%	35.25%	46.90%

Millers join calls to cut irrigation water prices

Queensland's sugar milling sector has followed CANEGROWERS' lead and is calling on the State Government to take steps to lower water prices for irrigators as a matter of urgency.

Australian Sugar Milling Council CEO **David Pietsch** said Queensland's sugar industry had played a vital role in supporting the State's economy during the COVID-19 pandemic and called on the government to repay that effort by making water more affordable for growers.

"We can help Queensland back on the road to recovery and support the Premier's focus on job creation, but not without a return to affordable water pricing levels," Mr Pietsch said.

A recent ASMC-commissioned report found that a 25% reduction in the price of irrigated water could deliver up to \$220 million in additional economic activity

and create an additional 140 direct and indirect jobs.

The government froze irrigation water prices in May, but only for 2020/21 following an earlier recommendation by the Queensland Competition Authority for further substantial price increases in the regulated Water Supply Schemes that service the State's cane fields.

Meanwhile, the LNP has made an election commitment to reduce irrigation water prices by almost 20% from July next year should it win the October poll.

CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** welcomed the ASMC's demand for more affordable water for irrigators.

"We're pleased to see the sugar processing sector supporting the position CANEGROWERS has had for years," Mr Galligan said.

"Reducing water prices and increasing the utilisation of existing irrigation assets is the fastest way to grow the industry as a whole.

"As well as encouraging additional cane production, much-needed price relief would deliver an economic boost to sugarcane irrigators and the coastal communities they support." ■

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Smarter irrigation delivering productivity gains

As costs of production rise and sugar prices fluctuate, smarter irrigation and rotational fallow crops are helping deliver productivity gains for next generation Mackay cane grower Steve Muscat. Assisting with the complex task of irrigation management is the Queensland Government's Farm Water Futures program.

BY JOHN FLYNN

A sharper than usual eye was being kept out as **Steve Muscat** inspected the rows of a freshly planted corn at his Homebush farm, accompanied by Mackay Area Productivity Services Senior Extension Agronomist **David McCallum**.

It was an impressive strike for the fallow crop, the second of three crops to be rotated through the block during a 24-month cane fallow.

Following the 2019 harvest, a crop of soya beans was zonally tilled into the trash blanket over the summer, with mill mud applied for nutrition.

The beans were harvested in May and sent to market as a successful cash crop. A bed renovation followed, prior to the corn being planted.

"I think the diversity from cane to soya beans, to corn, back to cane just gives such a variety of biology in the soil, it helps with soil health."

Just when everything appeared to be going right, the southerly march of the exotic pest fall armyworm into the Mackay region had Steve paying closer attention.

"Obviously we're extensively checking for bugs with the introduction of that fall armyworm, it's going to have its fair share of pressure in the crop. But at the minute it's looking good," Steve said as he inspected the leaves of the corn.

"From the planting rate and nutrition and water that we're prepared to give this crop, we're going to be targeting about 10 to 12 tonnes to the hectare in grain yield."

For Steve Muscat and his father Joe, who together work 280 hectares of cane land in the Homebush and Oakenden districts,

"Soya beans are renowned for putting a lot of organic matter back into the soil, supplying nitrogen for the following crop and helping biology."

alternate cropping is now an everyday aspect of their farming business.

The primary objective has been to boost soil health by planting legumes in cane fallows. However, in an environment of low returns for sugar, the focus has shifted to growing opportunistic crops during extended fallows to diversify income streams.

"This block here, it's actually under a 24-month fallow, we'll harvest the corn off it then we'll be going back into a soya crop in summer, then planted back into cane in April-June 2021," Steve explained.

"With sugar at 10-11 cents a pound, it's not much joy for anyone at the moment, so this is just one way of supplementing the income with some soil health benefits.

"With other blocks that we've done under the 24-month fallow system we see increased yields in the following cane crop."

The increased yields have come as no surprise to David McCallum who, as an agronomist, is a firm advocate of alternate cropping.

Although a grass crop such as corn will require nutrition to take it to harvest, planting legumes before and after the corn crop will ensure plenty of nitrogen is fixed in the soil and available for the next cane crop.

"I think the diversity from cane to soya beans, to corn, back to cane just gives such a variety of biology in the soil, it helps with soil health," David said.

"Soya beans are renowned for putting a lot of organic matter back into the soil, supplying nitrogen for the following crop and helping biology.

"It's income to the grower if he does it well and the prices are reasonable so there's benefits all-round."

IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT A CRUCIAL FACTOR

To manage a variety of crops working in rotation, irrigation needs to be precise. The Homebush and Oakenden districts rely on supplementary irrigation, especially in drier years.

The Muscats have invested heavily in irrigation infrastructure, including highly efficient, automated low pressure overhead centre pivot irrigators that use less electricity, minimise water use and reduce the labour requirement.

With a variety of blocks suited to different delivery systems, high pressure water winches, flood irrigation and even trickle irrigation systems are used to keep the crops hydrated.

To keep a close eye on farm irrigation requirements, two systems have been employed.

One of the systems is the use of five relocatable soil moisture sensors, known as GDots, which were funded under the Queensland Government's Farm Water Futures Program. These sensors measure

Continues next page ►

Pictured: (main) Steve Muscat with MAPS Senior Extension Agronomist David McCallum.



soil moisture tension - how hard it is for the plant to extract water - at one specific depth in the soil profile.

These relatively simple sensors have proven especially beneficial for the interim fallow crops. As the plant's root system grows, the sensor, a gypsum block, can be easily relocated.

"We've got the gypsum block in at about 150mm, right at the root zone", Steve explained as he demonstrated how soil moisture was being monitored in the corn crop.

"As this crop develops and the corn starts throwing secondary roots down, we'll remove the gypsum block and take that down to probably around 300mm.

"Your gypsum block should be where the root zone and the extraction point is."

When soil moisture is at full capacity, all of the fluorescent yellow flip dots on the sensor's display are showing. As the crop extracts moisture and the soil dries out, the dots flip over, so fewer dots are showing.

It's a simple system that is helping take the guess work out of timing irrigation events.

"Prior to the use of GDot and moisture probes we were sort of guessing when we were going to do our irrigation," Steve said.

"That might have been from a drive around the farm, to 'oh gee I think it's dry, we need to water', otherwise it was a scheduled program making sure our nutrition and herbicides are irrigated in to stop movement.

"We probably thought we were irrigating right before, but now we know."

In addition to the GDot sensors, the Muscats employ a more sophisticated system to monitor irrigation demands in their cane crops.

Five fixed soil moisture capacitance probes, strategically located on the farms, measure soil moisture at 10cm intervals from ground level to a depth of 80cm.

The fully encapsulated Enviropo probes are connected to data loggers that upload information via the 4G mobile network to an online interface.



Mackay Area Productivity Services has partnered with firm Outpost Central to deliver the technology and software applications, which allow growers to monitor their crop water use in real time.

"It's basically a website. We can access that information on our phone or our computers at home," Steve said.

"It's like a tradition in the morning when you're getting up to have your cup of tea or coffee, you're flicking through the weather and that's just the next page I go to, what our moisture probes have done in the past 24 hours."

Growers can also view data from neighbouring farms that are connected to the network, via the MAPS website.

The system was established with funding through the Queensland Government's former Rural Water Use Efficiency program. Ongoing upkeep of the network is being assisted with funding provided to MAPS via CANEGROWERS, by the Queensland Government's Farm Water Futures program.

