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CANEGROWERS provides free crop insurance* to members. The premium is paid by CANEGROWERS on behalf of members and will cover growers against accidental fire, hail or transport related losses to their crop. This initiative is designed to give members peace of mind that their crop is covered, while also lowering operating costs for growers.



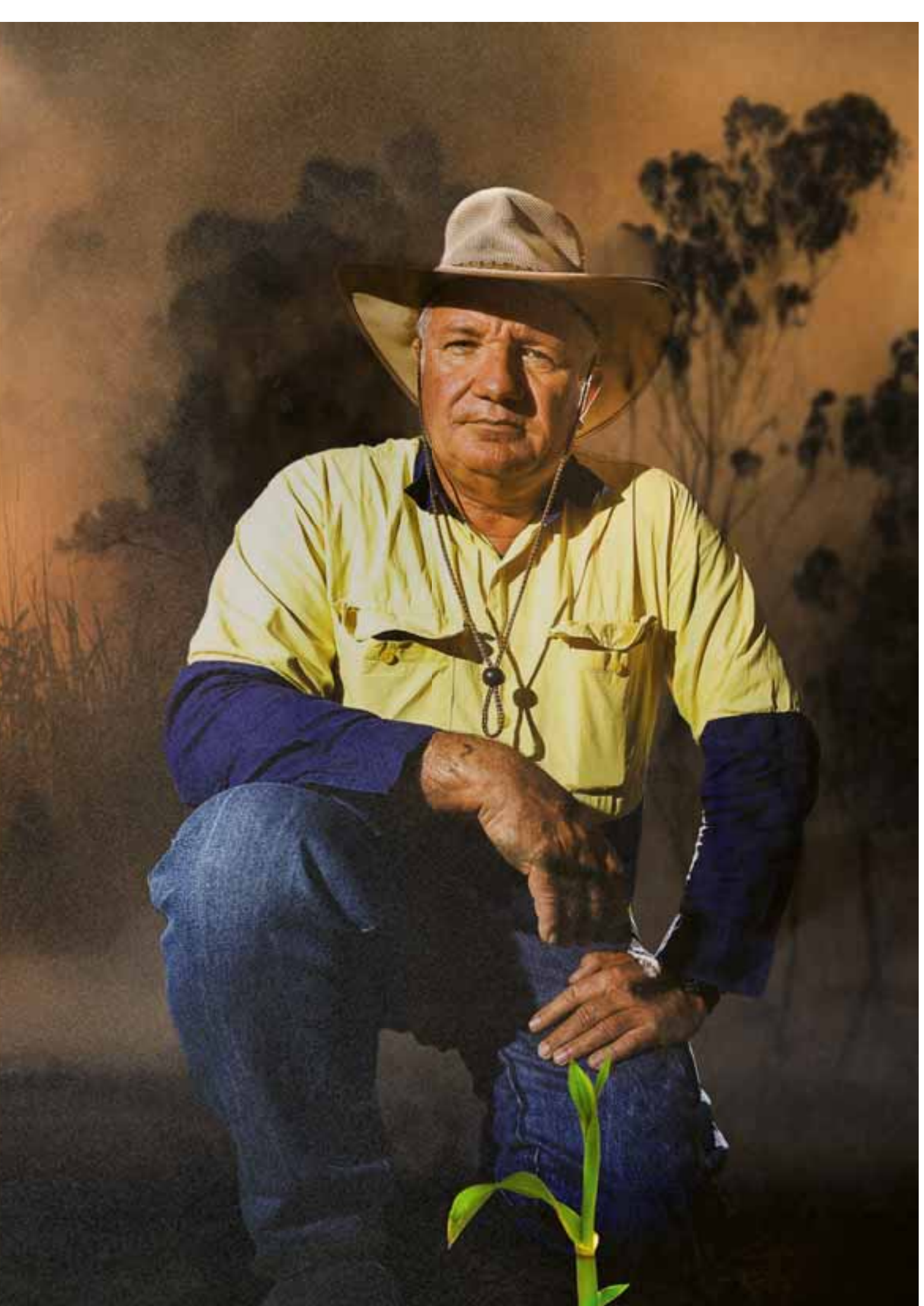
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COVER IMAGE:

Problem solving, innovating, and managing the needs of two busy enterprises are all in a day's work for Bundaberg grower Ryan Dingle.

Photo Credit: Robyn Devine

Read more on page 24

Peace of mind for members

Free crop insurance for sugarcane growers

CANEGROWERS will once again provide members with free crop insurance for the 2023 season, allowing growers to get on with running their business, safe in the knowledge their crop is covered.

This initiative is designed to lower growers' operating costs by providing free cover against fire, hail, and transport losses.

CANEGROWERS will pay the CGU premium on behalf of members, up to a cap of 75,000 tonnes per

membership, after which the premium will be deducted from the grower's membership levy rebate at the season's end.

"This is a pretty unique benefit of CANEGROWERS membership. I don't know of any other ag group that provides free crop insurance for its members," CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens said.

"We trialled it last year as a way of easing cost pressures on growers at a time when input costs were

extremely high. And while input prices have dropped quite a lot in recent months, the Board felt the crop insurance initiative was a significant enough benefit to growers to warrant maintaining the offer."

CANEGROWERS crop insurance assisted 13 growers in 2022. Local CANEGROWERS organisations may offer a top-up facility or district-wide adjustment. For more information contact your local CANEGROWERS office. ■

Qld's green jet fuel industry set to soar

In another step towards making Queensland a sustainable aviation fuel hub, the state government has signed a memorandum of understanding with Qantas pledging to "work together to explore the potential use of sugarcane by-products in the production of biofuels."

The focus will be on developing a Queensland-based SAF supply chain as Australia is yet to manufacture SAF at a commercial scale.

Earlier this year, the government, Qantas, and Airbus expressed their support for Jet Zero Australia to commence a feasibility study for a new biorefinery in Queensland, which could manufacture up to 100 million litres of SAF a year.

Deputy Premier Steven Miles said growing a SAF industry is one of those opportunities that will fuel Queensland's economic future and contribute to decarbonisation targets.

"With a rich supply of feedstock and skilled workforce, Qantas, and the world, has recognised Queensland as an ideal location to establish an Australasian SAF supply chain," said Deputy Premier Steven Miles. ■

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Natural disasters, droughts, financial stress and geographic isolation can be regular challenges faced by people in regional Queensland, often impacting significantly on entire communities and families.

However, the impact on mental health and wellbeing can be overlooked and, often

due to the remoteness, the lack of access to appropriate services can be more challenging than in urban areas.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has developed a valuable resource *Mental health and wellbeing on the land* to support individuals and families struggling with

these challenges. The book can be downloaded free from www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld and is intended to support families while raising awareness and assisting communities to break down the barriers that prevent people from seeking help. ■





The 2023 harvest is officially underway with Tableland Mill kicking off this year's crush on 22 May with Tully Mill expected to follow on 26 May.

The sound of harvesters firing up will undoubtedly fill growers with hope for a better season than last year, when weather delays, a larger than expected crop, and poor mill performance saw crushing extend through Christmas and well into January in some districts.

With sugar prices at record highs and above average yields predicted, growers, harvest crews and mill workers are keen to get cane through the rollers.

"The weather is pretty spectacular at the minute. We have blue skies and cool temperatures, so perfect weather for harvesting," CANEGROWERS Tableland Chairman Claude Santucci said.

"We had a bit of a cold snap come through a few days ago, so that will help push up the sugar content a bit, although it will be a while before we start getting decent CCS levels.

"The early cut cane from last year is looking really nice, but anything that was cut after late November

is looking pretty poor, and we also have grub damage in a few areas. Overall we're expecting the crop to be down 10% on last year.

"But if we can keep this weather and the mill has a good run, I'm hopeful we can have a pretty good 2023 season."

It's anticipated that the rest of Queensland's mills will start firing up from early June, if the weather continues to be favourable.

According to Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) the starting estimate for the Queensland sugarcane crop is 30.55 million tonnes, up by about 400,000 tonnes on the pre-season 2022 forecast but down by about 700,000 tonnes on what was eventually processed.

ASMC is hoping the return to El Nino conditions will be helpful and limit the weather induced disruptions to

harvesting and milling operations, as was the case during the past two years. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is predicting an 80% chance of at least a moderate El Nino and the Bureau of Meteorology's long-range forecast, issued on 18 May 2023, indicates below median rainfall is likely for much of Australia from June to August with temperatures to remain warmer than the median.

"The start of the crush is always an exciting time of the year and growers are optimistic that 2023 could be a bumper year for the industry," CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens said.

"There is a very positive feeling around the industry at the minute, with the industry on the verge of a transition to a range of new and growing opportunities in the bioeconomy that rely upon sugarcane for feedstock.

"The export of raw sugar will always be the foundation of our industry, but we know there are many other complimentary opportunities that are emerging for the industry and we hope that this coming season, combined with a strong price, will provide the basis for new and increased investment into these exciting projects. I wish all growers, harvesting workers and mill staff a timely, dry and safe crush." ■

WOMEN MAKING THEIR MARK IN THE INDUSTRY

Like most agricultural sectors, Queensland's sugarcane industry has long been viewed as a male-dominated space except for at the annual Women in Sugar Australia Conference, where men are truly overshadowed by influential and dynamic women.

This year's conference held in the picturesque Bargara, a coastal town and suburb in the Bundaberg region saw delegates gather from around the state. The two-day conference provided ample opportunity for inspiring presentations and networking, visits to the local attractions and the chance to taste the Bundaberg produce.

All aspects of the industry participate in the Women in Sugar networks throughout the districts, including CANEGROWERS district directors and staff, scientists and researchers, agronomists, farmers, advocacy and communication professionals, and many others – all of them women.

The 2023 conference was opened by local member Stephen Bennett MP who spoke of the proud history and connection with the sugar industry of the Bundaberg region.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Chairman Mark Pressler provided an overview of the district's sugarcane season and predictions for the upcoming harvest. He also spoke about how the current high global sugar prices have lifted growers' spirits.

Guest speakers included Lisa Deveraux and Cathy Myles from Sugar Research Australia (SRA) talking about the gender and diversity within SRA and science, and shared valuable experiences where women had provided positive mentoring.

Presenters Glenn Harris from Queensland Sugar Limited and Pia Piggott from Rabobank unpacked the reason for the current global sugar prices, including what is happening in other countries as well as trends for future pricing.



2023 Women in Sugar conference participants

Robyn Devine, CANEGROWERS senior communications officer discussed the current topical workforce shortages in the industry, and provided an update on CANEGROWERS' workforce campaign.

The sugarcane industry is situated in relatively highly populated regions on the east coast and has not previously had major workforce shortage issues, compared to other agricultural industries. This is changing and is expected to become a bigger issue in the future with an older workforce retiring, limited

new entrants and increased competition from other sectors.

CANEGROWERS has been investing in strategies to attract workers to the industry via mixed media campaigns, promoting and sharing workforce noticeboards, facilitating working groups and building alliances to better understand the issues within the industry.

CANEGROWERS is focused on finding ways to attract and retain workers and is currently exploring various pathways to achieve this goal, including offering skills training courses like Business Essentials workshops. Additionally, the organisation is working with peak educational bodies, such as the Primary Industry Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) and Kimberlin Education, to develop a range of sugarcane school-based curriculum resources to influence teachers to include sugarcane in their portfolios.

“Those of us who work in the industry have always known the vital role women have played”

Georgie Somerset, AgForce General President, discussed her passion for advocating rural Australia and her journey as a female in the world of agriculture.

Angela Williams, Head of Engagement and Advocacy at Growcom, provided an informative presentation on the *Walking the Wire* resource.

The *Walking the Wire* e-kit is a resource delivered by the Queensland Farmers' Federation and supported by the Queensland Government, that provides guidance for rural women in securing their financial future. *Australian Canegrower* provided a detailed article in the November 2022 issue.

Sightseeing and opportunities to explore the local Bundaberg area and cuisine rounded out the conference providing the participants the chance to connect with like-minded women and talk about the future of the industry.

CANEGROWERS sponsors the annual Women in Sugar Conferences recognising the value and input of women in the industry.



Bundaberg Brewed Drinks



Lisa, Cathy and Chris from SRA



Mark Pressler



2023 Women in Sugar conference



Bundaberg Women in Sugar organising committee

“Those of us who work in the industry have always known the vital role women have played and continue to play in driving our success,” CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens said.

“Thankfully, over the past few decades, female roles have moved from largely behind the scenes work to more prominent professional and leadership positions.

“Today we have women leaders at the head of our milling and research bodies, and also on CANEGROWERS district and state boards.”

It is a testament not only to the progressive nature of the industry, but also to the hard work and determination of the women working in it and Misty Hosking, Bundaberg Agribusiness Manager for National Australia Bank and a member of the Bundaberg Women in Sugar committee,

believes there is definitely value in having diversity amongst the leadership roles.

“If you have management from the same background, you only get one train of thought, where different ages, cultures, genders and backgrounds are mixed, it brings diversity of thought,” Misty said.

Tegan Attard from Attard Farms is a relatively new member to the Women in Sugar network and said the camaraderie of events like the conference was also an attractive part of the experience.

The presentations were encouraging, thoughtful and inspiring, helping to build a warm community network.

“It makes you feel not so alone,” Tegan said.

According to Bundaberg Women in Sugar Chairperson Krystal Golchert the conference went as planned and all the committee's hard work paid off.

“It is nice that such a diverse group of ladies can come together to network, the conference provides opportunities that we may not always have working on the farm,” Krystal said.

Krystal agreed that there is nothing but positives when women take up leadership roles.

