



NOVEMBER 2018

Welcome to the November edition of the newsletter. In this edition:-

Productivity Services updates, Gas Exploration update, Ergon Trials and more....

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE



Hi All,

Another season has come to a close. Unfortunately, it didn't have an "8" in front of it for total harvested, which would have been nice. The season finished with a total tonnage supplied of 795,354 and held a ccs of 13.49.

Ratoons are starting to look good after a slow growth start, due to the cold weather. We are seeing a slight improvement in the sugar price again and hopefully it is trend that continues toward next

season. India is still the elephant in the room on sugar price. What they can do and can't do with their sugar we never seem to know.

This season was notable for the improved transport operation with regards to the liners in the bins. Congratulations to all involved in trying to reduce spillage from the trailers as it was noticeable how little losses were occurring.

I spent two days last week attending our State policy Council meeting in Brisbane. Current issues discussed are summarised here:

- Policy Council meeting:
 - The Environment and Sustainability Committee reported on reef regulations, sustainable sugar supply chain work and chemical (2,4-D / Glyphosate) issues. The committee also led a discussion on forming a CANEGROWERS Climate Change policy.

- The Farm Inputs and Research Committee reported on the current negotiations on transport policy, pattern approval for NIR analysis and bio-futures project.
- The Economics and Trade and Committee reported on the submission to the review of the federal Sugar Code of Conduct, trade policy and market access initiatives and water price path reviews and electricity (T33) tariff trial.

While considering all these issues the Council also heard from multiple guest speakers including, Federal Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud, Dr John Pickering from Behaviour Innovation, SRA's Phil Patane on the harvesting project and Tom McNeill from Green Pool discussing current global market dynamics.

I would like to notify all growers the date for the End of Season meeting is set for the 4th December at Canegrowers hall in Maryborough.

Guest speaker will be MSF Sugar CEO, Mike Barry, and Paul Heagney will also be attending from MSF Marketing Division.

We have two generous sponsors for the event this year being Commonwealth Bank, as well as Lewis & McNamara Solicitors.

Meeting commences 2:30pm with BBQ to follow. Hopefully some rain ahead and look forward to seeing you all at the end of season meeting.

Jeff Atkinson, Chairman



* Shed roof was here ^

But ended up in the front yard!*





MANAGER'S UPDATE

Weather is always a major factor in our lives. On 11th October the area had a series of wild storms move across that saw some hail damage in Gympie. Hail sales are everywhere there now!

A very intense cell cut a path from Yerra across Yengarie, Copenhagen bend to St Helens areas around Maryborough. Crop damage was easily evident as was the property damage throughout the areas.

This has put a spot light on the insurance process and with plenty of claims needing attention the time taken to process and complete repairs can

influence the relationship with your insurer.

Make sure you understand what work is being undertaken as part of your claim and that you have agreed to the level of works proposed. The clearer the communication between the insurer and you, the better the outcome for all.



"Hail damaged cane at Yengarie"

Ergon energy trial

Ergon has put details of its control load tariff (T33) trial on its web site and is inviting primary producers to connect certain farm equipment, like irrigation pumps, to the tariff.

When used in conjunction with another tariff, the control load tariff does not include either an annual capacity charge or service fee. All electricity used on this tariff (T33) is charged at 21.050/kWh

- Those currently using T66 might like to take consider the trial to see if it meets their needs. This biggest saving for those currently using T66 in switching to T33 will be the removal of fixed charges.
- The annual saving of around \$4,500 on fixed charges by switching a 40kW pump from Tariff 66 to T33 is likely more than offset the 1.712c/kWh higher usage charge on T33 than T66.
- Those who pump irrigation water between 7am and 9pm on weekdays using T62 could also achieve worthwhile savings, up to 25.5c/kWh, in usage charges on their power bills during these periods.

- Those who pump water using T65 during peak periods could save up to 15.8c/kWh in usage charges for electricity used in those periods.

The downside to T33 is that participants must be willing to have their power supply interrupted up to 6 hours per day without notice of when the power will be turned on and off. Ergon advise they are working on a system that may make notification of power switching available in the future.