On the ground it's allowing extension organisations like MAPS to keep the systems up-and-running and continue to assist growers in managing irrigation.

"The equipment does get damaged and does have wear and tear on it so this funding is really important for us to keep this project going," David said.

"It's really important for us as an extension organisation to keep working with growers on irrigation efficiency.

"To get better sugarcane you have to water it efficiently, be timely and not waste the water because power and water are really expensive."

The next step is to get growers connected to the irrigation management tool Irrigweb, where they can enter paddock data, soil data and irrigation techniques into a software system that will assist with management of irrigation events.

It's a work in progress in Mackay but with several growers already interested, there are hopes of delivering further efficiencies in irrigation management.

"Yield is determined from a very young age in most plants so our goal is to try to maximise our yield to maximise profitability of our business," Steve said.

"We don't want to be over-irrigating and wasting that commodity and we don't want to be under-irrigating and reducing our yields." ■



The Queensland Government's Farm Water Futures Program is funded under the Natural Resources Investment Program 2018-2022.





STRIVING FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SMARTCANE BMP

By John Barbetti

Smartcane BMP Facilitator - Tableland

Adaptability has been key to the Rankine family's farming success. From operating the north's largest saw mill in the heyday of timber industry to moving into cattle and mixed cropping when north Queensland's timber trade wound up in the late-80s, through to **Doug Rankine's** decision to plant cane in 1995 when the Tableland sugar industry was in its infancy - the family has never shied away from new challenges.

It is this ability to adapt that has seen the family embrace practice change and new technologies in recent years in a bid to lower costs and improve production through better weed, pest and irrigation management.

A willingness to take on big challenges also contributed to the decision by Doug's son, **Benjamin**, to pack in an engineering career and return to Atherton with his family to help his dad and mum, **Suzanne**, run the family farm.

Benjamin, who had been working in the resources sector, has been on a steep learning curve since returning in 2018, but is enjoying the challenge.

His wife **Renee**, and their three boys **Lachlan 7**, **Tristan 5** and **Leighton 4**, are also relishing their new environment and the natural surrounds.

Drones are used for crop inspections for pest control, growth and growth variations, vine infestations, grub damage, pivot irrigator problems and pig activity.

"It's been a good change from the corporate world to a family business," Benjamin said.

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

While crop rotation and fallow management form part of a pest and disease management plan, technology, in the form of a drone, has now been incorporated into the Rankine's management practices.

Drones are used for crop inspections for pest control, growth and growth variations, vine infestations, grub damage, pivot irrigator problems and pig activity.

Cockatoos are a major pest for the Rankine's fallow crops – especially peanuts and maize.

Drones are used to scare off the birds and monitor flock movements before they enter the crop.



WATER MANAGEMENT

Water security is of concern to Doug, who sees increased demand from other agricultural industries in the Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area.

Managing this finite resource is critical to achieving productivity and viability across their mixed enterprises.

The Smartcane BMP irrigation and drainage management module completed by the Rankine's as part of their accreditation ensures that the use of irrigation water is considered and meets best practice.

Accredited growers are required to calculate the soil moisture and crop water requirements before deciding on the amount of water to be applied.

Run-off is managed to prevent unnecessary losses of both water and sediment.

The Rankine family uses enviroscan and irrigweb technology to monitor and record their irrigation activities.

ACCREDITATION

The Rankine family achieved Smartcane BMP accreditation in April 2019.

Whilst the business' aim has always been to drive efficiencies, and by default,

deliver best practice, Smartcane BMP has brought an added focus to how the farm operations interact more broadly beyond the farm gate.

Benjamin sees the future of Smartcane BMP continuing to evolve; to incorporate more practices for key fallow crops, to complete the cane growing system and deliver a program that further meets the needs of dynamic growers. ■

Tree change: Renee and Benjamin moved back to the Rankine family farm with their boys (L-R) Leighton, Lachlan and Tristan in 2018. Before that, Benjamin's parents Suzanne and Doug (opposite) had managed the farm alone.



OAKY CREEK - THREE YEARS ON

By Christine Walker, CANEGROWERS Mackay

The weather was cool and fine and Oaky Creek was dry as a bone when *Australian Canegrower* visited Lightning Ridge Farming recently. In fact, it was so fine that Eton Irrigation Scheme Director **John Muscat** had been irrigating to keep moisture up to his cane.

The scene was vastly different from March 2017, when Cyclone Debbie crossed the coast bringing destructive winds and an associated wet weather system that pounded the region for three days, dumping more than 1200 mm of rain.

Oaky Creek, a tributary of Sandy Creek, 20 kilometres south-west of Mackay, was among several creeks in the region which became raging rivers in the wake of the cyclone. It overflowed into surrounding paddocks, removing top soil and dumping tonnes of rock and debris into cane fields.

The large washouts gouged gullies in productive cane land owned by growers along the creek, including Jan and John Muscat at Oakenden who supply up to 12,000 tonnes annually to Racecourse Mill.

Oaky Creek runs through their property and they lost a block of fallow when a deep new drain was gouged out through the middle of the paddock. The rocks deposited along the banks made the land unusable. Three years later, they're still picking debris.

Another 15-20 metres of headland and cane fields were washed directly into the creek. Around 100 tonnes of production across 10 hectares were lost, while irrigation pipes in other areas were exposed. The farm was without electricity for more than a week but unlike others in the area they still had road access.

It was the biggest, most destructive flood the Muscats had seen, despite having been through several cyclones. Tens of thousands of tonnes of sediment washed out to sea.

"I've lived in the area for more than 50 years," said John. "But I've never seen anything like this before."

John was among the growers fortunate enough to receive a government grant to help him repair the damage to his farm, but

he says he still spent thousands of dollars of his own money in filling damaged areas with 10,000 cubic metres of soil.

In the process, John created a four metre deep recycling pit to provide soil to repair damage to the paddocks.

Of course, it was beyond John and his neighbours' capability to cover the cost of repairing the damage to the creek.

CANEGROWERS Mackay and Reef Catchments stepped in to jointly fund an assessment of the impact caused by the cyclone to Oaky Creek and other waterways, partnering with the Whitsunday Rivers Improvement Trust.

The assessment (undertaken by Alluvium Consulting) included a week of in-field surveys and site inspections.

Oaky Creek was placed at the top of the list of the most significantly affected sites and creek lines throughout the Mackay Whitsunday region.

Funding was secured under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) Category D, jointly provided by both State and Federal governments.

The application was successful for both Stage 1 'urgent' and Stage 2 activities.

Three community consultation meetings were organised for stakeholders, including landholders near the creek, CANEGROWERS Mackay, Reef Catchments, Mackay Sugar, Mackay Regional Council, Ergon, Sunwater, and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.



Pictured: (page 32) Oaky Creek following restoration work. (Left) John Muscat stands near the recycling pit he built to provide soil to repair damage to his paddocks; (top) Damage wrought by Oaky Creek on the Muscat farm; (left) Three years on large rocks in the paddocks are still a problem.

"Oaky Creek ... overflowed into surrounding paddocks, removing top soil and dumping tonnes of rock and debris into cane fields."

Stage one funding of \$1.67 million was directed to eight priority sites, of which Oaky Creek was one. Initially Oaky Creek was to receive just \$800,000, but Reef Catchments accessed additional funding and in all about \$1.3 million was spent.

Spatial analysis and hydrological modelling created a creek restoration plan that addressed community concerns whilst also stabilising the waterway using rock reinforcement and/or large woody debris. A riparian buffer zone was extensively revegetated for long-term stability.