“I think women sometimes think differently to men and you need a broad range of ideas to come up with solutions.” ■

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION VITAL AS NEW ERA DAWNS FOR INDUSTRY

CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens has said that strong leadership is more important than ever if growers are to have a seat at the table as the industry enters a new era of diversification.

"Now more than ever, it's important growers have strong cooperative leadership to help navigate the evolving nature of the industry," Mr Menkens said.

"The export of raw sugar will always be the foundation of our industry, but we are also on the cusp of an evolution that could see Queensland sugarcane take a leading role in the Australian bioeconomy.

"More and more, we are seeing government and commercial partners turning towards our industry as they seek out sustainable feedstocks for everything from sustainable aviation fuel to alternative proteins.

"It's vital that, as these projects and discussions take shape, there is a voice in the room advocating for growers and ensuring growers' needs are at the centre of all diversification opportunities," he said.

The capacity of CANEGROWERS to service the current needs of growers, but also deliver on the future opportunities for the industry, was front of mind when the CANEGROWERS Queensland Board of Directors met in Brisbane recently for their annual review of the state membership levy.

Board members maintained the current policy and increased the state levy by CPI, taking the levy to 21c per tonne for 2023 (ex GST). The board also lifted the membership levy cap from 55,000 tonnes to 75,000 tonnes. Growers will be able to see full levy details for each district in the Regional Round-up section of this magazine.

The Board also decided to once again provide free crop insurance for members in 2023. This insurance will indemnify growers against fire, hail, or transport losses to their crop to a level of \$35 per tonne.

CANEGROWERS will pay the premium on behalf of members on the first 75,000 tonnes, after which the premium will be deducted from the membership levy cap rebate.

Mr Menkens said the levy increase would ensure the organisation could continue to supply a full suite of support services to growers, while also continuing its important advocacy work on behalf of the industry at state, national and international levels.

"For almost 100 years CANEGROWERS has been working to help growers maximise their productivity and profitability, while advocating for fewer unnecessary regulations and restrictions on the industry," Mr Menkens said.

"Support from our members has underpinned the traditional advocacy work of CANEGROWERS that delivered initiatives like secure competition in marketing, trade policy that is opening up markets for Queensland sugar, and helping Australia to secure a win against market-distorting Indian sugar subsidies at the WTO, plus other important initiatives that have put the industry on the front foot, not least of which is the industry-led best management practice program, Smartcane BMP.

"The success of this program has in turn enabled us to not only argue against ever-increasing environmental regulations on growers, but also position Queensland as a world leader in the export of sustainable sugar. ■

BOARD VACANCIES

Sugar Research Australia is seeking to appoint two non-executive directors to join the SRA Board.

Are you interested in the future of the sugarcane industry, have experience in farming, finance, research or technology and looking for a new venture?

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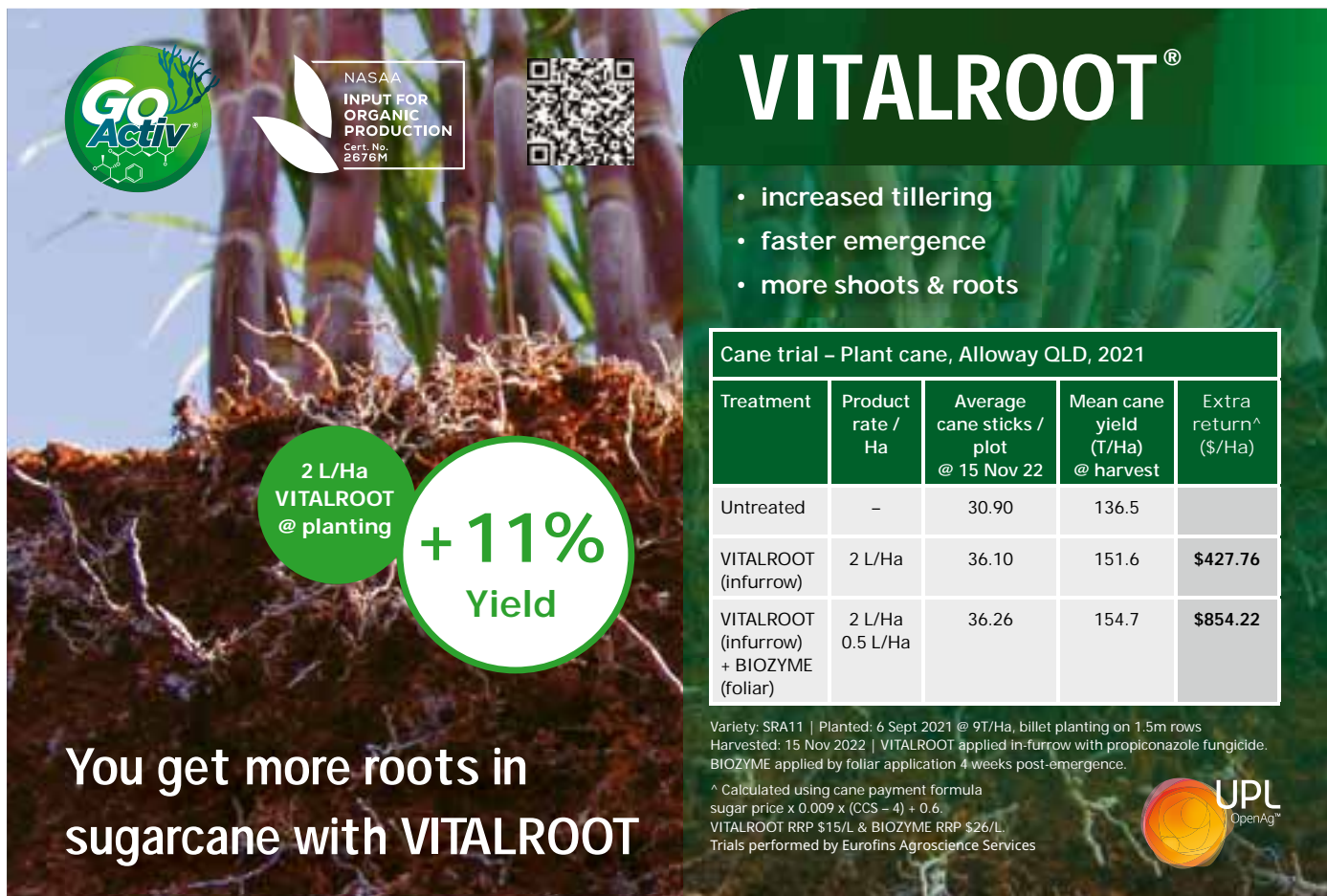
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Treatment	Product rate / Ha	Average cane sticks / plot @ 15 Nov 22	Mean cane yield (T/Ha) @ harvest	Extra return^ (\$/Ha)
Untreated	–	30.90	136.5	
VITALROOT (in-furrow)	2 L/Ha	36.10	151.6	\$427.76
VITALROOT (in-furrow) + BIOZYME (foliar)	2 L/Ha 0.5 L/Ha	36.26	154.7	\$854.22

Variety: SRA11 | Planted: 6 Sept 2021 @ 9T/Ha, billet planting on 1.5m rows
Harvested: 15 Nov 2022 | VITALROOT applied in-furrow with propiconazole fungicide.
BIOZYME applied by foliar application 4 weeks post-emergence.

^ Calculated using cane payment formula
sugar price x 0.009 x (CCS – 4) + 0.6.
VITALROOT RRP \$15/L & BIOZYME RRP \$26/L.
Trials performed by Eurofins Agrosience Services

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CONSTANT VIGILANCE ON BEHALF OF GROWERS

BY DAN GALLIGAN
CEO CANEGROWERS

We continue to see announcements about the strong potential for our industry to evolve and participate in the emerging bioeconomy. There is growing awareness that our industry can be the backbone of what the Queensland Government suggests could be a \$3 billion sustainable aviation fuel industry. Yet there are many more existing and potential projects afoot.

As Chairman Owen Menkens and I travel the state, meeting with growers and district Boards, we are explaining the CANEGROWERS strategy to make these opportunities a reality.

Importantly, though, we are not naïve. Opportunities do not materialise if we ignore the current issues.

So, as we all shift focus to the amazing logistical feat of taking 30 million tonnes of sugarcane from paddock to packet, CANEGROWERS will continue to be vigilant, ensuring that we have growers covered when it comes to addressing the needs of the here and now.

There are plenty of examples of the day-to-day operations CANEGROWERS staff undertake on behalf of growers.

Our district and Queensland Cane Growers Organisation staff have just finished a range of meetings with the crucially important cane auditors.

We have also held a series of workshops with transport regulators and operators, while our insurance team have met with service providers and underwriters.

At the district level, CANEGROWERS has completed complex discussions around cane supply and agreed performance measures with some mills.

Now that the harvest is underway, many of these same staff will shift focus to be ready to help growers with permitting arrangements, mill bin delivery, and harvest equity arrangements.

At QCGO our policy managers are working on issues that underpin and, in some cases, could threaten farm profitability.

With the predictions of an El Nino and associated drying conditions, we are concentrating resources towards responding to current water and electricity price reviews.

While harvesting conditions may improve, the need for increasing energy and water usage to irrigate valuable cane for next season will also come under pressure.

Trade remains our best bang-for-buck policy area and while the UK Free Trade Agreement comes into force, we are also working on the EU negotiations to provide even more market access opportunities for Australian sustainable sugar.

The strategy to be able to certify and trace sustainable sugar from Australia is gaining momentum and this year we will continue to work to turn this into a hip pocket outcome for growers.

And, literally while the harvesters are traversing the paddocks across Queensland, our staff and industry colleagues will be telling the story of the industry at the Ekka in Brisbane and in the development of new curriculum-aligned school resources.

Grower support for CANEGROWERS is what gives us strength as an advocate and the resources to try to solve the challenges growers face in the current season, while also crafting solutions that may not be realised for years, possibly decades to come. The ability to work across the immediate and long term is a remarkable feature of CANEGROWERS.

So, as you harvest this year's crop, I hope you feel assured that your organisation is there to support your efforts not just today, but also your plans for the future. ■

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Shikira and Sarah

TALKING ALL THINGS CANE

CANEGROWERS project officer Shikira Kalatzis and CANEGROWERS Cairns Region district manager Sarah Standen were actively talking all things cane to 210 delegates from all over Australia, including many agriculture teachers, at the 2023 PIEFA Conference.

PIEFA's Growing the NextGen of Food and Fibre Education conference, held in Canberra last month, showcased the latest in agricultural education and provided the opportunity for educators to connect with industry representatives.

Project officer Shikira, who leads the implementation of education strategies for CANEGROWERS says attending conferences, like PIEFA, provide opportunities to speak directly with agricultural teachers and pitch the concept of teaching about sugarcane in the classroom.

"There were some outstanding speakers at the PIEFA conference that shared their insights and experiences, as well as educators who are changing the way agriculture, food and fibre is taught," Shikira said.

"It was inspiring to see industry representatives who are exploring different methods to engage with young people, and academics and researchers devoted to

developing innovations for the agricultural sector.

"During one of the workshops, PIEFA gave teachers a sneak peek into our new sugarcane teaching resource by showcasing a lesson and example of the sugarcane modelling task."

This resource aligns to Design and Technologies (Australian curriculum) and the Agricultural curriculum (NSW syllabus) and targets Years 9-10 students and will be finalised and available for teachers in the coming months.

This is the second curriculum-aligned resource for schools that CANEGROWERS has



collaborated with PIEFA, the first Sugarcane: One plant, Many products designed for Years 5-8 was launched in December 2021. It provides interactive lessons and engaging activities that delve into the process of growing, harvesting and processing sugarcane allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of the many products that can be produced from sugarcane.

The development of sugarcane school-based curriculum in collaboration

with PIEFA is one way to engage with the educational sector, but CANEGROWERS also champions the industry in a variety of ways to engage with and educate young people about the career pathways available.

For example, appearing in the Queensland Farmers' Federation's publication Careers in Ag, the successful interactive industry display at the 2022 Ekka, and the regular school visits via the CANEGROWERS district offices throughout the year, all assist in introducing young people to the industry to gain a better understanding, and showcase potential career pathways. ■



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FROM THE CHAIR

By Owen Menkens CANEGROWERS Chairman

The 2023 sugarcane harvest is finally underway, with the Tableland and Tully mills kicking off their crush late last month.

The remainder of Queensland's 19 sugar mills will fire up over the coming weeks, as growers, harvest crews and mill workers race to get our entire 30 million tonne crop cut and crushed by the end of November.

Last year was one of the worst crushes in recent memory due to poor weather and poor mill performance in some areas.

The crush was so badly delayed that some districts were harvesting right through Christmas and well into January, and still we finished with a million tonnes of standover.

No-one could blame growers for being a little anxious heading into this year's crush.

However, what I've discovered as I've travelled around the districts recently, speaking with members and grower representatives, is a sense of optimism.

Yes, last year was tough, but in recent months the world sugar price has skyrocketed, and growers are locking in fantastic prices for the 2023, 2024 and even the 2025 seasons.

The surge in the world sugar price is a result of a deficit on the world market due to poorer than expected crops in other large sugar producing nations such as India and Thailand.

Longer term, there is no obvious solution to how this deficit will be reduced. The Indian ethanol industry continues to grow and will eventually take up much of their exports.

The Brazilian crop is much larger this year, but still not enough to overcome the deficit. This is good news for the world price.

Australian growers are unique amongst their international peers as the only cane growers who can forward price, and many are capitalising on the current market.

Of course, mills can also take advantage of these once-in-a-generation prices, so there should be no excuse regarding more investment in capital and maintenance.

Growers need to be confident of good mill performance in order to plant and invest in their crops going forward.