Participants may also incur costs associated with ensuring they have a compliant meter box. Trial details, eligibility criteria and associated costs are outlined in the **attached** Ergon Fact Sheet.

The trial may not suit all irrigators. But for those who can manage the potential supply disruptions, the change could bring significant savings.

Ergon uses a dynamic load control system. This means that it only switches electricity off in parts of the network when there are load constraints. If there are no load constraints the power is not turned off.

Some growers have been on the original T33 trial since it started last year. Allan Dingle, one of the trial participants reports, "In the 12 months I've been on the trial the electricity to that particular pump was cut off for a 2-3 hour period at end of February on extremely hot day – that's the only time it's interfered with my irrigation. If the power was cut at any other time I wouldn't have known because I wasn't irrigating."

- The Ergon website: <https://www.ergon.com.au/agtariiffs> is the best place to sign-up.
- Before going on-line growers will need:
 - i. their account number;
 - ii. NMI; and
 - iii. a photo of their meter box / switchboard.
- If growers have multiple NMIs, need to put an application in for each site.
- For more information, Ergon advises the best contact is:
 - Brian Elmer
Customer and Community Projects Manager
P: 07 3851 6218
M: 0467 774 409
E: brian.elmer@energyq.com.au

Gas exploration

On the 9th of November Judy Plath visited from Bundaberg for an update on the gas exploration licenses. A further economic report has been completed by the Australia Institute indicating the economic impact of gasfields in farming regions for employment is for every 10 jobs created by the gas industry, 18 farming jobs are lost. It was also noted a reduction in agricultural output of 7% was common.

A delegation of concerned community representatives travelled to Brisbane on the 22nd November to hand over letters of objection from the communities to emphasise the need to address and, Ideally, remove the threat of these licenses.

Activities from the office

A District Managers meeting was conducting directly after the Policy Council meeting last week. Managers discussed policy and strategy implementation as agreed by the Policy Council and also



discussed initiatives around diversity in cane farming systems, insurance business offerings, membership engagement and training on Australian Financial Services legislation. Another item discussed is the upcoming

Crop insurance top ups

Now is the time to consider increasing the level of crop insurance you have in place.

As a member of CANEGROWERS, you automatically receive cover for fire and hail damage to the value of \$20/tonne.

This can be increased up to a further \$20/tonne for a small cost.

For example:-

- cover a farm of 10,000 tonnes for additional cover of \$10/ tonne, total premium \$160
- cover a farm of 10,000 tonnes for an additional cover of \$15/tonne, total premium \$240

Give the office a call to arrange.



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Upcoming Events

- 30th November BMRG annual General Meeting in Tiaro
-
- 4th December Maryborough Canegrowers End of Season Meeting & BBQ . Starts 2:30pm
-
- 12 December- surface drip irrigation demonstration- Alan Otto
-
- 25th December- Jolly fellow in Red suit visits all the good kids.



Season Update

Crop statistics

The 2018 season finished on November 13th, falling just short of 800,000 tonnes. While this was the second largest crop since 2006, it was well short of the pre-season estimate of over 900,000 tonnes. When estimating, Growers had factored in in-season growth which did not eventuate due to unfavourable weather and an extent of flowering not evident at the time.

Tonnes	795354
Hectares Harvested*	11728
Yield tch	67.8
CCS: Maryborough Growers	13.53
CCS: Sunshine Coast	13.49
Season length (Days)	154
Season Length (Weeks)	22.0
<i>*Preliminary areas subject to Grower Returns</i>	

2018 Block Data Returns

About now, growers should be receiving our end of year block data surveys. These are required to compile productivity data for farms and varieties and we must complete this step before we can commence preparing your 2019 maps.

There is also provision on these forms to tell us what each block class & variety should be in 2019 as well as any changes to block shape/area.

Your co-operation in returning these early is greatly appreciated – please call either Dannielle or myself if you need assistance with this.

Cane Supply Contacts (estimates, mapping etc):

Chris Coutts-Smith..... 0409 269 189

Dannielle Nitschinsk..... 0417 247 020

Don't forget that "moogle" will give you access to your specific farm data and results.