The Oaky Creek restoration was the first key project as funding became available. Further 'shovel ready' projects were undertaken as funding was able to be sourced.

CANEGROWERS Mackay worked to ensure growers were an integral part of the evaluation, planning and final project. While not every idea could be incorporated because of funding constraints, local knowledge influenced the design and end result.

Following the completion of the project in June 2019, Reef Catchments, with funding provided by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries under the Reef Water Quality program, continued to support landholders to maintain the revegetation.

Reef Catchments had planned to hold a stakeholder event this year, including a field walk to highlight and celebrate what has been achieved since the first community consultation meeting held in March 2018 but unfortunately, COVID-19 has so far prevented this. Plans are afoot to bring it about later in the year.

In the meantime, there is a PowerPoint presentation which highlights the scale of the works undertaken and what has been achieved in a relatively short amount of time with the support of the surrounding landholders.

A copy can be obtained by contacting CANEGROWERS Mackay on 07 4944 2600 or Reef catchments on 07 4968 4200. ■

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

MOSSMAN

Mossman's weather and crush turned a corner in mid-July, with the district experiencing mainly fine, sunny days, cool nights and minor lost time since then.

At the end of Week 10 (23/8/2020) Mossman Mill had processed a total of 308,007 tonnes of cane for an average of 11.87CCS and an additional 54,061 tonnes of Mossman cane had been toll-crushed at the Tableland Mill.

Coastal growers supplied a total of 227,660 tonnes and Mossman Tableland growers supplied 134,408 tonnes.

CCS continues to be quite low but the coast is starting to see some improvements in weekly averages so it now sits at 11.49, while the Mossman Tableland growers average is 13.30.

The crop estimate has dropped below 700,000 tonnes to 685,000 tonnes of cane. Mill availability has improved since the start of the season and sits well above 80% most weeks. As at 23/8/2020, Mossman Mill is approaching 45% cut.

With the finer weather, growers have been able to get ground ready for planting. Mossman Agricultural Services (MAS) has opened its cane seed plots and allocations have been made and sent to growers.

The Hot Water Treatment tank is now up and running.

MAS has used some Department of Agriculture water quality funding to purchase a number of weather stations for the Mossman area. They are hoping to install them on cane farms and allow all growers access to the information through a website or app.

CANEGROWERS Mossman has been invited to be part of developing a Terrain NRM water quality project in the Mossman basin. The first meeting was held on 18 August and involved reps from MAS and the Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership.

This project, once signed off by the Minister, will be funded under Reef Trust funding as the Great Barrier Reef Foundation funding is focused on higher priority catchments.

The three-year project is to be designed to provide real productivity benefits for growers but to also have measurable water quality outcomes for government.

Pictured: preparing the ground on the Fasano farm.



CAIRNS

The weather has remained fine with sunny days and quite cool nights. Taking advantage of the good conditions, growers are busy in the paddocks.

Mill performance has been pleasing. The base CCS at both mills will remain unchanged for the present.

Please remember, any members intending to use the bean planter are asked to make contact with the office so plans can be made. The mud spreader is also available for use by members.

INNISFAIL

With the impact of wet weather on the harvest abating, there has been good supply to the mill. As of 18 August, 28% of the pre-season estimate of 1,433,525 tonnes had been crushed.

The South Johnstone Mill performance has continued to be excellent so far this season, maintaining an average crushing rate above 524 tonnes per hour with only minor stoppages. The planned daily crush of 12,500 has been achieved on a number of days so far. CCS levels have eased back, mainly due to the wet weather.

With the easing of conditions in the paddock, much of the district is in the midst of planting. In a reversal of recent trends, 31.6 hectares of ex-banana land is being returned to sugarcane production. The grower is busy preparing the land to plant this year.

TULLY

The wet weather in June/July continued into August, with the Tully district receiving almost 100mm in the first three days of the month. The rain should boost this year's crop, which is welcome after the 2019 season achieved one of the lowest tonnes per hectare in some years.

Following the early wet weather, conditions fined up for the month and growers have been busy in the paddocks, with ground preparation and planting underway.

As a result, there is an increase of farming equipment on the road travelling from one farm to another. Road users must

be vigilant, particularly when operating oversized farming equipment.

Harvesting operations are going well, with a rise in yield and CCS.

CANEGROWERS Tully representatives and growers travelled to Brisbane recently to speak at the Senate Inquiry into the regulation of farm practices that impact water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef. The Inquiry was well attended, with representatives from multiple cane growing areas, as well as other entities from across Queensland.

HERBERT RIVER

The CANEGROWERS Herbert River AGM was held on 24 August. Guest speaker, CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan, spoke about some prominent topics including CANEGROWERS State election focus and strategy, AgForce Cane – what they say vs the reality, Senate inquiry actions and outcomes, and what's next for CANEGROWERS and its priorities for members.

In harvest/crush news:

Week 7: Victoria Mill completed a cleaning intermission. Shredder chokes resulted in a stop to inspect and change tips on A Shredder. Macknade Mill also completed a short, planned stop for a shredder inspection. Victoria Mill crushed 133,177 tonnes for the week and Macknade Mill crushed 72,103 tonnes. The mill average for CCS for the week was 12.27.

Week 8: Both Victoria Mill and Macknade Mill undertook a maintenance day and a chemical clean of evaporators. Victoria Mill crushed 146,500 tonnes for the week and Macknade Mill crushed 44,000 tonnes. The Herbert River mills CCS average

for the week was 12.55. The crop in the district is continuing to cut above the estimate.

Week 9: During Week 9, Victoria Mill had a 12 hour stop due to a bump in the 66,000 V Ergon power supply. It was reported that a Brolga hit a power line, resulting in a surge causing the protection system in the mill to trip. It took two hours for Ergon to reconnect power so that the mill could recommence crushing. The fluctuation in power caused several issues to the control gear, variable frequency drives, 5 MW generator exciter and other mill equipment. It took a number of hours to work through the issues and restart factory.

Victoria Mill also had a chemical clean on the evaporators and normal maintenance stop. Victoria Mill has crushed around 125,000 tonnes for the week with an average CCS pf 12.85. Macknade Mill crushed approximately 70,000 tonnes for the week.

BURDEKIN

The 2020 crushing season for the Burdekin remains behind schedule due to a combination of wet weather stoppages and breakdowns. Finish dates are being recalculated and it would be unlikely for mills to report a season finish by the end of November, with a December finish looking probable.

There is much talk around a La Nina weather pattern and a wet finish to the season. Growers are hoping for a good run to get as much cane out of the paddock and into the mill as quickly as possible.

Father-son growers and contractors Gary and Ashley Stockham (pictured) are pleased to be back in the paddock harvesting cane after a stoppage for wet weather. Further wet weather was predicated after this photo was taken, but thankfully there were no serious downpours.

Since February 2020, CANEGROWERS Burdekin (CBL) has initiated several meetings with the other Burdekin grower collectives to gauge the appetite for working more closely together as we feel that the region can achieve more as larger unified group. Representation in the Burdekin has

been fractured for far too long which only serves to dilute grower messages to the miller, government and community. The level of crossover amongst the collectives is high as we are all representing similar issues on behalf of our members. It makes sense to work more collaboratively where we can, providing that our underlying values and leadership principles are appropriately aligned.