Another reason for optimism is the recent fall in input prices. Of course, fertiliser prices are still well above where they were in 2020, but they've been falling steadily for months, and those lower world prices are finally filtering through to the local resellers. Fuel prices should also be lower this year.

Finally, forecasters are predicting a drier winter than last year, and unlike 2022 when monsoonal rain across the state stopped the harvest almost before it began, this year's crush kicked off under crystal clear skies and cool temperatures. Perfect harvesting conditions.

All in all, things look pretty good for the industry heading into the 2023 crush. Let's just hope things stay dry and the mills run well. ■

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GROWERS

OPTIMISE PROFITS IN 'SWEET SPOT' FERTILISER TRIALS

Supplied by Terrain Natural Resource Management

Forty-one growers from Mareeba to Ingham have trialled changes to their cane-growing practices across 10,000 hectares of land to find the sweet spot for productivity and sustainable agriculture.

Changes have ranged from using enhanced efficiency nitrogen fertiliser and applying fertiliser at variable rates to improving soil health through compost production, mill mud application and planting legumes fallow crops. They have also included upgrading soil and yield mapping to better understand each cane block.

And all these steps have been underpinned by the industry's SIX EASY STEPS® program for nutrient management, which looks at all essential nutrients and soil constraints. This is because optimising profits is a lot more than just managing the input of nitrogen fertiliser.

The Wet Tropics Reef Trust IV Repeated Tender program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by Terrain NRM in partnership with Cairns Canegrowers, Herbert Cane Productivity Services and Tully Canegrowers.

"In the tropics, with our variable rainfall from season to season, timing fertiliser application and improving fertiliser efficiency to optimise yields and minimise nitrogen losses is a big challenge for the industry"

Terrain NRM's Trevor Parker said the program has helped growers to reduce the financial risk of determining optimal inorganic nitrogen application rates and, as a result, many farmers have made changes.

"In the tropics, with our variable rainfall from season to season, timing fertiliser application and improving fertiliser efficiency to optimise yields and minimise nitrogen losses is a big challenge for the industry," he said.

"Financial support provided through the Repeated Tenders program gave growers the confidence to work out their sweet spot for nitrogen application, using the SIX EASY STEPS® program. This has resulted in a collective reduction of 1000 tonnes, which is a significant cost saving.

"Some found they'd gone down too far in terms of its effect on yield, but then they readjusted to rates that were still below their old rates. Others experienced no yield changes from applying less than the old rates. And some growers are now reporting yield increases.

"This has been all about working with cane growers to match fertiliser use more closely with crop needs and responsiveness, leading to the same or better yield and profitability benefits. A good thing about the program was that growers could choose what actions to take. They also had support from extension officers beyond their cane blocks - in things like improving record-keeping, becoming a Smartcane BMP-



Paul Marbelli

accredited grower if they weren't already and developing a customised nutrient management plan."

The four-year Repeated Tender Program ended in April. Here is what growers had to say:

PAUL MARBELLI – INGHAM

Third-generation cane farmer Paul Marbelli describes the last three years as a 'learning curve'. But he says they've led to cost-savings and a much better understanding of what his soil needs across 200 hectares of diverse cane blocks.

The Ingham grower reduced his inorganic nitrogen use to an average of 135 kilos per hectare over plant and ratoon cane with the "peace of mind" that the Wet Tropics Reef Trust IV Repeated Tenders program was a financial buffer if he'd dropped too far for his land and the seasons.

"I probably reduced it a little too much," he said. "Now I know how low I can go before starting to lose production when conditions are not as favourable, I'm back around the 140 mark and following soil tests and the Six Easy Steps nutrient management program to the letter."

The project also helped him to move into variable rate fertiliser application. "Getting a rate control system fitted means we know more accurately how much fertiliser we are placing, so we can be more confident in reducing nitrogen."

In addition, the Marbellis have focused more on their mill mud application.

"Our farms are close to the mill so we've used a lot of mill by-products over the years. But previously we haven't reduced our fertiliser rates where we're using mill mud. Now we've got more confidence to do that. With fertiliser prices doubling, there is plenty of incentive. There are huge cost savings in finding the balance between minimising impacts on the environment and maintaining a productive farming business."

"I probably reduced it a little too much, now I know how low I can go before starting to lose production when conditions are not as favourable"

ANDREW VELLA – ABERGOWRIE

Abergowrie cane grower Andrew Vella's change to enhanced efficiency liquid nitrogen fertiliser has enabled him to average 140kg per hectare on the family's farms, which collectively have 300 hectares under cane.

Application is down to between 80 and 100kg per hectare on plant blocks - depending on whether he can get a legume crop in or not – and rates on ratoons are also consistent with use of the SIX EASY STEPS® program.

"With the rising cost of fertiliser, you don't want to waste it. But when you're cutting back on nitrogen you want to still be able to maximise your production. You want the plant to use

the whole lot. It's a challenge because our growing season varies every year. Sometimes we get a lot of late growth."

He believes new products, like enhanced efficiency fertiliser, are the key to dropping nitrogen fertiliser rates because "you're not losing as much nitrogen to denitrification or leaching". But they are currently a more expensive option – and that's where the Wet Tropics Reef Trust IV Repeated Tender program has helped.

**Andrew Vella**

Developing a customised nutrient management plan with an extension officer was another advantage. And an accompanying increase in soil tests has shed light on soil health needs, including application of more lime.

Cane production on the Vella farm remains in the top five in the sub-district.

Andrew says water sampling is a well-established practice in the catchment, where automated sampling stations have been in place for three years, with information relayed back to farmers.

“You’re not losing as much nitrogen to denitrification or leaching”

“Imidacloprid, for cane grubs, is one of the biggest worries. We are now using slow-release Suscon maxi granules, allowing us to use less liquid. If there’s a problem, we’ll work out a way to fix it.” ■

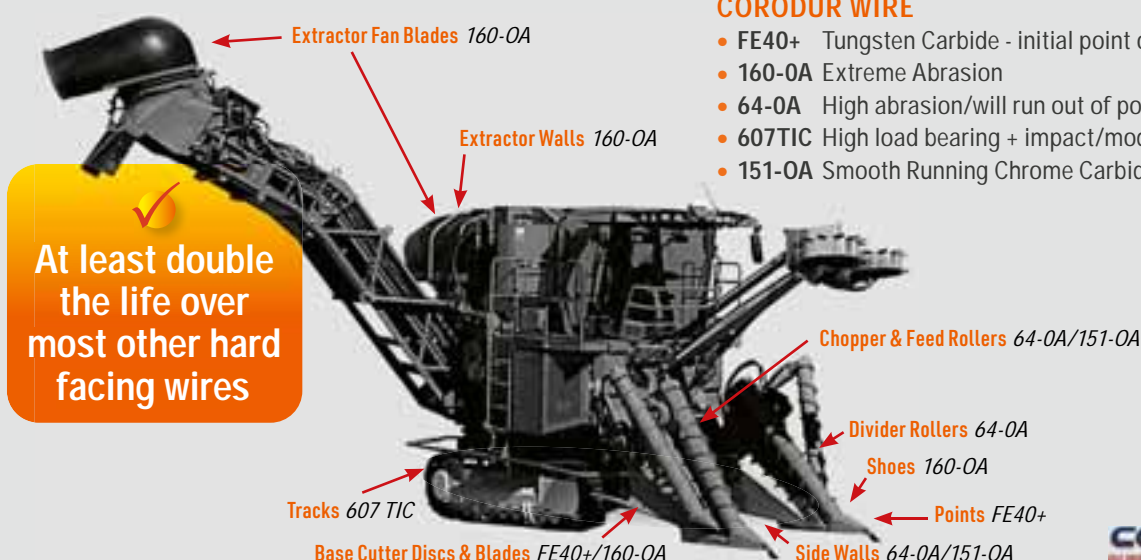
ABOUT TERRAIN NRM

Terrain is one of 56 regional natural resource management bodies around Australia. Terrain is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that works with local partners in the Wet Tropics region so that our soil, water, landscapes, plants and animals remain healthy and continue to support great communities.

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QSL GROWER PRICING UPDATE

Sugar Market & Currency

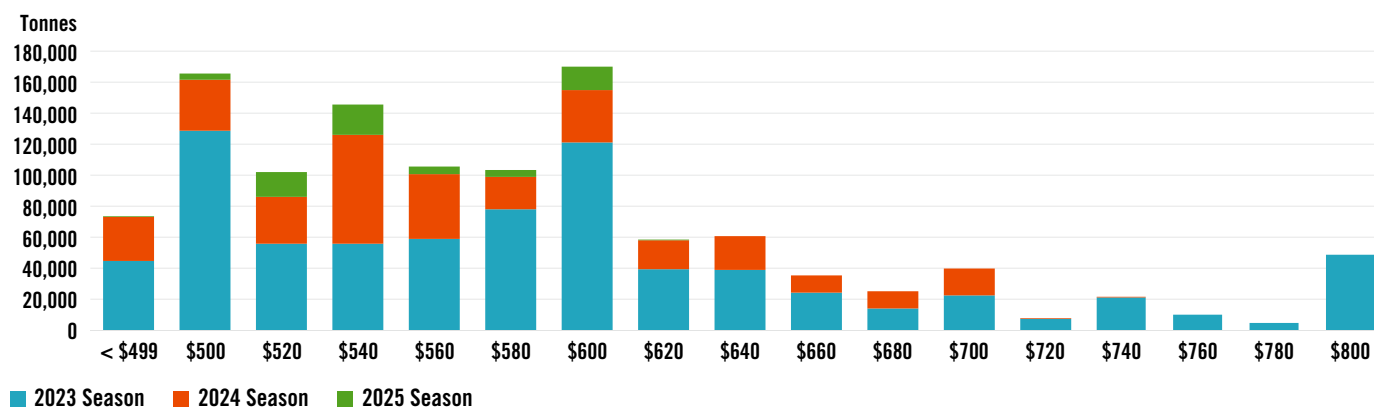
Influence	Commentary	Outlook
Brazil	Vessel wait times reached 30 days in early May, with 3.3 million tonnes of sugar waiting to be loaded. This volume is similar to the congestion usually not seen until mid-season and is unprecedented at this early stage.	
India	By the end of April 31.8 million tonnes of sugar had been produced with approximately 1 million tonnes expected for the remainder of the season. Market rumours suggest the Indian government may not approve any export quota next year in a bid to meet domestic consumption as Indian ethanol production increases.	
Thailand	Final harvest figures reached 94 million tonnes of cane and 11.2 million tonnes of sugar, approximately 1 million tonnes less than originally anticipated. A forecast El Nino weather pattern may bring below average rainfall to Thailand in the key growing season.	
Speculators	Specs are virtually unchanged month-on-month, reportedly holding a 209,000-lot net long position as of 2 May. This suggests the majority of the volatility in the ICE 11 market is driven by commercial buyers and sellers of sugar.	Neutral
Currency	The AUD has traded in a 66-68 US cent range for weeks on end now, with two-way risk evident. Inflation, interest rate decisions and the US banking crisis are all influencing the AUD.	Neutral

The outlook ratings above are in relation to AUD/tonne sugar prices.  A bullish outlook is considered positive.  A bearish outlook is considered negative.

Grower Pricing

- > The highest grower-managed pricing levels achieved across all growing regions using QSL products to date (all gross price actual/tonne) are:
 - 2023 Target Price = \$850 / IFC \$850 (Mar24)
 - 2024 Target Price = \$705 / IFC \$740 (Jul24)
 - 2025 Target Price = \$605 / IFC \$625 (Jul25)
 - 2026 Target Price = \$540
- > Key Dates:
 - **20 June:** Last day to price 2023-Season Target Price Contract tonnage before the pricing window is automatically extended and roll adjustments apply.
 - **20 June:** Last day to achieve or roll pricing allocated to the July 2023 ICE 11 contract through the Individual Futures Contract or Self-Managed Harvest Contract.
 - **30 June:** Last day to qualify for the 2022 QSL Loyalty Bonus.

QSL GROWER-MANAGED PRICING FILLS – 2023, 2024 & 2025 SEASONS



This chart captures all pricing achieved as of 11.05.23 by growers from across all sugarcane growing regions using QSL's Target Price Contract, Individual Futures Contract and Self-Managed Harvest products. Prices quoted at AUD/tonnes actual gross.

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 or 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.



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MaxSil™ is a product for our times.

Managing Director David Archer and Operations Manager, Michael Trutwin at the Brendale factory with the first one-tonne bag of MaxSil™ silicon fertiliser produced in the first quarter of 2023.



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- ✓ MaxSil™ has a track record of producing increased yield in both ratoon and plant cane in the Bundaberg, Ingham and Tully regions
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BURNING OF SUGAR CANE

With the crush starting in some regions, this is a reminder to growers of their obligations when burning standing cane or tops and trash. There are only two ways of burning standing cane or tops and trash legally.

Firstly, under the *Notification for Burning of Sugar Cane* published in Queensland Government Gazette No 29 on 31 May 2019. This gives cane growers the authority to burn sugar cane in accordance with the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990, provided the conditions are met.

An extract of this gazette and a *QFES Information Sheet - Cane Burning Notification* about the new Notification can be found on the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services website - www.qfes.qld.gov.au. Essentially this describes the eligible land on which a grower may light a fire and the minimum conditions for weather, smoke hazard (signs), equipment and persons.

Secondly under a Permit to Light Fire from a fire warden. This permit should be a period permit (for the season) and again contains conditions which must be met to be legal.



There are significant penalties for lighting an illegal fire. More importantly if the fire is legal then any liability at common law for any loss, injury or damage caused by the fire is covered except if the grower is reckless or malicious.