The CBL Board is pleased to announce that we have agreed to establish a closer working relationship with one of the other collectives, Pioneer Cane Growers Organisation Ltd (PCGO), for the purposes of collectively negotiating a CSA with Wilmar, as



Pictured: Ashley and Gary Stockham.

Continues next page ►

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

BURDEKIN

well representing our members on other common issues where appropriate, e.g. rates. CBL and PCGO are committed to working together and will pursue the collective bargaining opportunity as a joint venture and we do not propose to form any new corporate entities for this purpose. This will enable us to capture the synergies of our combined expertise and tonnages for the benefit of our members when negotiating with Wilmar, whilst each retaining our own autonomy to service our respective members as we currently do.

Council rates are a topical issue in most growing areas and the Burdekin is no exception. The CBL Board met with two Councilors from the Burdekin Shire Council to discuss rates and diversification. We look forward to working with the Council on addressing these important issues for our members.

PROSERPINE

At the conclusion of Week 8 (22 August), Proserpine Mill had surpassed the half-million tonne mark of the 2020 crush.

Throughput over the past few weeks has been reduced due to a combination of wet weather and mechanical issues. Significant time was lost in mid-August due to a broken belt on the conveyor that carries ash from No. 1 and No. 3 boilers.

With fine weather forecast for the next few weeks, it is hoped to recover the lost time.

CCS continues to steadily rise and the season-to-date average now sits at 13.12.

Highest CCS for the month was a rake of first ratoon Q240 from the Lethebrook productivity district which tested 16.25. At this stage, the other stand-out varieties in terms of CCS are Q183 and Q208.

SSP has been busy this past month with planting one-eye setts. SRA has advised the Tissue Culture seedlings have been delayed and will now be delivered in late September.

MACKAY/PLANE CREEK

Marian Mill led the three Mackay Sugar mills with 92,304 tonnes of cane crushed for the week ended 16 August (Week 10), followed by Farleigh with 62,902 tonnes and Racecourse with 53,168. The year to date total is 1,712,445 tonnes with a CCS of 12.70.

Mackay Sugar's 2020 season is more than 30% complete, but the weather has been inconsistent, which has hindered harvesting. On a positive note, the rain has brought some excellent strikes of plant cane throughout the area with minimal irrigation costs.

The new Peri rail line in the Racecourse area has now opened, improving deliveries and operations at Racecourse Mill.

However, the predicted finish to the season is around the middle of December, even with a late night train at Racecourse and Farleigh.

Wilmar's Plane Creek Mill crushed 51,524 tonnes on 15 August (Week 8) after rain the previous week put a temporary stop to harvesting. Crushing rates steadily improved towards the middle of the week.

Only a marginal improvement in CCS of 0.19 units over the previous week was achieved, taking the season CCS to 12.80.

The highest CCS was 16.3, from a rake of Q208 first ratoon cane from the Dawlish productivity district.

A car collided with a brake wagon at a flashing light intersection on Hoey Street, Sarina in August. Fortunately, the locomotive was travelling at low speed and there were no serious injuries. In a separate incident, a loco driver reported seeing a vehicle zig-zag through boom gates guarding an active intersection on Anzac Street.

These incidents are a timely reminder of the need for all road users to take care around the cane rail network.

Crop estimates remain at just under five million tonnes cane for Mackay Sugar and 1.23 million tonnes for Plane Creek.

Mackay Sugar Crushing Figures

Week ended: 16 August 2020 (Week 10)

Farleigh	62,902 tonnes (YTD 506,101.31) (100.1 % of original estimate)
Marian	92,304 tonnes (YTD 700,113.97) (106.9 % of original estimate)
Racecourse	53,168 tonnes (YTD 476,229.33) (103.7 % of original estimate)
Total	208,374 tonnes
YTD	1,712,445 tonnes
CCS Week	13.65
CCS YTD	12.70

Plane Creek Mill Crushing Figures

Week ended: 15 August 2020 (Week 8)

Cane crushed	51,524 tonnes
YTD	396,884 tonnes
Average bin weight week	3.77
Average bin weight YTD	3.75
CCS Week	13.70
CCS YTD	12.80

BUNDABERG

Following the public hearings of the Senate Inquiry into the evidence for reef regulations, Dr Peter Ridd has been through the transcripts and come up with a series of interesting points that he calls 'confessions' and which CANEGROWERS Bundaberg has been promoting and has published on our website www.bdbcane growers.com.au

For example, Confession 1 reads:

The Senators extracted some remarkable information from various GBR science institutions during the Senate Inquiry. We will go over some of these in the next few posts.

The Australian Institute of Marine Science stated that the "inshore Reefs", which they claim are affected by river plumes carrying farms mud and pesticides, are only 3% of the Reef. Half of that 3% is north of Cooktown, where there is no agriculture.

Even for most of the inshore reefs near the agricultural areas, the measured pesticide concentrations are extremely low or undetectable. Mud concentrations from the rivers on those inshore reefs are about 1% of the natural concentrations that occur naturally by resuspension by waves.

So 97% of the Reef is totally unaffected by farm mud or pesticides. And there is only a tiny affect on half of the remaining 3%. How much closer to negligible can the farmers influence be?

In other news, Bundaberg Sugar mills processed 68,803.35 tonnes for the week ending 15 August 2020, bringing the season-to-date total to 412,825.43 tonnes. \

The average CCS for Week 6 was 14.34 CCS. The season CCS average for Bundaberg Sugar Mills is at 14.04 CCS.

The highest individual CCS for Week 6 was 16.70 units for varieties Q252 plant in Millaquin and Q240A plant in Bingera.

Base CCS has been increased to 14.3 at Millaquin and 13.8 at Bingera. As in other years, this is monitored closely and is increased in line with the actual results achieved.

ISIS

The 2020 crushing season has progressed well with a few minor harvesting interruptions due to showers at the end of July and during August. Despite these disruptions and an associated reduction in CCS, it has provided some much needed benefits for plant cane and ratoons.

	Tonnes Crushed	Tonnes Crushed YTD	CCS Week	CCS YTD
Week 1	33,783.09	33,783.09	13.82	13.82
Week 2	39,397.16	73,108.25	14.19	14.02
Week 3	37,730.87	110,911.12	13.81	13.95
Week 4	47,997.69	158,908.81	14.02	13.97
Week 5	42,848.27	201,757.08	13.86	13.94
Week 6	47,826.38	249,583.46	14.33	14.02
Week 7	52,106.68	301,690.14	14.72	14.14

As at end of August over one third of the 2020 crop had been crushed. Week 4 saw the highest CCS supplied by a grower who farms along the Elliott River. This grower recorded the highest CCS for three out of the first four weeks of the 2020 season.

In Week 1 the grower supplied Q252 1st ratoon, which recorded the highest weekly CCS at 16.5 units. Then in

Continues next page ►

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ISIS

Week 3 the same grower supplied Q240 1st Ratoon at 15.89 units of CCS, which was the highest CCS for the week and in Week 4 the very same grower supplied an Isis Mill 2020 season high CCS of 16.60 units from the cane variety Q240 1st ratoon.

Q240 continues to dominate supply and the highest CCS for quite a few weeks. Week 5 saw a Cordalba grower with the highest CCS for the week with 16.46 units from Q240 2nd ratoon. Week 6 saw a Sharon grower with a CCS of 17.2 for Q240 AP and Week 7 saw a Cordalba grower record CCS of 16.77 for their Q240 2R.

Pat Daley has been conducting our Irrigation and Tariff Assessments with growers during August and will return to the Isis district mid-September. Growers are encouraged to phone Jo at the office to make an appointment with Pat – 30 mins of your time could save you big \$'s.