It is recommended that if in doubt about complying with the Notice or to be certain that the cane is burnt legally then a permit should be obtained from the local fire warden and the conditions of this permit followed. ■

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JUGGLING DUAL BUSINESS DEMANDS

By Robyn Devine

Problem solving, innovating, modifying equipment and managing the needs of two busy enterprises are all in a day's work for one young Bundaberg grower.

The Dingle family, and their property called 'Strathmore' at Moorlands, have a rich and extensive farming history in the area with 27-year-old Ryan Dingle the fifth generation to farm the family land.

"Growing up I always wanted to be a farmer. I did a trade as a boilermaker at a local engineering workshop but I knew I really wanted to be farming" Ryan said.

"The farm is 256 ha in size with approximately 130 ha of cultivation. I purchased half of the property from my parents in 2020 and I lease the remaining property as part of the family's

succession plan, which will allow mum and dad to semi-retire or retire as they want."

It can be challenging as a young person to buy a farm, but Ryan's off farm income from his contracting business which he established as a 20-year-old helped with his acquisition.

Ryan is quick to recognize the value of his family legacy and acknowledges the opportunities he, and his older brother Craig, have had to learn from their father Allan's experience. Allan has been actively involved as a grower representative and industry leader since 1994 and is currently President of the Queensland Farmers' Federation.

"Dad has a wonderful knowledge of not only growing cane but the industry as a whole and it's great to have that



Problem solver Ryan built this machine as he was unable to find anything of its size on the market. It's designed to cover a lot of area in a short time with a 6-tonne fertiliser bin, weigh scales and rate controllers to make the operation easy and reduce fill times



resource available to bounce ideas off and ask questions about the past, present and future," Ryan said.

"There have been pros and cons with his representative career and his time away from the farm. Dad being away so much allowed Craig and I to step up and find our own ways of doing things. I worked a few of those things out the hard way though, but I guess that's the best way to learn. Craig has gone on to work in the corporate farming world and I am sure those hard lessons we learned as kids have helped us more than we will ever know.

"Sugarcane suits this farm's river flats and our soil types, and I really enjoy growing cane.

"About half the farm has fertile alluvial river soil, and the other half is grey loam soil which is harder to farm but doesn't have the flood risks.

"We haven't had any flooding since October 2017. Prior to that we had major flooding in 2011 and 2013. At that stage I wasn't actively involved in running the farm business, but I was working here and learnt a lot from those challenges.

"Cane has always been the predominant crop, but the family also has cattle and soybeans. We have found soybeans to be a great rotational crop with cane, while the cattle fit in and around the odd ends of paddocks.

"Dad was an early grower of soybeans in the Bundaberg area; one of the first to try them as a rotation with cane and make a few dollars as well. It definitely has been a good thing to put the legumes back into the soil with lots of on-going benefits.

"We do have soldier fly badly here and, when the price of sugar was lower, I took the opportunity to remove the cane and leave it fallow for the last few years."

Soldier flies are native insects that naturally inhabit grasslands and can cause severe damage to sugarcane crops and may cause significant yield losses in localised areas. Over the past few years, they have been problematic in the Bundaberg region.

According to Sugar Research Australia soldier fly larvae inflict damage through feeding on the roots of both newly germinated setts and established stools. Small larvae cut off fine root hairs. Larger larvae burrow their heads, leaving visible cavities. Root damage impairs the ability of the roots to supply water and nutrients to the plant. Larvae may also inject a toxin into the plant during feeding, but this has not been proven.

Affected stools have few shoots and growth is usually poor. Damaged cane blocks appear weak and gappy, but stools along the edge are often healthy. Roots may show asymmetric cone-shaped hollows.

"There is no insecticidal control for the problem, and the point of a long fallow is to keep the area free of all grasses as a number of grasses can host the soldier fly," Ryan said.

"They are more active at certain times of the year. My plan is to harvest all the susceptible country later in the year when it is hotter, and the soldier fly are not as active.

"We burn the river flats and work it conventionally to try and get the ratoons away as quickly as possible. Farming this way has some merit; admittedly we lose our trash blanket, but it makes harvesting a heavy crop easier and helps to control the soldier fly.

"I have changed the way we water by upgrading from high pressure water winches to low pressure lateral irrigators. Hopefully we can achieve greater yields to take advantage of the current price of sugar.

"The lateral irrigator is certainly making my life easier and nowhere near as expensive to run as water winches, so that's a big saving."

"We managed to do a lot of the set-up of the lateral irrigator ourselves which saved significant costs. I bought it second-hand and revamped it with current technology. By adapting the new tech to the older irrigator, we have saved about two-thirds of what a new lateral would have cost and it's working well.

"The lateral irrigator is certainly making my life easier and nowhere near as expensive to run as water winches, so that's a big saving"





Ryan has modified his lateral irrigator to allow him remote access to assist with managing the farm

"There's a GPS guidance system on the lateral, so it's all controlled from a phone or an iPad which makes life a lot easier, especially when I'm not home. We have another lateral in the making as I have found the low pressure irrigation works better for the limited amount of time I have due to the contracting business.

"The contracting started when I was backed into a corner financially with a failed chickpea crop. Around the same time the header used by the local Grain in Cane Co-operative couldn't keep pace with the quantity of soybeans. One thing led to another, and I purchased a secondhand header and before long I was contracting.

"After cutting my teeth on soybean heading an opportunity arose to apply fertiliser and other soil ameliorants on local corporate farms. Today, over numerous passes, we work around 10,000 ha of local farming land for a wide customer base. We also plant soybeans and peanuts.

"Even though I am still relatively young and green when it comes to business, I have learned the value of developing good working relationships. We have an excellent staff and without them, we wouldn't be able to provide the services we do.

"We embrace as much technology as we can including modern John Deere equipment; they have been very good to work with and have some great

"We embrace as much technology as we can including modern John Deere equipment"

products. Their ag technology is excellent, with great platforms that allow me to keep an eye on my contracting equipment remotely, and the data recording is excellent. For product application we use variable rate controllers, which certainly is not new technology, but provides quality control and efficiencies for our clients."

After the challenging weather of previous seasons, Ryan is cautiously optimistic about the start of the 2023 crush and the season ahead.

"We've had a really good growing season; I don't think I can remember conditions where we have had good rain well-spaced throughout the year. Watering has only been supplementary, and we didn't have to grow the whole crop with irrigation. It makes life a lot easier as well as being a cost saver.

"Last year there was around 3,000 tonne of cane as most of the farm was out with fallow. It's only been in the last year we have planted it up again. This year should be around



Ryan is looking forward to see the results of the cane after a long fallow to assist with getting rid of soldier fly issues

8,000 tonne and next year, depending on the season, we are working towards 10,000-12,000 tonne."

With the sugar industry where it is, Ryan says his plan is to keep the farm with an 80% cane and 20% soybean rotation. Along with a few more cattle, and a bit more technology, he aims to develop the farm further into an easy to manage property.

"I don't know how long the sugar industry will be able to sustain itself in Bundaberg for young growers like me. There is limited access to land, and as I see it, the land prices have driven the young cane farmer way out of the market," Ryan said.

Local agriculture has been transformed with changing crops, especially as the sugar industry has been less profitable than it needs to be to allow young cane growers to enter the industry.

"It's a juggle to look after the farm and keep developing the contracting business. This year there's around 30 growers we're harvesting soybeans for, so trying to keep them happy is all in a day's work. We work in an area of approximately 100km radius which means a lot of time moving equipment around, making sure I am across all the necessary permits, signs, pilots and meeting the regulations involved with moving farm equipment.

"The Bundaberg CANEGROWERS office staff are very helpful. Matt Leighton has a wealth of knowledge on rules and regulations which certainly helps when moving the amount of equipment we have to throughout the year."

Ryan says he'll continue to keep learning and working, using his own innovations and incorporating the latest technology to manage the demands of running a farm and operating a successful contracting business, because he couldn't imagine doing anything else. ■

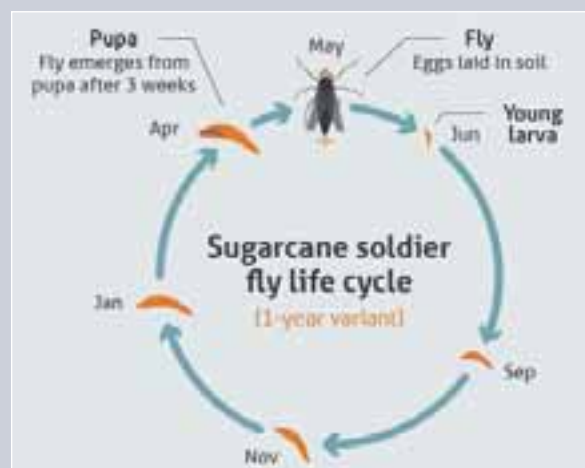


Fig 1: Sugarcane soldier fly life cycle (1-year variant)

Management

No insecticide is registered for use against soldier fly as none has proven effective in trials. However, predators (e.g. wireworms and ground beetles) and the fungal disease *Metarhizium* can significantly limit soldier fly populations.

In addition, management options can reduce numbers and their effect on the crop:

1. Take out affected blocks early in the harvest season. This will lengthen the break from cane, and destroy the larval food while the new generation is still small and vulnerable.
2. Have a grass-free break from cane, e.g. a long herbicide fallow under trash after spray-out of the old ratoon, or a short fallow followed by a non-grass crop such as soybean. Larvae will eventually starve as grasses are their natural food.
3. Plant the next cane crop after the flight period (i.e. after June). Flies are less likely to lay eggs when there is no cane or grass during the flight period.
4. Plant sugarcane with minimum tillage following the herbicide fallow. Keep cultivation for the break-crop at minimal but adequate levels. Extra cultivation does not effectively kill soldier fly and will harm natural enemies.
5. Grow varieties with strong root systems that can ratoon quickly.
6. Harvest plant and early ratoon crops when conditions are good for ratooning. Soldier flies will have less impact if ratoons come away quickly.

Do not:

- Plough-out and immediately re-plant infested blocks.
- Plant sugarcane early (in autumn) following an infested ratoon. Plant after the flight period (after June).

Source: SRA Soldier Fly Infosheet

LIMES AIN'T LIMES. ITS ALL ABOUT NEUTRALISING VALUE – OR IS IT?

KCL has been aware for some time that its' lime and dolomite have some unique properties. Customers using sophisticated telemetry have told us that our lime and dolomite work almost immediately – particularly when the soil is damp.

Testing by Dr. Bernhard Wehr at University Queensland has uncovered part of the secret. The SSA – or Specific Surface Area of individual particles of KCL lime have over 400% more surface area than samples from conventional lime deposits in Queensland. KCL dolomite has similar properties.

When viewed under 2000 times magnification, the particle shape of KCL lime is porous like a moonscape, as opposed to the characteristically smooth sided shape normally associated with calcite.

In simple terms this means that there is more lime in contact with your soil – approximately 445% more! This enables the lime to go to work immediately.

All KCL lime and dolomite products contain a percentage of magnesium carbonate ($MgCO_3$). This is a 'plant available' form of magnesium which while being beneficial to plant growth, also contributes to the CCE, or calcium carbonate equivalent, a benefit not always recognised when simply looking at the product's NV.

It gets better. The presence of calcium bentonite in our lime and dolomite, when applied repeatedly, provides the potential

to work for a longer period and have the ability to hold water during dry periods.

In scientific terms, the molecules of KCL lime and dolomite tend to be amorphous rather than crystalline. That means they have an indistinct shape. This gives the particles the ability to 'aggregate' – or bond to other particles. Aggregation, according to Dr. Wehr means higher porosity and surface area, permitting entry of water into the particles.


Interestingly, samples of lime provided to us by farmers from other sources in Queensland, have almost no tendency to aggregate therefore limiting the porosity and surface area of that product.

Dr. Wehr also discovered that 90% of KCL lime and dolomite particles were

below 28 – 38 micron – some four times finer than other limestone products commonly available in Central Queensland. It is well known by agronomists, that the efficacy of lime is significantly improved by smaller particle size.

Most farmers understand why we now mill a much finer product than in the old days.

As part of an overall commitment to Continuous Improvement, KCL has recently made changes to its screening and milling process with a view to raising the product's neutralising value (NV). This has involved installing machinery to reject aggregates which might adulterate the NV, and give preference to aggregates which are extremely high in calcium carbonate, therefore raising the overall NV.



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INNOVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE TULLY



Nick Stipis

With the demand for sustainable products by consumers a topical subject, the ability to prove sustainability could be challenging in some industries, but as Smartcane BMP has been recognised by major global sugar sustainability programs, including Czarnikow VIVE and ProTerra, being an accredited grower within the program could prove invaluable.



This means sugar produced from cane grown by Smartcane BMP accredited growers is getting international recognition and the Tully district appears to be ahead of the game when it comes to embracing the program, with almost 90% of the mill area accredited.

For almost seven years Smartcane BMP facilitator Nick Stipis has been assisting sugarcane growers around Tully to become accredited with the Smartcane BMP program.

Nick is an integral part of the Tully community, having been a local for over 30 years. In 1984 he came to Tully as a school principal and in 1985 became a grower with the acquisition of a cane farm.

He has a compelling passion for effective farming and professional development and since 2014 has been working with growers to assess their practices, collect and collate farm records and other required evidence to achieve accreditation.

He loves the district and after retiring from his educator's role, and selling his farm, he could have moved away from Tully. But instead he uses his time as a facilitator and his experience as a grower to skill up the

growers in the program. His knowledge of the many resources available to assist and his availability to work through challenges, concerns or issues with growers is appreciated by the community.

"Tully has always been known for its progressive growers, they show a strong interest in professional development, there's always great attendance at workshops or shed meetings, and they're willing to share good farming practices," Nick said.

"These correlate to trust and respect in the district, and the growers have great relationships with Sugar Research Australia, the Tully Variety Management Group and the Tully Cane Productivity Services Ltd. The networks are fantastic.

"The mill is right behind the program and Tully Sugar are recredited enterprises within the program."

To date in Queensland 721 enterprises are Smartcane BMP accredited, representing more than 158,000 hectares of cane land, or 40% of Queensland's cane area.

CANEGROWERS Policy Council member and Tully grower Bryce Macdonald is a Smartcane BMP accredited grower and says the program recognises growers' efforts to farm better and to manage the constraints for better outcomes.

"As a first-generation grower the program supports my farming practices," Bryce said.

"I grew up in this district and Tully growers have a long



history of being innovative and progressive in adopting best management practices.

"We grow better cane when we understand our soil health and nutrient management, and drainage needs.

"By implementing soil tests, understanding the best varieties available and using pesticides and herbicides responsibly, with accurate record keeping, we can achieve sustainable results."

The willingness of Tully growers to participate in

Smartcane BMP, with assistance from Nick, has certainly put the district ahead of the game in demonstrating its sustainability credentials.

CANEGROWERS acknowledges the funding support for Smartcane BMP from the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program. ■



Bryce Macdonald

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

MOSSMAN

Now the toll-crush agreement between FNM and MSF mills is finalised for the next three years, the crop estimate for FNM in 2023 season has dropped to 606,000 tonnes of cane.

The split is 445,000 tonnes of cane on the coast and being processed by the FNM Mossman mill and 163,000 tonnes of cane being toll-crushed at the tableland MSF mill.

The crop cut in the normal crushing period last year continues to look good, but the late cut is still looking small and immature. With another drier than average month in April and a cooler change coming through in May, the cane is starting to arrow, and the concern now is that the late cut cane, that is arrowing, will not continue to grow and fully mature.

Mossman mill is operating on a five-day week and is looking to

start crushing the first week of July and finish in the second week of November, meaning 19-week crushing for 2023.

Slack season maintenance is on track with only the 6MW generator potentially not fully operational until late June due to the degree of damage needing repair.

In May the milling train was being put back together and the shedder turbine was assembled and commissioned, there was some stack repair also being undertaken. All maintenance is to be complete in time for planned steam trials between 19-21 June.

The Mossman Cane Analysis Program review for 2023 has been completed and adopted and all lab equipment certifications have been done along with NIR Unit maintenance.



Mossman Analysis Auditors' workshop

CANEGROWERS Mossman participated in the cane analysis auditors' workshop on 16 May at the SRA Meringa Research Station. This annual event is of great benefit to those in the audit cane analysis programs in the mill juice labs.

The FNM Mossman Coastal Productivity Awards for the 2022 season will be held 8 June at the Mossman Bowls Club Hall.

Membership Levy 2023:

CANEGROWERS Mossman has struck their 2023 Membership General levy at eleven-point

seven (11.7) cents per tonne of cane and left the Grower Services Levy at one (1.00) cent per tonne of cane. The board also agreed to take advantage of the CANEGROWERS free crop insurance coverage offer with indemnity of \$35 per tonne of cane, with nil excess.

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 37.07 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Mossman mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season.

TABLELAND

The Tableland Mill started crushing on 22 May. There is an estimate of 910,000 tonnes of cane to be processed, this includes toll crush from Mossman Mill.

Every stick of cane on the Tablelands will be going to the Tableland Mill this season. May the cane gods smile down on all and have a safe and uneventful season.

In the past month there has been numerous meetings with growers, millers and groups associated with the industry. This office attended the cane auditors workshop which was held at the Meringa Sugar

Experiment Station. Representatives from all districts attended this workshop. The workshop assists with the understanding of required processes to ensure that the correct actions are being taken in the labs of the mills.

Growers are invited to the Mareeba Leagues Club on Wednesday 7 June at 9 am for the SRA "Latest on Variety Development" presentation.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 56.10 cents per



Cane Auditors Workshop held at Meringa Sugar Experiment Station (SRA).

tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to the Tableland mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season. CANEGROWERS Tableland has elected to top up the crop

insurance offering to \$40 per tonne indemnity level, (an increase from the State offering of \$35), nil excess. This top up will be paid for by the CANEGROWERS Tableland on members behalf.

CAIRNS

Cooler days are now beginning to be felt within the Cairns Region. Depending on conditions planting is underway with growers getting in and planting fallow blocks prior to the mill starting next month.

Many growers have been busy using the first few months of the year to continue to work towards attaining Smartcane BMP accreditation. Recently more farming businesses have undergone accreditation and reaccreditation audits, equating to

over 200 hectares gaining and maintaining accreditation within the district.

Recent grower representation has included preseason meetings with both the Mulgrave and the South Johnstone Mills to address concerns that any additional cane supplied to the MSF business will not affect the current crushing expectations for the 2023 season.

Our Environment and Sustainability Officer Joel Tierney, local SRA Far North Delivery Officer Paul Calcino and local young grower James

Caption



Oldacre were all panellists in the PIEFAs careers week session to raise awareness of the career pathways within the industry.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy,

combining the state and local district charges is: 50.60 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season.

TULLY

The Tully Sugar Mill is in final preparations for the 2023 Crushing Season with a planned start date of 26 May, weather permitting.

The current growers' estimate for the 2023 crushing season totals 2.76 million tonnes.

This month the Tully Variety Management Group hosted its Pre-Season meetings across the Tully District, which included the launch of the 2023 TVMG Tully variety guide, and reports by Tully Cane Productivity Services.

CANEGROWERS Industry Manager Burn Ashburner together with representatives from the National Heavy Vehicle

Regulator and the Dept of Transport and Main Roads hosted a Transport Workshop, pictured, at Murray Upper Rural Fire Station providing information to growers on public road access for ag vehicles and permit requirements.

Tully Sugar and CANEGROWERS Tully hosted a Smart Drones - Smarter Farming Precision Aerial Agriculture demonstration, pictured, for growers and industry representatives. The demonstration was well attended and provided growers

with a chance to ask questions about this new ag technology.

Industry representatives attended the Cassowary Coast Reef Smart Farming event which highlighted the past 15 years of water quality improvement initiatives in the Tully and Johnstone Catchments. The Cassowary Coast Reef Smart Farming project is working with cane and banana growers in the Tully and Johnstone basins to improve productivity and optimise nitrogen use efficiency.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 41.93 cents

per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is inclusive of cane testing/auditing fees.



INNISFAIL

Over 60 growers and invited guests attended the CANEGROWERS Innisfail Annual General Meeting on 11 May including.

Representatives from MSF, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, CANEGROWERS, SRA and USQ. CANEGROWERS

Chair, Owen Menkens was the evening's guest speaker and gave an update on leadership, trade and advocacy. Growers also heard updates from CEO, Dan Galligan, Snr Manager for Membership, Engagement and Innovation, Matt Kealley and MSF Sugar's Head of Cane

Supply, Mark Magnanini.

Overall, the night was a success, topped off with coffee and cake to celebrate Owen's 50th Birthday.

Feral pigs continue to cause significant damage across certain parts of the Innisfail region.



Annual General Meeting

CANEGROWERS continues to engage locally, with both the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and MSF Sugar to develop a shared strategy to manage these increasing populations. CANEGROWERS

Innisfail and MSF Sugar Limited will be holding another, "Understanding your cane pay" session on 30 May. Growers are urged to RSVP if they would like to attend.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 52.45 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to South Johnstone Mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season.



Owen Menkens' 50th Birthday

HERBERT RIVER

May has been quite dry in the Herbert with very little rainfall for most parts of the district with only isolated showers.

Most growers are working their ground and either preparing to plant or have commenced planting. The crop is looking good in the well drained areas and average in

late cuts and lower areas of district. There is a big question mark on standover as some looks ok and some not so promising. The schedule thus far is to commence crushing on 19-20 June depending on weather. The finish date is predicted to be around the middle of November. The estimate for 2023 is 4.2 million tonnes excluding seed.

CANEGROWERS held a transport workshop with guest presenters from NHVR, TMR and CANEGROWERS Brisbane. The workshop was well attended by CANEGROWERS Herbert River members.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy for CANEGROWERS Herbert River members includes local district

charges of 17.2 cents per tonne plus 6.30 cents per tonne for cane analysis / auditing fees and 21.00 cents per tonne for state levies totalling 44.50 cents per tonne (48.95 c/t inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Wilmar mills in the Herbert by all members during the 2023 crushing season.

BURDEKIN

By the time this magazine goes to print, the season commencement should only be one week away.

A dry start to the season would be a wonderful way to commence the crushing for a change, but we haven't had a dry start for a while as winter rainfall has a habit of stubbornly turning up when it is not wanted. Wilmar had advised a staggered start of 6 June for Invicta and Pioneer 7 June for Inkerman and 8 June for Kalamia and at the CBL AGM held on 18 May they re-affirmed their commitment to these starting dates. Steam trials were programed from 23 May to 1 June and season start dates may also be contingent on how these trials go.

At the AGM, Wilmar was the guest speaker along with Owen Menkens in his dual role as Chair of QCGO. Wilmar went into some depth about how much work had been completed in the off season at their factories with the work having to be done in a compressed timeline due to the

late 2022 season finish. Wilmar showcased their local manufacturing capabilities and their locomotive program, with fit for purpose locos built and/or upgraded to be fit for purpose for their roles in the Burdekin. Wilmar were quizzed on mill performance and are targeting mill reliability in the high 80% range for the 2023 season.

Owen Menkens detailed the future prospects associated with sustainably sourced sugar via the Smartcane BMP program and it is a bright new world for the sugarcane industry, if the technological advances combined with supportive government policy can enable the bioeconomy to gradually take hold, with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) being the flavour of the moment.

Planting activity was at a frantic pace in May for those who were unable to work ground previously. The services of laser levellers and planting contractors are in high demand to get the billets buried adding perception that more

hectares are going under cane in pursuit of the high sugar prices on offer, courtesy of the sugar industry's competitive advantage of being able to forward sell crops up to three seasons in advance. What cane that was previously planted prior to May has come out of the ground nicely except for the low end of some blocks that got waterlogged with the April downpour.

Owen Menkens did some farm visits on the North Bank providing members with updates and obtain firsthand feedback on the important issues for growers.

Burdekin Cane Audit Services Ltd (BCAS) scheduled their AGM for 29 May and CBL teamed up with Kalamia Cane Growers Organisation Ltd to nominate Upper Houghton grower Kayleen Walsh for a Bargaining Representative Director position on the BCAS Board. BCAS fulfils an important obligation in ensuring growers are correctly paid for their sugarcane and it is pleasing that local growers are willing to put up their hand to



Loading up the planter

serve on the BCAS Board for this crucial payment function.

SRA Burdekin are holding their annual Field Day on 31 May at the SRA Brandon Station and CBL will be there. It's good to see the Brandon Station being opened up to the agricultural community to facilitate this day.

After a challenging 2022 season, the Burdekin is looking forward to the 2023 season getting underway. Here's to a successful 2023 season and we wish growers, contractors and millers all the best. Let's hope it's a safe and relatively dry one and we are all finished in November 2023!

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 50.00 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all

sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is inclusive of an adjustment to top up the crop

insurance offering to a \$40 indemnity limit on tonnages up to the 75,000t cap.



PROSERPINE

With the opening date set for 13 June, all eyes are on the mill repairs and maintenance program.

Although the shortage of both skilled and unskilled labour remained a challenge, the program thankfully stayed on track for May. The introduction of a seasoned shutdown manager was also positive, a move welcomed by both mill staff and growers alike. Before kick-off, the CANEGROWERS Board have been invited to tour the Mill in early June. At this stage there would be more clarity on the state of the mill following a large part of the planned capital and maintenance investment having been spent.

In many parts of the region, wet conditions continued to delay planting over May. There remained some uncertainty of the crop estimate with growers

questioning late ratooned area. Whether the final crop reaches 1.8m tonnes will depend largely on how these areas perform towards the end of the season. Currently, there is still an expectation that the crop could finish closer to 1.7m tonnes, but time will tell. With a decent crop, high pricing and hopefully a good crush, expectations remain high for the coming season.

The CANEGROWERS Board approved continued support for the Fire Perils Insurance top-up for Proserpine growers. This remains a key service offering to members.

Events included a Transport Workshop held on 3 May (organised by QCGO) that was well received and a Sunwater Irrigation Price Path meeting. This is to inform growers on the engagement process for the pricing period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

Sugar Services Proserpine continued their search for a new staff member which is proving difficult in the current labour market. There is also a challenge for both SSP and SRA to improve the number of growers that are 'opting-in' to the data share arrangement recently launched by Wilmar. Growers have been encouraged to 'opt-in' to ensure important data remains available to both SSP and SRA into the future. Speaking of future, it is almost time for the Proserpine Show Cane event. Already significant sponsorship has been raised which is indicative of the support this event receives from the community. One exciting addition for the Show Cane event this year includes the 'CANEGROWERS Young Farmers Trophy'. We are looking forward to see what stalks are put on show by growers. Some may say the



Proserpine CANEGROWERS Transport workshop

cane presented is a precursor to what lies ahead for the upcoming season. Let's hope the tea, or should we say, cane leaves read well!

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 40.70 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to the Proserpine mill by members during the 2023 crushing season. The PDCC levy includes the additional cost of a top up to the crop insurance indemnity on behalf of its members.

MACKAY / PLANE CREEK

CANEGROWERS Mackay has held another year's successful running of its annual Haulout Driver training courses, supporting 20 new carters into our industry.