Recently, the Bundaberg Regional Council (BRC) issued rates notices and have used a rise in land valuations to significantly increase the rates levied on Category 9 Agricultural land. *Agricultural properties in the Bundaberg region will contribute*

over 12% of the BRC's General Rates this year, an increase from 6% last year. This is unfair to our members.

CANEGROWERS Isis, CANEGROWERS Bundaberg and Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers we have united as the Bundaberg Food and Fibre Alliance with support from the Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) to work together on strategic issues of importance to agriculture and agricultural producers in the Bundaberg Region.

These issues include Paradise Dam and water security, COVID-19 and regulations. Our first united call to action is to get this unjust and unconscionable rates decision reversed. Together we will be mounting a concerted campaign to have a motion approving the Budget rescinded and the budget recast such that all ratepayers pay no more than a CPI increase as promised in the pre-election rhetoric.



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ROCKY POINT

The Rocky Point Mill crushed a total of 40,621 tonnes of cane during Week 5 of crushing, with an average CCS of 12.71.

Our estimate is currently sitting at 322,224 tonnes, so we still have a long way to go.

The weather has fined up. The soil profile has plenty of moisture, and some growers have now begun planting.

The second phase of the Fire Ant Self-Management Program has kicked off, with another batch of bait delivered for pilot participants.

MARYBOROUGH

Maryborough District has enjoyed some kind weather for the past month with a couple of wet weather stops and very few issues with the mill.

As at 28 August, we had crushed 194,648 tonnes, with CCS still performing well at 13.87.

The highest CCS for the week was 16.7 for Q252 1st ratoon at Tinana.

It has been a busy period during August with board meetings, industry meetings, herbicide meetings and grower meetings.

The district board is now progressing discussions with Isis Mill to ensure we are able to manoeuvre for 2021 and should MSF sugar outline their intentions for the future, we can adapt as needed.

The concern around economic impact without the mill also has us now investigating government support for infrastructure that may be needed.



MINIMISE YOUR RISK TO EXTERNAL FINANCIAL FACTORS

Why do growers irrigate their crops? That is a question, we're sure, you already know the answer to.

What might not be front of mind is that the very same reasons you irrigate can – and should – apply to managing the accounting and financial wellbeing of your business.

While irrigation reduces the dependency on external variables such as rainfall while improving crop reliability it also provides increased flexibility across your farming operations. The same applies to your accounting and business advisory needs. By working with professionals, you are minimising your risk to external financial factors while maximising flexibility; allowing you to focus on what you do best while knowing you are partnered with a team who knows your business and goals.

It's a philosophy we live and breathe at Bennett Partners Chartered Accountants here in Mackay and we are excited to announce the next stage of our own growth story as we ally with another like-minded Queensland regional firm to become **Sammut Bulow Bennett Partners**.

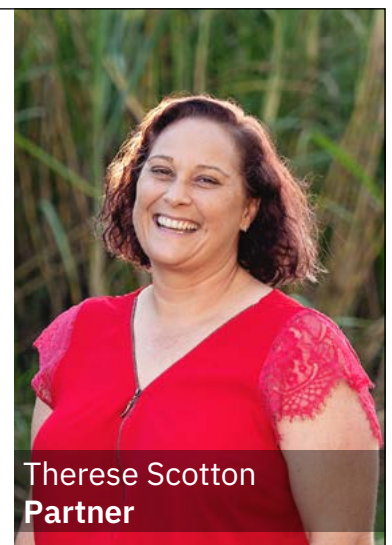
So, while our name and branding will slightly change in the near future, our friendly local team and genuine professional service is **here to stay**.

We're proud to work with our regional growers and look forward to **partnering with you** to achieve your personal, business and financial goals. ■



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WE'RE WORKING FOR MEMBERS

CANEGROWERS POLICY UPDATE



Mick Quirk

Environment and Sustainability Manager
CANEGROWERS

Little effort by government to explain new chemical regs

The Queensland Government has recently made changes to the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Regulation. These changes, effective from July 2020, mainly relate to record-keeping and were made with no consultation.

To compound this error, there has been little communication about the new regulations and what they mean for growers.

Growers have had to find out about these changes during compliance visits by Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) compliance officers. This is obviously far from satisfactory.

From what we can gather from discussions with DAF staff, the new requirements for growers include:

- All herbicide and other pesticide applications require a record that includes date, location or block number, crop stage, product, method of application and nozzle configuration, rate and weather conditions including temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, cloud cover and amount of any rain.
- For certain products (ametryn, atrazine, diuron, hexazinone), growers in reef catchment areas also require a receipt or other record of purchase of the herbicide, and growers using these products will need the required chemical application competencies.

There are contradictions in the regulations over the specific training competencies required to apply chemicals and CANEGROWERS has sought clarification from DAF. However, growers who already hold competencies in chemical use from previous training events will be able to meet the new requirements as well as the ongoing requirements for Smartcane BMP.

There is also confusion over the source of weather data. Common sense would suggest that growers source temperature and relative humidity from their nearest weather station, but DAF officers have indicated this may not be adequate. CANEGROWERS will be promoting the commonsense approach.

There will be few changes for record-keeping for Smartcane BMP growers – the only additions for future records are cloud cover and rainfall on the day of application.

Smartcane BMP accredited growers will not be the target for compliance visits.

These changes are apparently due to harmonisation of chemical use regulations across the states. But, in effect, they have simply imposed unnecessary detail and added to growers' frustration and confusion with increasing red tape.

A lot of this confusion and concern could have been avoided had industry been properly consulted before the rules came in and if the government had made real efforts to publicise and explain the changes and their implications for growers. ■

The Queensland Government has recently made changes to the Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Regulation. The changes are effective from July 2020, relate to record keeping and were made without consultation.



Burn Ashburner
Senior Manager - Industry
CANEGROWERS

Critical input into research

The sugarcane industry's main income is from selling a commodity (raw sugar) into a distorted world market. We are price takers, so increasing productivity and profitability to remain competitive is critical.

This makes research, development, extension and adoption across the industry (not just on farms) fundamental to remaining competitive.

The Australian sugarcane industry has a proud record of doing that and has boxed above its weight for many years.

I often hear that Australia has exported its expertise and thus the rest of the world has been able to catch up without doing all the clever thinking. This demonstrates that our industry is, or has been, ahead of the game. However, there has been no real yield increase for many years.

There are many reasons for this, including more than 100 years of monoculture and decades of compaction from mechanical harvesting creating poor soil health.

Coupled with climate change, an exhausted genetic pool through conventional breeding, and a lack of research outcome adoption, this has made it difficult to increase yields.

We do have challenges in front of us!

Sugar Research Australia, under its new CEO, has instigated a Strategic and Operational Review to determine the sugarcane industry's strategic direction and priorities for research.

There may be about 3,500 different grower views, eight different miller views, at least two different government

views, and multiple different service provider and researcher views on this.

CANEGROWERS has an important role to play in being part of the solution by bringing a consolidated grower position to the table and working with the other stakeholders to get a balanced direction for SRA.

The clever use and leverage of our precious and limited resources need to provide us with an advantage over our competitors, who may have significantly more investment dollars.

We need to get balance between solving the incremental change issues, which are important, and looking at the more blue-sky possibilities for future or transformational change.

The sugar industry cannot spend too much energy on fighting for a bigger piece of the research pie for a particular sector, region or cause. This process must be bigger than that.