The district is thankful that it has been successful in attaining triennial funding for two courses through the Queensland Government Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.

This year saw an increased number of women engaging with the industry, with eight completing the course. There were also a number of people who had recently moved into the area and were keen to connect with the region's agricultural sector.

In congratulating participants in Course One, CANEGROWERS Mackay Chairman Kevin Borg noted the importance of supporting people new to the industry.



Mackay Chairman Kevin Borg

"We pride ourselves on the fact that most people who go through the course end up in a job, carting cane, or somewhere else in the

sugar industry," he said. "For someone like me, I was born into this industry so understanding the work involved is not that difficult for me, but for someone

new to the industry, there is a lot to learn and I give credit to everybody who has walked into this course with no skills or experience, and who will now walk away with a better understanding of what is involved when it comes to tractor driving, siding delivery or whatever else."

The crush will be commencing across the district, with Mackay

Sugar's three mills scheduled to roll out between 1-14 June, and Wilmar Plane Creek is planning for a 6 June start. We urge members still looking for workers to check our jobs board, either in the office or on the website, or add their position vacant online, or call 4944 2600.

Membership Levy 2023:

Mackay Sugar Area:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 45.20 cents per tonne (49.72 c/t inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is

inclusive of cane testing/auditing fees.

Plane Creek Area: The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 50.72 cents per tonne (55.79 c/t inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is inclusive of cane testing/auditing fees.

BUNDABERG

Bundaberg's start date is set for 29 May for the pre-crush season, which will see Bundaberg Sugar Ltd harvest their own cane including organic cane with the core season to start on 19 June.

The estimate is approximately 1,060,000 tonnes in total, which gives us an approximate 27 November finish after allowing for wet weather.

Soybean harvest is underway with some good yields and quality beans harvested although there have been some high levels of weed seed in the samples despite use of the Magik Cleaner.

Considering the current high sugar prices the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Board has resolved to increase the crop insurance indemnity level to \$55/tonne for the 2023 season. Bundaberg Regional Council is due to hand down their budget soon and while other councils itemise individual projects and key spending areas in their budgets, Bundaberg Regional Council keeps their community in the dark. On behalf of the ratepayers and broader community of the Bundaberg region, the Bundaberg Regional Ratepayers Association made the following requests of the

Bundaberg Mayor and Councillors. In the upcoming local government budget adopt the following:

- Implement an immediate rates freeze
- Bring back the early payment discount
- Remove the community and environment levy
- Wind back the agricultural rates
- Introduce genuine transparency and accountability in Council
- Introduce pre-budget community consultation
- Implement an open and honest budget with itemised spending

Membership Fee 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and district levy totals 85.98 cents per tonne (exclusive of GST), on all sugarcane supplied to the Millaquin Mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is inclusive of cane testing/auditing fees and an adjustment to top up the crop insurance offering. In establishing these fees the directors have taken into account the level of services available and the need to set a reasonable fee.

ISIS

At the time of writing this update we are eagerly awaiting to hear the final estimate so negotiations for the 2023 season start date can continue.

It looks as though the estimate will be lower than originally thought with some late cut cane not bouncing back as well as was anticipated.

May has been a busy month across the Isis district with a field day and several workshops taking place. We supported Isis Productivity in hosting their

annual field day. It was great to see a good roll up of both Isis and Maryborough growers to this event. A tour of the clean seed plot and an infield look at SRA32,39,39 and SRAW33 was a highlight for those who attended. CANEGROWERS recently hosted Business Essentials workshops for Isis and Bundaberg growers. We also attended the annual cane auditors workshop with the Isis Mill Auditing team.



Tyler Bengtson IPL Chair, Isaac Schmidt MCPS Chair, Paul Nicol ICSM - IPL field day

Much of our work during the past month has been heavily focussed on:

- Assisting growers with extraordinary disaster assistance recovery grant applications
- Preparing fire permits
- Assisting growers with employment contracts for seasonal workers

- Preparing a new electricity tariff comparison tool

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 51.70 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to the Isis mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season.



Darren Harney ICSM Chair, Peter McLennan CIL Acting Chair - IPL Field Day

MARYBOROUGH

The little bit of rain around the district has helped through mid-May where the southern areas fared best but they had also been pretty dry for a while.

The pre-season meeting was conducted on 25 May with representatives of Isis Central Sugar Mill, CANEGROWERS Isis and CANEGROWERS Queensland all able to join a well-attended meeting and BBQ.

CANEGROWERS Chairman Owen Menkens and CEO Dan Galligan gave an update on the wide-ranging activities the state body is engaged in and the flow on benefits to local growers.

The mill preparations for the season are continuing although supply issues are putting pressure

on the expected start date and further revisions are likely.

Preparations in the field are also timely with road access and loading pad condition vital for a smooth run this season. With the new logistics structure this year it won't be the same truck coming to your farm to collect and ease of access is worth improving if possible.

This season has had several changes among the harvest groups with a couple of harvesters not operating this year or no longer in the industry.

The mill has sought to confirm any changes among harvest groups or if you are still without a harvester for 2023, contact Bruce Findlay on 0409 629 751 or Troy Manderson 0429 888 590 to update urgently.



IPL Bus Trip Peterson variety Plot

RSD testing is underway, and Tony McDermott is keen to cover all farms planning on planting as soon as possible. Give him a call to arrange a visit and sample collection. Seed cane distribution will also be an early planning item for this year as Tony is away from mid-September for six weeks.

The CANEGROWERS Maryborough Board wishes every grower a successful harvest for 2023.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 50.00 cents per tonne excluding GST (55.00 c/t inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to Queensland mills by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee does include the regional productivity levy of 17.00 cents per tonne (exclusive of GST).

ROCKY POINT

The 2023 estimate for Rocky Point is in the vicinity of 250,000 tonnes due to the late finish from 2022 and drought conditions existing across the district.

The majority of this year's millable cane will be standover from last year, with a small amount of plant cane and ratoon cane making up the balance.

We are still on track for 3 July start according to mill management.

CSA negotiations for 2023 to 2027 are at an impasse and to break this impasse it is looking increasingly likely that we may have to go to Arbitration.

The weather has been dry. While some of the district received 70mm in the last month, much of the district fell well short with only 30mm. This has most of the district at less

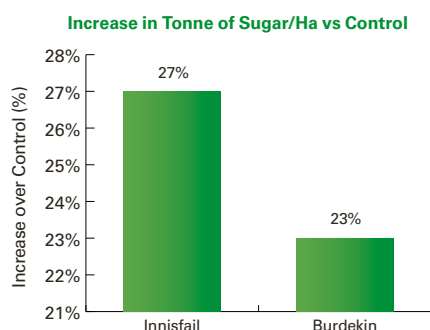
than 100mm for the 2023 calendar year to date. We are hoping for a mild and wet winter to help the crop for this season and next.

The Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce has arranged for a district-wide aerial baiting of the cane fields this month, something we have been requesting for years.

Membership Levy 2023:

The 2023 membership levy, combining the state and local district charges is: 81.14 cents per tonne (inclusive of GST) on all sugar cane supplied to the Rocky Point mill by all members during the 2023 crushing season. This fee is inclusive of cane testing/auditing fees, a levy for productivity/extension officer and an adjustment to top up the crop insurance offering.

OMNIA SPECIALITIES DRIVING RESULTS



After a 27% increase in sugar per hectare in Innisfail Queensland, Omnia Specialities took their biostimulant solutions to different regions, starting with the Burdekin. The first results came from a high yielding loamy soil near Ayr, and showed to be just as positive as Innisfail, with a 23% increase in sugar per hectare over the control. Speaking to Michael Gabiola, the Nutrien Ag Sales Representative who managed this trial, he said "the trial strip looked better throughout the early part of the crop. And after a late harvest in 2022, the treated area showed an increase in both yield and CCS." Michael closed off by saying "the grower would be using the products again in further trials."

Omnia have always focused on understanding what is driving the response to their products and the root system is at the core of this focus. Following on from the positive yield result in Ayr, Omnia analysed three other sites using the SARDI Root DNA analysis tool which identifies the amount of living root DNA in a sample. Mark Kirstein, Omnia Specialities Research and Services Technician, believes the increased root system is where Rhizovator™ OB and Bacstim® 100 are making the difference. Commenting "the results from three

different sites in the Burdekin indicated an average of 51% more root DNA verses the control. To put plainly, the products are providing up to 51% more opportunity for nutrient exchange between the soil and the root system.

He went on to say "being able to accurately measure the amount of living root DNA, we can monitor if the increased levels of living root results in a yield response. And we know this is where Rhizovator™ OB and Bacstim® 100 thrive." For more about Omnia Specialities and how they can help improve your root growth and ultimately yield, be sure to visit their website at www.omnia.com.au or contact their offices at 03 5133 9118.



BIOSTIMULANTS DRIVING RESULTS



Harnessing the power of biostimulants continues to produce outstanding trial results in Sugarcane.

For more information contact our specialist agronomists:

David: **0448 911 978** (FNQ)

Brendan: **0438 776 480** (Bundaberg/Southern QLD)

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03 5133 9118
omnia.com.au





Photo attribution: Sandra Henrich

CANE AUDITORS COME TOGETHER

Cane analysis auditors from across the industry have met face-to-face for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. Their May conference, coordinated by CANEGROWERS, was held at Sugar Research Australia's Meringa Station (SRA) near Cairns. The meeting brought together auditors, CANEGROWERS district managers and experts in the NIR (Near Infrared Spectroscopy) Cane Analysis System (CAS).

On the agenda was everything from weighbridge and tip inspections to sample tracking, Brix, poll and fibre analysis, control charting and NIR validation. Auditors shared details about their own systems in each mill in a cultivation of peer-to-peer learning.

Those attending also heard from Steve Staunton, SRA's expert in the online NIR Cane Analysis System, who discussed technical and data matters. NIR is a valuable tool used to both audit mill processes and analyse cane products to ensure correct calculation of supplier payments.

Cane auditors are crucial in determining CCS and grower cane payments by ensuring mills adhere to standards for cane analysis that have been agreed to under terms set out in Cane Supply Agreements. This vital grower service has been time-tested over many decades.

YOUR marketing company
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Make your vote **COUNT**

QSL
Your Trusted Partner

Nominations for the election of QSL Grower Representative Members open 28 June 2023

Nomination forms will be available at www.qsl.com.au or from your local QSL office.

To nominate as a representative for a mill area, you must be a grower who supplies sugar cane under contract to a mill in your mill area. Signed nomination forms must be lodged with QSL by 5pm (QLD time) on Wednesday 12 July 2023.

Voting will be held if there is more than one nomination for each vacancy.

For more information:
www.qsl.com.au

Your QSL grower rep election contacts:

> Cathy Kelly (0409 285 074 / cathy.kelly@qsl.com.au)

> Russell Campbell (0408 248 385 / russell.campbell@qsl.com.au)

Queensland Sugar Ltd ACN – 090 152 211



REVIEW OF REEF REGULATIONS ON THE HORIZON

Sustainability & Environment

MICK QUIRK

Sugarcane farming practices have been regulated since 2009, through various changes to the Queensland Government's *Environmental Protection Act*. In 2019, the Act was again changed to regulate other farm industries and to add extra requirements to cane, most notably the N and P budget.

The 2019 Act included requirements for the Government to review the regulations in the following manner:

- After 3 years, a once-off review of their effectiveness for reducing annual loads of sediment and dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) in rivers flowing into the GBR lagoon.
- After 5 years, and every 5 years thereafter, a review of:
 - o the adequacy of regulated practice standards for achieving water quality objectives
 - o the adequacy of the water quality objectives themselves.

The 3-year review has commenced and will focus on how much the regulations have influenced practices as well as how their implementation could be improved. It apparently will not estimate the water quality impacts of any such changes, which is surprising given this has been standard procedure when evaluating any investments addressing Reef water quality.

In fact we are not aware of any previous evaluation of the Government regulations on cane growers, despite these being in place since 2009 with consistent enforcement since 2014. This is surprising and concerning. If we don't know what the impact of the 2009 regulations were, how do we know if the 2019 tweaks made things better or worse?

In any case, the 3-year review of the 2019 changes will be done by an external contractor

who will consult with growers and grower organisations and presumably undertake analysis of data held by the regulatory compliance team. CANEGROWERS will ensure members' ideas for improving the implementation of the regulations are made clear to the government contractor.

The addition of the N and P budget requirement has improved one aspect of the original regulations - it shifted the checking of N and P amounts from the block to the whole farm, giving the flexibility needed when rationalising the number of blends. However, it has also created unnecessary amounts of additional paperwork and considerable confusion.

The first 5-year review will start at the end of next year and it is the most problematic one for our industry. This is for two main reasons:

- The water quality targets cannot be achieved by practical and affordable changes in sugarcane management – the government's own modelling shows this. But government has continued to hold this belief, regardless of the lack of evidence, and may therefore seek to further tighten the use of nitrogen fertiliser.
- The current government targets for adoption of 'best practice' includes sugarcane practices that are either plainly uneconomic or of uncertain value for growers. CANEGROWERS insisted on an independent review of these targets and practices, but this process is now in abeyance and seems destined to lose its independence. As a result, we still see reports from government consultants saying that growers should be adopting practices that we know to be uneconomic. This increases the risk of government looking at tighter restrictions on nitrogen use.

Through careful economic analysis and expert advice from industry agronomists, CANEGROWERS is well positioned to argue against any further regulation. The fact is we need less regulation. But we should not underestimate the political convenience of more regulation of practices related to water quality given that the main drivers of coral cover (such as ocean warming, ocean acidification and severe weather events) are in the too hard basket for governments. ■



GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR BIOSECURITY

Sustainability & Environment

ELISA WESTMORE

The Federal Government was proud to announce that the recent budget will provide more than \$1 billion dollars of sustainable funding over the next four years for biosecurity. This is obviously very welcomed given the ailing state of the nation's biosecurity system, but farmers will be less impressed by the intent to "ensure that the beneficiaries of strong biosecurity make a fair contribution to the cost of the biosecurity system."

In effect, they propose a new levy on farmers to help raise some of this new investment. This new levy would be set at a rate equivalent to 10 per cent of the 2020 – 2021 industry-led agricultural levies and raise approximately \$153 million over the next three years. This levy is sold and justified in the budget papers as

"recognising the benefits that primary producers derive from Australia's biosecurity system". But, while biosecurity is everyone's responsibility, growers are already contributing their bit to biosecurity, through existing levies to organisations like Plant Health Australia and Sugar Research Australia. And growers bear the primary cost of managing the historical pest animals, plants, and diseases from past incursions.

Increased funding is badly needed for our biosecurity system, but it should be sourced from the risk makers, not the risk takers. For this reason, CANEGROWERS has long supported the National Farmers' Federation's (NFF) campaign for a container levy on importers. The proposed new biosecurity levy will begin in 2024 but the steps to achieve this are unclear. New industry levies typically require consent from industry. CANEGROWERS will therefore work with NFF over the next year against this new levy, while supporting the other proposed measures for increased biosecurity funding.

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Maurice Shephard, 0457 924 762
Jordan Villaruz 0404 787 144



HARVESTING THE POTENTIAL AND WONDER OF THE SUGARCANE HARVEST

Membership Engagement & Innovation

MATT KEALLEY

The choppers on the sugarcane harvesters are sharp, the hydraulics checked, and the motor is humming in anticipation of the first block of cane to be cut for season 2023.

The harvesting groups are organised and the haulouts ready - as once that steam appears from the top of the mill's chimney, the signal is sent, and we are off.

Sugarcane harvest is an exciting time.

Seeing how the cane is cut by machines invented in Queensland and transported on rail to the mill shows the ingenuity and foresight of the sugarcane industry. And I am constantly reminded of this when I meet and work with people outside of the industry.

In May, I had the opportunity to attend the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) staff summit in Canberra. The two-day event was well attended by staff from commodity groups and state farming organisations across Australia and was an opportunity to network, discuss issues relating to agriculture and listen to examples of advocacy that are used by NFF and agriculture organisations to tackle their respective and more often, our collective challenges.

When I talk about the Queensland sugarcane industry, how we grow cane, how it is marketed and how we harvest and produce sugar - the sheep and wheat cookies and the representatives from other farming industries in the southern states are full of wonder.

They have to wrap their heads around how we deal with water. Moisture retention is so important to grain and while we are conscious of this in the drier parts of our industry, when I explain that having to

manage 5 meters of rainfall is one of our biggest challenges their eyes widen just a little.

This inevitably leads to the cropping cycle, the farming system and machinery. The discussion ebbs and flows on how cane is planted, the fact you can get five years from one plant, soil preparation, nutrition, extension, varieties and farming practices.

Naturally, this leads to harvest. A crude comparison I use is "cane is a giant tropical grass that you mow once a year with a cane harvester". We chuckle but then I grab my phone and show them footage of cane harvesting and the comparison makes sense. The discussion then leads to the transport, how the mill works, how sugar is made and how growers get paid. Once we start talking forward pricing, the chat often leads to markets, sometimes to market access but always to sustainability.

Sustainability is a big driver in all aspects of agriculture. No matter if it is grain, grape or goat, the need to be sustainable, productive, profitable and conscious of the expectations of the community is all pervasive. The social licence to operate and need to meet ESG targets like carbon emissions is in every farming organisation's consciousness and is always part of the conversation. Fortunately, the Smartcane BMP program delivers for sugarcane and is sometimes envied by the people I talk with – particularly for market access.

The day before the NFF meeting, I was in Sydney with KPMG workshopping how the KPMG Origins traceability platform can be used to show provenance of sugar accredited by Smartcane BMP to support market access in the UK, EU and US markets. These international markets are increasingly requiring sugar imported from other countries to meet their sustainability criteria. These are great market opportunities for our sugar and fortunately, Smartcane BMP and the blockchain traceability can prove provenance and provide confidence of sustainability.

Once the steam signal appears and the season is in full swing, just know that as the bins are being filled and the cane is crushed, the harvest represents the foresight, innovation, hard work and opportunity of sugarcane and the industry. It is highly regarded and is full of potential.

I wish you all the best with the 2023 harvest. ■



BETTER BUSINESS AS USUAL

Industry & Farm Inputs

BURN ASHBURNER

A few months ago, I wrote about some of the issues faced by the Farm Input and Research Committee and briefly covered the industry Sugar Plus Roadmap and the three different themes with better business as usual, adding value across the industry and developing a bioeconomy.

It is critical that the industry have a consolidated vision and strive to develop opportunities in value adding and a future bioeconomy. However, better business as usual producing raw sugar is expected to be the backbone into the foreseeable future.

At the Australian Society of Sugarcane Technologists (ASSCT) conference I was standing in for our CEO at a panel session on Sugar Plus Roadmap. I was asked the question "what are some of the key opportunities for better business as usual", this made me think.

Clearly as an industry we have always strived to do better business as usual. We have been good at this and are world competitive. We must not lose focus on the main game of raw sugar.

The Sugar Plus plan talks a lot about reliability and efficiency. At a grower level there are two things which come to mind. Firstly the underperforming hectares and secondly how do we break the yield plateau for the top performing Ha's.

The millers, SRA and Productivity Services would see any ha that is not producing to its potential as underperforming. Quite understandably they want every ha to be maximising tonnes cane and/or sugar or profit per ha. This is thinking at an industry level.

The reality is that the only person who can do something about it is the individual grower. The grower must believe the Ha's are underperforming, believe the solutions are feasible and then be able to adopt them. Arguably support from SRA, Productivity Services, resellers and consultants is only a phone call away.

If we want underperforming Ha's to be better this may entail social science research and a focus on self-assessment tools like Smartcane BMP and professional development for growers like Business Essentials.

The second issue of breaking the yield plateau is a hard nut to crack. To be better the focus must still be on research resulting in something new which can be adopted e.g. variety development, farming systems, nutrition, weed and pest control and irrigation.

Interestingly though the SRA levy has not increased for 10 years, so are we investing less and expecting more?

We also need to be better across the rest of the value chain with harvesting and transport to the mill, mill reliability and season length, sugar marketing and pricing, and trade.

For mill reliability to be better we need the mills to operate at an agreed hourly rate and keep season length to a minimum allowing for wet weather. Continued lack of investment in sugar mills can become a death spiral. Perhaps the current upturn in the sugar price will allow the mills to focus on replacement and maintenance of critical infrastructure. As with growers a milling best practice would highlight where mills are using outdate practices and/or equipment and could improve.

Another old issue at which we need to be better at is around the industry being able to collaborate to implement the Sugar Plus plan.

The industry needs to use the current positive looking profitability over the next few years to strategically invest back into the raw sugar industry. ■




ENDING EMPLOYMENT – THE BASICS

CANEGROWERS Legal Advisor

CHRIS COOPER

Although there are many fewer employees directly employed by growers in the sugar cane industry these days, there remains many vital workers doing important work for growers. Circumstances can change though and the need to end employment does arise. Doing so in a responsible and limited risk way is a good management strategy as we are seeing more and more challenges to dismissal. The following article provides some basic information on an important and sensitive topic.

1. An employment relationship can be ended by the employer or the employee.
 2. If an employer dismisses the worker, it must be done in accordance with relevant employment laws.
 3. If a worker is full time or part time, they are usually entitled to a notice period.
 4. There are exceptions to having to provide notice such as dismissal for serious misconduct or employed for a fixed period. Casual workers are not usually entitled to a notice period.
 5. A worker can be required to work out the notice period or the employer can payout the notice period and have the worker leave immediately by a payment in lieu of notice. A recent Federal Court decision has decided that a payment in lieu of notice must be paid at the time of termination. It is unlawful to make the payment in lieu of notice some days after the termination has been given.
 6. Any payment in lieu or notice must be for the full amount that the worker would have earned if they worked out the period, plus all accrued entitlements.
 7. The length of notice depends on how long the worker has been employed and the age of that worker.
- 
8. As a general rule a full time or part time worker is entitled to:
 - if worked less than 1 year – 1 week
 - between 1 and 3 years – 2 weeks
 - between 3 and 5 years – 3 weeks
 - more than 5 years – 4 weeks
 - if the worker is more than 45 years old and worked at least 2 years – 5 weeks
 9. If an award, agreement or employment contract provides a greater notice period then that longer period applies.
 10. Remember a casual worker, or worker dismissed for serious misconduct or employed for a fixed term is not usually entitled to notice.
 11. If an employee resigns they may have to give notice. An award, agreement or contract of employment may provide relevant notice periods.

12. Where an employer is required to give notice, it must be in writing. Employees giving notice may be able to give it verbally if permitted by an award, agreement or employment contract.
13. In some cases certain types of employees who were dismissed can apply to the Fair Work Commission to challenge the dismissal as being:
 - unfair; or
 - contrary to the general protections provided for in the Fair Work Act.
14. For an employee to claim unfair dismissal they must have been employed for at least 12 months if the employer is a small business i.e. less than 15 employees. To be unfair an employee must show that the dismissal is harsh, unjust or unreasonable. However, small business employers are protected from an unfair dismissal claim if they followed the Small Business Unfair Dismissal Code.
15. For an employee to claim that the dismissal is contrary to the general protections in the Act they must show that the dismissal was for a prohibited reason such as:
 - discrimination
 - workplace rights
 - sham contracting
 - temporary absence due to illness or injury
 - freedom of association.
16. Where a grower is contemplating dismissing an employee it would be wise to consider the risks of the worker challenging the dismissal and consider obtaining advice before proceeding. Following the Small Business Unfair Dismissal Code is a good start. ■

This article contains general advice only. The particular facts and circumstances of each case always need to be taken into account.

Any grower wishing to discuss aspects of this article or any other legal matter should contact your local CANEGROWERS office or call CANEGROWERS Legal Adviser, Chris Cooper, for free initial legal advice.

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Workshop Series Unimig 270S with 4 Roller KT50
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Accommodation available for seasonal workers
2023 sugar cane crushing season on the Atherton
Tablelands (Mareeba/Walkamin/Atherton areas).
Please contact Robert to learn more on 0429 933 884.

Howard CH2000 4.2m rotary hoe, crumble roller.
Comes with spare brand new gearbox still in crate.
Ph: 0439 965 921

2006 Case 7700 Track Harvester, 10.3Lt Iveco Motor
3,500hrs Very Good Condition Ph: 0467 198 700
AH: 4067 1498

7 Tyne heavy duty: Camuglia Ripper with bar for 5
Rubber tynes GC- \$4000. 2000LT Diesel tank with
BHP legs GC- \$1200. Hodge 2 Fan Blower with cane
topper VGC- \$3000 Phone no. 0429 681 264

Fiat 980 2WD-3,500hrs, Fiat 1000 2WD - 5,000hrs,
John Deere 4040 2WD - 3,600hrs, Chamberlain JD
4080 2 WD - 5,000hrs, Case 2590 2WD - 5,700hrs,
Michigan 110-14 Elevator Scraper-New engine
& Spare engine, D Massey Ferguson 3635 4WD
- 5,500hrs, 6tonne tipper bin, Silvan Euro Spand
CX2 Spreader, Portable bulk bin, Hustler Super Z
Zero turn mower, Bunning Lowlander Mk 40-60 Ag
Spreader(near new), Complete tracks to suit cane
harvester, Half tracks to suit cane harvester, and Fuel
trailer tank. Mulgrave Area 0407 160 673

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2012 Case 8800 fulltrack cane harvester fitted
with Trimble GPS and new walking gear. All in
goodcondition. Near new 6t side tipper. Mulgrave
Area Ph: 0407 160 673

07 Case 7700 lots of mods tripple sai chopper
motors 10 blade lift drums; 2x case 97 powerhaults
10ton l/hand tip & suspension w/cummins qsb 6.7l
engines & upgraded cooling packages; Fiat 140
tractor. Call 0429795883 or fb messenger Scott
Warland

Toft 6000 harvester \$20k Liquaforce 5 row applicator
\$25k stainless steel 25000L tanker on tandem axle
trailer \$15k 10 tonne side tipper \$12k kubota 8580
\$22k rotary hoe grubbers rollers ploughs plus more
call Rodney 0429984920

Rotocult 1 shot cultivator \$7,000 ONO + GST. Ph:
0149 988 158

2022 Case 9900 Harvester Ph- Craig 0436 332 044

2018 Case 8810 Harvester Ph- Craig 0436 332 044

2 of 2019 Case Puma 210 cut with 14T GTB Razor
Tippers Ph- Craig 0436 332 044

2 of 2021 Case Puma 225 Cut with 16T GTB Razor
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International 866 Tractor \$11,000, 1000 Litre plus
Diesel Tank on Stand \$1800, 2 Ripper Coulter's
each \$1900, Single Fertiliser Box Stool Splitter \$700,
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Road DEERAL.