There needs to be a clear direction worked out with SRA to keep the industry strong for another 100 years and CANEGROWERS will be part of that. ■

CANEGROWERS has an important role to play in being part of the solution by bringing a consolidated grower position to the table and working with the other stakeholders to get a balanced direction for SRA.

Warren Males

Head - Economics
CANEGROWERS



Getting to know your relatives

Most of the long-standing structures in the sugar industry are there for good reason and, from time to time, it's helpful to look back and reflect to understand why we do the things the way we do.

Recently, some growers have questioned why we use relative cane payments schemes, rather than simply paying for cane on actual CCS.

At their core, relative payments schemes take account of the strong seasonal pattern in sugarcane quality and the reality that growers harvest their cane several times during the season.

At the beginning and the end of each season, CCS levels in cane delivered to a mill are characteristically lower than they are towards the middle of the season, when the cane is mature.

Season length is determined by many factors, with crop size, mill capacity and expected weather patterns being the principal drivers in setting each season's start date.

Once the start date has been determined, mills need a reliable supply of cane to enable the efficient production of raw sugar.

Without some form of adjustment, all growers would seek to deliver their cane during that part of the season when CCS is at or near its maximum.

Clearly, such an approach would not fit with providing a consistent supply of cane across the season.

Relative cane payment schemes were first introduced in Australia in the 1930s to solve the grower/grower equity issues arising from group harvesting rosters that typically see a grower's cane harvested several times during the season.

In these schemes, the CCS in each grower's cane deliveries is measured and compared against the mill average for the week.

This is then compared with the average quality of cane supplied across the whole season.

For example, a consignment of cane delivered in the first week of the season may record a CCS of just 9 units. If the mill average CCS in that same week is 9, the cane will be worth just as much as a consignment delivered later in the season when the CCS reaches 15 units and the mill average for the week is 15.

Both deliveries will receive the same payment. Another grower who delivers cane of higher CCS than the average in any given week will be paid more than the average. Similarly, those that deliver cane with lower CCS will be paid less than the average.

The average of the past five years CCS is usually taken as the starting point. At the end of the season, after the actual mill average CCS is determined, the grower's cane payment is adjusted so that the CCS is measured relative to the season's actual mill average.

This is reviewed and may be adjusted through the season in accordance with the terms of the cane supply agreement.

These calculations were originally made to determine cane payment entitlements. They are now used to calculate the amount of economic interest sugar for which a grower is entitled to choose a marketer and manage the price risk.

The challenge for each individual grower continues to be delivering cane that exceeds the mill average CCS in the week it is harvested. The challenge for all growers is to optimise yields and overall CCS.

Get to know your relatives, they are grower friendly. ■

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Males'.

At their core, relative payments schemes take account of the strong seasonal pattern in sugarcane quality and the reality that growers harvest their cane several times during the season.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WHAT IS IT AND IS IT GOOD FOR



WHAT IS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Collective bargaining arises where a group of similar businesses with common objectives and requirements negotiate together.

The 'strength in numbers' of businesses working together increases the likelihood of negotiating better terms and conditions with the large processors and manufacturers that they deal with.

There are also benefits for the large processors and manufacturers dealing with only one united group. Negotiation costs are usually reduced and efficiency in finalising agreements increased.

OTHER INDUSTRY EXAMPLES

Collective bargaining is common in primary industries. Examples include dairy, chicken growing and oyster farming. Other industries, such as hotels, retailers of plumbing and hardware equipment, and newsagents also engage in collective bargaining.

ACCC APPROVAL

As a general rule, collective bargaining is not permitted unless it is authorised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). All of the above examples of collective bargaining have been approved by the ACCC.

The mighty sugar industry has enjoyed probably the most efficient and effective collective bargaining arrangements of any industry.

For nearly 100 years, until government deregulation in 2006, CANEGROWERS was effectively authorised by statute to collectively bargain on behalf of growers with mill owners.

If collective negotiations came to a deadlock, then a dispute resolution system was available to resolve the dispute with the outcome binding on all growers and the mill owner.

The *Sugar Industry Act* passed in 1999 specifically provided for exemptions from ACCC approval for collective bargaining of cane supply agreements.

CANEGROWERS ACCC AUTHORISATION

These exemptions continue in the current Act, but some mill owners have expressed a view that the exemptions for collective bargaining on behalf of growers did not extend to negotiating things like by-products, such as molasses, and on-supply agreements related to sugar marketing issues.

Indeed, some mill owners refused to negotiate with growers collectively about those issues.

CANEGROWERS responded to this restrictive mill approach by successfully applying for ACCC approval for collective bargaining.

The approval covers CANEGROWERS members and future members and relates to cane supply agreements and related agreements associated with the supply of cane to mills.



By Chris Cooper,
CANEGROWERS
Legal Advisor

GROWERS?



The approval specifically covers by-products and any related products from cane.

The ACCC stated in its authorisation decision:

137. Given the perishability of cane, which needs to be crushed soon after harvest¹²⁰ and transport costs, the supply and acquisition of sugar cane occurs in localised areas around a mill. The majority of growers only have one option to supply cane to their local mill. There is generally only limited competition between growers in neighbouring cane growing districts, as well as between neighbouring mills when acquiring sugar cane from growers.

138. Regarding the supply and acquisition of sugar cane, the ACCC also notes that cane growers tend to be small businesses while mill owners are typically large often multinational companies.

There is no doubt the ability to collectively bargain helps level the playing field in negotiations with mill owners.

There is also no doubt that the Queensland Parliament's grower marketing choice amendments and the Commonwealth's Sugar Code of Conduct have helped to address an imbalance in bargaining power between growers and millers.

The ability to refer disputes about cane supply agreement terms to arbitration, as occurred in the Tully area this year, is an important tool in protecting and advancing growers' rights and interests regarding supply of their sugarcane.

The benefits of collective bargaining, however, are at risk of erosion if there are several groups attempting to bargain with the same mill owner.

CANEGROWERS has been collectively bargaining for growers for more than 100 years and continues to do so for the vast majority of growers.

The more united growers are, the greater the strength and impact of collective bargaining.

Many mills have changed ownership and industry policies and strategies for mills are now driven more by overseas considerations than the local Australian industry.

Growers have met industry challenges in the past and managed to maintain the industry at the forefront of world sugar industry technology, efficiency and innovation.

Growers have access to sophisticated marketing arrangements and marketing control of their own grower economic interest sugar, to the envy of overseas sugarcane producers.

Fair and reasonable cane supply agreements remain the cornerstone of grower profitability.

Collective bargaining through a strong and well-resourced grower representative body, acting as bargaining representative for as many growers and tonnes as possible, is the best option to protect and advance grower interests.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any CANEGROWERS member wishing to discuss any aspect of legal matters should contact their local CANEGROWERS district office or call me on Free Call 1800 177 159, for free initial legal advice. ■

A collective, grassroots voice with a powerful impact

Whenever I travel, I always check in with the local CANEGROWERS office. From Mossman to Rocky Point, there's 13 of them covering every sugarcane region.

A grower once said to me that membership starts at the front door of your local office and when I visit, as well as catching up with the District Manager and staff, I usually bump into a grower or two.

It's great to have a chat to see what is top of mind, understand what is keeping them busy, what's working and what's troubling them. Often they are getting some paperwork sorted or following up on a CANEGROWERS service such as payroll or insurance.