2006 Case 7700 Track Harvester. 10.3Lt Iveco
Motor 3,500hrs. Very Good Condition Ph: 0467 198
700 AH: 4067 1498

Multi-Weeder \$350; Cane Drill Marker \$250; Silvan
600L Water Tank \$300. Ph: 07 4065 2165

Howard 80 inch Ripper Rotary (new blades & new
ripper tips) \$3,300. GST incl. 2 x second hand
Tractor tyres. 20.8 38 8 ply \$100 ea. GST incl. Ph.
0438 988 858

John Deere 7520 Premium Cab, IVT Transmission,
Power Beyond, Row Crop Tyres, 9,000 hours,
In excellent condition \$58,000 (plus GST)
Ph: 0439 965 921

Toft 6000, CAT 3306DI, Rotary Chop, Bent
elevator, standard topper. Good condition for age.
Ph: 07 4067 5327

Silkwood Implements whole Stick plant cutter with
topper \$5,000 Includes GST Ph: Ron 0407 667 819

Quantity of used Harvester track plates - curved and
flat Ph: Ron 0407 667 819

2015 Case 280 Magnum Ultimate 1750 hrs-equipped
with Case Trimble FMX 1000 GPS \$300,000 includes
GST Ph: Ron 0407 667 819

2012 Case iH Magnum 340. 4950hrs, Hydraulic Top
Link 4 Remotes, Trimble RTK GPS Included. G/C
\$230,000 + GST. Ph: 0408 700 555 or 0447 226 739.

2011 John Deere 7200R FWA tractor, 5,915hrs, G/C,
Trimble GPS, rear PTO, 3PL, front weights, tinted cab,
\$120,000 + GST. Ph: Peter 0427 976 416

Kubota M9540 4850 Hrs G/C \$38,000 + GST. Two
Ford 5000 articulated tractors coupled to 4 t side
tippers \$10,000 each + GST. One Ford 50 00 tractor
\$8,000 + GST. Ph Jamie 0427 089 009

2010 Austoft A8800 Cane Harvester, New Motor,
1800 hrs, Walking Gear has done 1 Season, \$90,000
inc. GST ono. Ph: 0407 630 499 or 0428 453 640

HERBERT RIVER - BURDEKIN

Case 5150 4wd w front end loader \$18,000. 100
hp. chamberlain canelander \$3,500. Massey
ferguson 178 \$8,000. Fert box 2t drop on top
\$950. Back blade suit 100hp no hydraulics
\$500. Phone John 0417 070 844. Photos
available. All items plus gst if applicable.

For sale Mulcher Nobili BNE 210 \$5,500 O.N.O
Phone 0747 765 114

2015 Austoft 8800 harvester. Good condition.
Ph: 0499 888 919 or 0429 989 502

15KW WEG Mining motor High Efficiency E3
415 Volt 3 Phase 1470RPM. \$1300 Neg inc
GST. This motor was manufactured in Feb
2018 and was in service for 3 years until the
switchboard was completely upgraded to fit
a VSD for better pump control. Motor was in
perfect working condition when taken out of
service and has been sitting in the shed since
then. Motor is complete with a taperlock and a
4 belt drive pulley. Current replacement cost is
\$2,150.00 bare motor ex Melb. without pulley.
Ph: Mario 0429 181 276

MF178 Tractor. Reasonable running condition
- Multipower, no canopy, new mud guards
\$10,000. Chain driven Row. Fertiliser box
1.5 tonne. trailed \$1,000. 3pl Back blade no
hydraulics. \$600. Chamberlain Canelander
Tractor good for spare tractor or tow boat
\$4,000 Ask for photos. Ph: John 0417070844

M135 4WD, 15,000hrs. Good Condition. \$35,000
inc GST. Ph: 0407 636 055

International 1086 Trike (146HP). Tractor was manufactured as a trike from the factory and has the genuine front pedestal and twin front wheel set up. Complete with full set of front weights, standard 3 point linkage as well as a locally produced mid mount implement toolbar. Tractor is in good operating condition other than the aircon which does not operate. Selling due to lack of use and taking up shed space. \$12,000 + GST. Ph: 0429 181 276 for more information or photos.

MACKAY-PROSERPINE

Farview Engineering 6 tonne side tipper. Ph.0407 761 364

Billet Planter- Hodge Front, Moller sorter bin with single chain, auger, Lorsdan tank. \$6200 Moller tipper bin and trailer. \$2500. 2 fan stripper with Hyd topper, new hose and clutch \$2500, Hodge upright thrash planter, spare knives \$500 2 x plant trailer \$800 ea, whole stick plant cutter \$950. Contact Michael 0427 846 246

4000 litres of 50/50 diesel/petrol mix suitable for firebug burners or parts washing. ph.0411196860

Southern cross LAH 7 stage turbine pump. Please phone 0407 595 218.

4040 John Deere for sale. Ph: 4954 1174 for price.

4080 Chamberlain tractor, air-con cab with John Deere engine, in good cond. 4280 Chamberlain tractor with John Deere engine, good for spare parts only. Ph: 0409 264 351 for price.

Hodge billet planter for sale with double chains and single axle bin, stainless steel fertiliser box all in good condition. \$22,000 plus GST. Ph: 0417 714 209 or 0428 165 142

2 x number 8 irrigation sprinklers with fittings. 15/5" Alum pipes with ajax fittings, galv pipe trailer, 5" bench etc, Nelson big gun for water winch. Ph: 4959 7207 or 0428 597 207 for price.

John Deere 8300 tractor 1998 model 8552 hours Has had engine and front differential rebuild Dual wheels, A5 gps and base station Good condition. \$65,000 Inc gst. Ph Stacey 0427 678 572

1 international 414 for sale, tyres 90% tread, engine needs repairs, \$1,000. Ph: 4954 1174

Newton 10 tonne elevator bin for sale. Ph: 4954 1174 for price.

Hodge billet planter for sale with double chains and single axle bin, stainless steel fertiliser box all in good condition. \$22,000 plus GST. Ph: 0417 714 209 or 0428 165 142. 2016 Case 8800 Track Harvester; 4887 Hrs; Good Condition. PH: 0408755453 Proserpine

Goldacres 800Ltr spray unit with in-cab controls, 110 LPM pump, near new condition. No boom. Spare new solenoids included. Good condition. \$3,200 + GST ono. Ph: 0419 646 235.

Water meter never used SIEMENS BRAND (no before or after the meter pipework required) 150 MM FLANGED, TABLE D/E Ph: 0411 196 860

6 Tonne west tool cane trailer. For price Ph: 0408 192 495

Diesel Tank on 2 wheel trailer 4500 Litres Ph: 0411 196 860

6 and 8 inch cast iron flanged Gate Valves. New never used. Ph: 0411 196 860

Rainfall Report

Brought to you by  Australian Retirement Trust

LOCATION	RECORDED RAINFALL (mm)			
	Month prior (Apr 2023)	Month to date (1 May -21 May)	Year to date 2023	Year to date 2022
Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman)	105.8	27.4	449.8	3554.8
Mareeba Airport	74.6	1	798.8	971.4
Cairns Aero	147.8	35	1437.4	2037.4
Mt Sophia	346	55	2250	4086.2
Babinda Post Office	no data	no data	no data	4543.2
Innisfail	474.2	67.8	2220.4	3621.4
Tully Sugar Mill	400.1	115.6	2210.5	4010.3
Cardwell Marine Pde	145.2	23	1584.5	2064.3
Lucinda Township	117.4	46	1269.2	2224.6
Ingham Composite	150	13	1313	2122
Abergowrie Alert	65	3	713	incomplete
Townsville Aero	111.8	7.6	924.8	1448.8
Ayr DPI Research Stn	190.2	0.2	975.6	1012.8
Proserpine Airport	83.4	3.2	1308	1446.6
Mirani Mary Street	52	14.6	1190	1236.5
Mackay MO	148	116.6	1110.2	incomplete
Plane Creek Sugar Mill	97.8	9.3	1052.9	1408.9
Bundaberg Aero	32.4	19	368	1280.6
Childers South	57.2	18.4	324	1359.6
Maryborough	39.2	27.6	343	incomplete
Tewantin RSL Park	68.8	122.8	374	incomplete
Eumundi - Crescent Rd	no data	no data	no data	2644.9
Nambour DPI - Hillside	69.6	96.2	165.8	incomplete
Logan City Water Treatment Plant	82.3	82.5	339.6	incomplete
Murwillumbah Bray Park	80.8	120.5	567.9	incomplete
Ballina Airport	152	136.8	731.6	2896.4
New Italy	69.1	50.6	436.2	2579

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.

Howard AH 120" Rotary Hoe. New blades, oil cooler, hydraulic lift crumble roller. Always kept in shed. In great condition. \$12600 +GST. Ph: 0428 761 324

1973 Ford 5000 2wd with 4ton Newton side tipper \$11000 +GST .3m niemeyer nr1411 Power Harrows \$5600 + GST. Ph: 0437 184 822

6t side tipper Ian Ritchie, Excellent condition \$15,000 + GST. Ph: 0478 719 294.

2 fan stripper \$500. Moller single chain planter \$4000. Roberts 6T goose neck trailer \$5000. Grubber & box \$300. Hodge upright planter \$3000. Ph: 0408 776 336 OR 4959 1765 after 7pm

Case 8810, 2018 model cut 4 seasons, low hour low tonnage machine, owner driver. Ph: 0427 271 278.

Celli Tiger spike hoe, 2.5m wide with hydraulic crumble roller and oil cooler. VGC. Mackay. Ph: 0438 606 578.

Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Mackay. Ph: 0438 606 578.

12t self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder. VGC. Mackay. Ph: 0438 606 578.

6t side tipper on Leyland tandem. GC. Mackay. Ph: 0438 606 578.

Massey Ferguson 8110 4-wheel drive with cab, 135hp, only 2,636 hours in good condition. \$55,000 incl GST. Ph: 0438 606 578

BUNDABERG-ROCKY POINT

2 x Single axle Hi lift tipper bins, one 8 tonne and another one 7 tonne \$12,000 plus gst Phone 0413 584 728

Daily row rake and centre row ripper. \$150 plus gst. One tonne bag lifter. \$150 plus gst. Ph. 0457 447 561

Massey Ferguson harvester 305 \$5,000, stick plant cane cutter 3 point linkage \$600, 2 fan stripper \$500, whole stick planter \$500, spinner weeder \$600. All + GST. Ph: 0402 781 765

Howard rotary hoe 90 inch reasonable condition \$3,000. Bonnel single stick cane planter good condition \$1,000. Aged billet planter weathered condition \$2,500. Belt spreader 3 ton bin good condition \$15,000 Phone 0437 266 711

Bonell whole stick plant cane cutter 3 point linkage \$200 plus GST. Ph: 0457 447 561

Plant cane cultivator 2 x 1.6m row w/ 3 weeder rakes and tines \$2,200 incl GST, Land plane w/

4m. hyd. tilt blade \$4,400 incl GST, 2x1.6m row cultivator w/ 10x 30ml. tines \$2,200 incl GST. Ph: 0408 761 463.

JD 2010 3520 harvester 7700hrs GC \$175,000 + GST. Ph: 0418 881 343.

Case 8810, 2018 model cut 4 seasons, low hour low tonnage machine, owner driver. Ph: 0427 271 278

HBM billet planter set up for dual row or single. \$9,000 + GST. Ph: 0413 584 728

2 row Bonnel fertiliser box with ground drive, \$1,100 + GST. Ph: 0413 584 728

WANTED

Wanted to buy Yeoman 7 leg ripper or similar style preferably with roller Ph: 0428 724 025

Wanted permanent purchase Lower Mary River Water Allocations on Mary River, Tinana Creek and Channel Pipeline sections of the scheme. Phone 0427 930 696.

Wanted to buy high rise spray tractor. (Mackay area) Ph: 0427 541 346

Wanted - Water tank trailer, about 5000 Litres PH 0417 784 642

Fertilizer box drop on stool type Tableland -Mossman -Tully Ph. 0439 951 110

Wanted 6 Cylinder Turbo Cat Motor - Phone 0417 193 385

Wanted a vintage 3 ton cane railway bin to display at the Childers historical complex QLD. Anything considered even parts. Email: Darrensbrennun@outlook.com Contact Number: 0402 122 790

Wanted 1996 - 2004. Toft / Case 7000, wheeled cane harvester. Phone 0420 600 943

WTB Tractor with FEL 100-140 HP up to \$50k. NQLD Area. Call Peter 0427 760 449

Cane stripper in good condition. Ph: 0407 675 361

Double 5 or 6 tonne side tipper with load sharing hitch. With or without tractor. Ph: 0418 379 253.

Weeder rake. Preferably heavy-duty frame, looking to modify. Condong area. Ph: 0438 428 113.

14 tonne elevator bin and tractor 50klm box or more. Preferably JCB. Ph: 0400 794 857.

Flat bed trailer approx. 3000 x 2100. Mackay/ Sarina area. Ph: 0439 752 381.

Service truck/trailer set up for harvester. Must have a good compressor. Ph: 0437 503 818.

PROPERTY - FOR SALE

Mulgrave Sugar Cane Farm - 82 Ha on 2 titles will sell separately. Lot 1 - 47 Ha with water License. Lot 2 - 34 Ha with house and shed. Ph: 0437 293 241 Mulgrave Area

2 Tableland Farms 59.145ha and 23.395ha 9(203.65 acres) on 4 Titles Walkamin area. 304 megs Tinaroo irrigation water, 65ha CPA, 10ha avocado and mangos, 2 houses, sheds, machinery, center pivot and hard hose irrigator. Soil and climate suitable for vast array of other crops. Ph 0439 951 110

PROPERTY - WANTED

Want to buy farm in Victoria Plains, Eton, Pleystowe area. Ph 049 00 29 387

Wanting to buy/lease cane farm. Close to Racecourse mill, Tekowai, Alexandra areas. Ph: 0438 545 251

Wanting to buy/lease cane farm in the Septimus area. Ph: 0417 607 722

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