We talk about the mill and how the season is shaping up. When they hear I'm from the Brisbane office, I inevitably get questions on reef regulations, the sugar price or about something they read in *Australian Canegrower*.

I always learn something and often I can point to some information that is useful for their business.

I firmly believe it is the local cane-growing community and the grassroots representation by elected members that drives our organisation.

The elected members are all growers, offering their time - they are growers involved at every level of CANEGROWERS policy development and they direct our activities and priorities.

Through the support of our members, the 13 districts and Brisbane office bring a collective grower voice to our efforts which are focused on contributing to a future for the whole industry.

A POWERFUL IMPACT

Strong advocacy and representation from strong membership gives members a legitimate voice and negotiating strength on important issues.

CANEGROWERS views are heard by the community, government, politicians and industry through our networks and media presence locally and at a state, national and international level.

CANEGROWERS voice, through your grower representatives, was loud and clear at the recent reef regulations Senate Committee inquiry.

Eight CANEGROWERS districts were represented by growers and staff - the Cairns Region, Tully, Innisfail, Herbert River, Burdekin, Proserpine, Mackay and Bundaberg.

In August, CANEGROWERS called out the Queensland Government on a farm data tender which would have put at risk the privacy of members' personal information. The tender was withdrawn.

SUPPORTING YOUR BUSINESS

CANEGROWERS has remained focused on ensuring agriculture is treated as an essential service and that the sugar supply chain remains open during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

From road access for agricultural machinery to water and electricity pricing, CANEGROWERS has kept pressure on regulators and put the industry perspective and needs forward.

CANEGROWERS participates in the Australian sugar industry's trade and market access activities to retain, enhance and build export markets for our raw sugar. And we continue to push the WTO action against India.

MEMBER MEETINGS ARE PLANNED

Over the past six months, CANEGROWERS has held 12 membership engagement meetings via video conference with CANEGROWERS District Boards.

Feedback from the meetings has been positive. The format provides an opportunity for timely engagement and good discussion.

We did manage to hold a meeting in Tully prior to COVID-19 restrictions being imposed and face-to-face meetings in other districts are still the preferred approach. Video meetings allowed for agile and timely discussion and will be used more frequently for discussion and feedback.

CANEGROWERS is planning face-to-face member meetings in all districts in the lead up to Christmas. The advice around COVID-19 can change quickly, yet I'm looking forward to getting back out and about.

Stay tuned for details and keep an eye out as we may be in your local CANEGROWERS office for a chat soon. ■



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

FIRST 5 LINES FREE* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

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

Next deadline is **23 September 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, such as farm machinery, etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at \$11 per line incl GST. Only prepaid ads will be accepted.

Graham Twyford Machinery Sales Pty Ltd

Specialising in Used Cane
Harvesting Equipment Sales



2014 JOHN DEERE 6170M
4,100 hours front suspension 40K
Power quad transmission
Fitted to a Carta Single Axle elevator
Double door delivery
New 23x126 tyres fitted to bin.
Very Good Order!

AUSTOFT 7700 L10 cummins engine
12"x 6 blade chopper
Plastic primary extractor hood &
standard toppler.
Good Tracks.
Suit small group or
wet weather machine.

CANETEC BILLET PLANTERS 2500
Rubber belt cane feed
2.5 tone capacity
two in stock now.

Whole Topper late model CASE as
new complete with hydraulic valve.

JD shredder topper 3510-3520.

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

IN STOCK NOW
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CHOPPER DRUMS
Suit '05 Cameco to JD 570.
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www.gtmachinerysales.com.au

Mossman-Tully

HBM Plant Cutter, GC, \$2000. Cane Blower
\$700. Innisfail area. Ph: 0488515259.

Howard Rotary Hoe - HR50-305. Ph:
0427327977.

1/2 Tracks to suit Case Wheelie 7000. New
salt chains, load rollers and drive sprockets.
Reconditioned idlers, grousers in good
condition. Complete with weld on mounting
brackets. Ph: 0488190023.

2004 Cameco Harvester VGC \$150,000 incl.
GST. Ph: 0427655168.

Hardhose Irrigator 400 metre Southern
Cross, Hydraulic Controls. \$35,000.00 inc.
GST. Ph: 0407914098.

1x Massey Ferguson 6475 6t side tipping
haulout tractor. Also 1x 6t side tipper
available. Low hrs. VGC. Can sell separate.
Ph: 0740562063.

Herbert River-Burdekin

Rims 20.8-38 tractor. No Tyres. \$200 each
or 3 for \$500. Ph: 0417070844.

Deutz-Fahr 6.30t tractor for sale. FWA with
4330hrs. Air Condition cab. Front weights.
Tires 30%. Always in shed. \$25,000 + GST.
Ph Gordon: 0428423250.

6 ft Page Slasher, adjustable skids. Good
condition. Ph: 0747776148.

Leyland Truck Tandem Drive and twin steer 8
new rear tyres front 90%, 29 foot body, very
good condition, no rust. Ph: 0400730328.

Mackay-Proserpine

Case Track Harvester 2016 New Tracks &
Elevator chain, tidy machine serviced ready
to use \$298K; 2 x 10T Side Tippers (2 & 3
axle trailers, dual tyres) bins can fit on trucks
\$20k ea; 2013 Iveco Trakker 6x6 (off road)
Cab Chassis low kms \$85K; Multiplier \$2K.
All + GST. Proserpine. Ph: 0408755453.

Trash incorporator; double row marker with
hydraulic ram; double row fert box; 3-row
trash rakes; 3-row multi-weeder; cutaways;
McLeod 5-leg rippers; grubbers for ratoon
& fallow; cane break pushers; Moller Billet
Planter. Ph: 0417612883.

2004 Iveco Eurotech Prime Mover,
automatic transmission airbag suspension,
PTO hydraulics, sleeper cab, UHF radio.
GVM 24.5T/GCM 75T \$19,800 + GST. Ph:
0419700761.

Half tracks to suit Toft 7000 \$5,000 + GST.
Mackay area. Ph: 0407969883.

International 776 tractor, good condition
\$7,700. Massey Ferguson 290, excellent

JOHNNY FARMING COMPANY

New Hydraulic Heavy Duty

OFFSETS

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



New Heavy Duty SLASHERS

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

Johnny Farming Company

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

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Experienced cane farmer
helping farmers **BUY** and
SELL. Several qualified
buyers waiting.

More listings needed.

Steve Rossi
0410 600 247
steve@cairnssouth.com.au

 **Professionals**
Cairns South

Classifieds

condition \$13,750. Both tractors one owner from new. All neg. Ph: 0438162972.

EHS 15in 8 blade chopper drum, 95ml blade \$8,000 incl. GST. Ph: 0407179571.

Set McLean half tracks to suit Cameco/Austoft. 2 sets sprockets. Ph: 0427186570.

Chisel plough 3350 wide or 11' 2230 deep or 7'6", 11 legs (+4 spare legs) with leaf harrows \$3,850. Ph: 49595883 or 0407643441.

50 lengths of 4inch x 9metre aluminium irrigation pipes and sprinklers. Price negotiable. Ph after 6pm: 0749545179.

1995 Austoft Cane Track harvester \$40K; Bonel Billet Planter \$9K; Westhill Trash Extractor \$200; Westhill 1t Fert bin \$300; Hodge 4 furrow disc reversible plough \$1K; Cummins 6 Cyl head-new in box \$500; BHC Duster \$100; Montabert 750 Rockbreaker \$4.5K; Montabert 125 Rockbreaker \$2.4K. All + GST. Ph: 0418185663.

15 mgls Kinchant Dam water. Allocation on own deed. Price negotiable. Ph after 6pm: 0749545179.

3x coulter double disc opener assemblies. 30% coulters RFM ddo. Suit 100mm bar. \$900 + GST each. Ph: 0429876441.

Moller wide shute billet planter with dual chain feed, side chemical tanks. Does a really nice job, results can be viewed on farm in last years plantings \$18,000 +GST. Ph: 0428611714.

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

12t self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder. Very good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

6t side tipper on Leyland tandem. Good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

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

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

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

Track transporter; 2x6t side tippers; V10 Mercedes motor; Robot running gear. All GC. Ph: 0427617807.

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.



PH: 1800 899 885

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**ROCCA ST- 200
SupaTill**



**ROCCA ST- 350
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**ROCCA ST- 350
SupaTill**



ROCCA SupaTill RANGE,
REVOLUTIONIZING THE DISC TILLAGE INDUSTRY

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Australian Design





Rainfall Report

Brought to you by Sunsuper

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)			Average rainfall (mm)
	Month prior (Jul 2020)	Month to date (1 Aug-31 Aug)	Year to date	Jan-Aug
Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman)	61.2	7.2	1,525.8	2,332
Mareeba Airport	0.4	9	474.4	669.3
Cairns Aero	33.8	10	1,173.6	1,645.5
Mt Sophia	79	49	1,937	2,728.6
Babinda Post Office	152.1	109.6	2,526.3	3,514.1
Innisfail	84.4	102.8	2,531.3	2,953.5
Tully Sugar Mill	144.3	141	2,678.4	3,409.4
Cardwell Marine Pde	47.5	14.1	1,410.3	1,712.5
Lucinda Township	42	0	1,652.5	1,762.9
Ingham Composite	38.9	5.2	1,607.2	1,676.4
Abergowrie Alert	8	2	580	1,143.4
Townsville Aero	15	0.8	775.6	915.7
Ayr DPI Research Stn	62.8	2.8	1,024	751.7
Proserpine Airport	54.4	19.6	771.6	1,135.2
Mirani Mary Street	36.4	24.7	952.9	1,147.4
Mackay MO	37.6	29.6	1,143.4	1,255.1
Plane Creek Sugar Mill	0	0	1,012.6	1,365.5
Bundaberg Aero	24.2	35.4	481	682.4
Childers South	35.2	37.6	424.6	584.9
Maryborough	62.8	24.4	659.8	814.4
Tewantin RSL Park	131.6	22.2	1,252	1,151.3
Eumundi - Crescent Rd	105.6	13.6	1,199.6	1,235.5
Nambour DPI - Hillside	120.6	17.4	1,261	1,313.6
Logan City Water Treatment Plant	102.6	19.6	907.8	749.4
Murwillumbah Bray Park	155.8	26	1,433.4	1,147.3
Ballina Airport	174.8	55	1,619.4	1,311.8
New Italy (Woodburn)	139	28.6	1,291.7	975.3

 **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. Weather report sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology Recent Rainfall Tables.

Hodge Inter-row Fertiliser Applicator, tows behind 4 wheeler \$3,700. Carryall, Extra Heavy Duty, 1800mm W x 800mm D x 850mm H, quick hitch set up \$1,500. Ph: 0428236165.

Bundaberg-Rocky Point

800L Silvan tank with 8.5m Yannie Creek boom, electric controls, H/D irvin legs as new \$8000. Arched toolbar with S tynes \$800. Bonel 1 ton fert bin with 2 1/2" toolbar 1 1/4 tynes \$1500. All + GST. Ph: 0427629434.

24 plate shearer offset disc \$7,920; Bonel 4 furrow rvsble square plough \$12,100; John Deere tractor 6910 \$35,200; 7 Tyne H/D Subsoiler \$5,500. All incl. GST. Ph: 0408761463.

Farmall-AV \$5,500. Whole stick planter, Whole stick cutter & Cotton King \$1,500 (for all); Trailco irrigator & hose reel \$6,000. Trash incorporator \$10,000. All + GST. Ph: 0419577110.

Track Infielder, Toft 3306 cat engine, 6 tonne hi lift bin \$35000. Hi Rise international spray tractor, 5 row spray Invin legs, 2 800ltr tanks, 200ltr 24D tank \$30,000. Quinco fert bin, Stainless steel worm 1t capacity, 9 discs \$10,000. All + GST. Ph: 0447532490.

3 tonne 3 row stool splitter stainless steel box and worm. Isis area. Ph: 0488415781.

8t High Lift Tipper Bin \$10,000. TM165 & Toft 8t High Lift Tipper Bin 4700 hrs \$60,000. 2x Southern Cross 160 acre water winches. Water ram just refurbished. 2x 200 meter 4" hoses with ends. 120 Meter 4" hose with ends. 80 meter 4" hose with ends \$20,000. All + GST. Maryborough area. Ph: 0428879341.

Old grey bonel 3 furrow disc plow. Criton Mark 2 Harvester with 135 Massey Ferguson Tractor attached. 2x 6000 Austoft Harvester Elevator Sleys 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.

NSW

2010 John Deere 3520, 10,000 Engine hrs (current), shredder topper, 20" bent grouser plates, side knives, 34" elevator extension, Blaky bisalloy elevator floor, 4 blade EHS choppers, steering wheel or joy stick steering, Greenstar 6000 GPS, hydraulic tilt basecutter box, performance engine tune. Harwood area. Ph Andrew: 0419635033.

Wanted

International 1066 tractor or similar, prefer not going and open station. Proserpine area. Ph: 0428283454.

1200 x 20 Truck Tyre for haul out. New or second hand. Bundaberg area. Ph Michael: 0418353501.

Massey Ferguson 4WD tractor: low to reasonable hrs; 170-200hp; wide tyres. Mackay area. Ph: 0417542783.

Property to lease cane land Marwood/Balberra location. Ph: 0408011983.
STL shares wanted. Ph: 0408448227.

Property

Pleystowe cane farm. On 2 Lots. Approx 190 acres all up. Teemurra 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.

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.

STICKER SPOTTER COMPETITION



CANEGROWERS sticker spotters are out and about in all sugarcane regions looking for vehicles proudly displaying their CANEGROWERS Growing Together bumper sticker.

Is this your number plate? If so, you're a winner!

408 MXR 859 LNS BEN 41 132 RZQ 985 DBV

Can't find your bumper sticker? Need another one for another vehicle? Contact your local CANEGROWERS office.

How to enter:

- ✓ Make sure your CANEGROWERS bumper sticker is on your vehicle
- ✓ Wait for one of the CANEGROWERS sticker spotters sees it as you drive around your district
- ✓ Check the next *Australian Canegrower* magazine for a list of number plates
- ✓ If yours is listed, contact CANEGROWERS Brisbane office to claim a prize.
Phone 07 3864 6444 or email info@canegrowers.com.au



Don't waste

YOUR VOTE

unite with fellow growers to ensure there's a

STRONG GROWER VOICE

Get to know
CANEGROWERS
candidate
Stephen Calcagno
inside this issue

*in the management of
Queensland's bulk sugar terminals*

- Sugar Terminals Limited Board election will be held at the company's AGM on 21 October 2020
- Grower shareholders (G-Class) can influence who sits as G-Class Directors on the STL Board
- Voting can be completed in person or by proxy
- For details on how to vote and candidate profiles, visit www.canegrowers.com.au