CANEGROWERS Insurance: Working for you, not the insurers

CANEGROWERS Insurance Scheme - owned by growers, working for growers, was commenced in 2012 to look after growers' insurance needs.

Wide Bay Authorised Representative Ray Goodwin recently commenced with CANEGROWERS upon the retirement of Colin Mobbs. Ray has extensive experience in looking after the insurance needs of the rural sector and has already assisted many of our growers to ensure that their insurance cover is tailored to their requirements. Ray provides a personalised on-farm service to growers, primarily servicing CGU's Canepol insurance policies.

He also has access to a broad range of other insurance products and alternative underwriters so that appropriate insurance cover can be obtained for all aspects of growers' businesses at the best price.

CANEGROWERS Insurance can help you in three (3) ways:

1. Expert advice - our advice doesn't stop once we've arranged your insurance policy
2. Faster claims - Ray can assist with the claims process from lodgement through to finalisation allowing you time to focus on what really matters
3. Better outcomes - we leverage the support of our network to ensure that you've got the added benefit of a large organisation who can help if any issues arise.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ray Goodwin about your insurance needs. ■



CANEGROWERS
INSURANCE

Ray Goodwin
Insurance Regional Manager
Wide Bay Region

Authorised Representative for NAS Insurance Brokers
AFS Licence No 233750

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Maryborough Cane Productivity Services

November Newsletter

Another weed for us!



Praxelis clematidea (Praxelis)



Ageratum conyzoides (Bluetop)

Looks like Bluetop, but the broad leaf weed shown above left, has been identified on a local cane farm as Praxelis. It is likely Praxelis has been with us for some time, simply not noticed as a different species.

Distribution and Ecology:

"A native of South America naturalized in Australia. The distribution of this species in Queensland is now from the islands in Torres Strait to Gympie in SE Queensland". It seems also to flourish in low light conditions i.e. past out-of-hand stage.

Similar species

Ageratum conyzoides (Bluetop) is often confused with *Ageratum houstonianum* (blue billygoat weed). These species can be distinguished as follows:

- *Ageratum conyzoides* has only a few hairs on the bracts surrounding its flower-heads. The bases of the flower-heads are relatively large (5-8 mm across).
- *Ageratum houstonianum* has numerous sticky hairs on the bracts surrounding its flower-heads.

Control: From my enquiries it seems the chemical control options are the same as for Blue Billygoat weed- atrazine or imazapic (Flame etc), Clincher Plus (metolachlor) are registered as a residual control or use of the products in the phenoxy range as a knockdown (Starane/ Comet, MCPA). Other products may also be registered.



Herbicide field demonstration walk

Amitron from Arista LifeScience: A successful field demonstration grower walk was held last week- it was a busy time for growers, however nine were able to attend, along with the Arista regional sales manager Mark Ellwood and Yolande Kliese from Northern AgriServices, the local supplier of Amitron.

The new herbicide Amitron a.i. is 700 g/kg amicarbazone, had performed well 27 days after application (DAA), as compared to imazapic (Flame, Spark, Impose) as the standard. Both herbicides were under a lot of pressure both from weeds and the 250 mm of rain 10 DAA. The main broadleaf weed was sesbania, a

legume which imazapic will always struggle with. Amitron was doing well against this weed, however seedling grasses (Rhodes grass, summer grass) were beginning to dominate.

Following the walk, there was spirited grower discussion around the changed 2,4-D legislation relating to droplet size, along with a nozzle demonstration. The key nozzle demonstrated was the AITT- air induction turbo twinjet which at 2-3 bar produce the required droplet spectrum.

Nozzles commonly used in Irvin leg systems are AIXR TeeJet which also produce the correct droplet spectrum at 2-3 bar.

The AITT nozzle splits the stream of spray solution resulting in improved coverage. I would like to thank Darryl Doyle for the effort he went to in applying Amitron and for the use of his tractor and boom used in the nozzle demonstration.



“Growers discussing Amitron, nozzles etc.”

Spray Adjuvants: The next interesting topic, initiated by Yolande was the subject of spray adjuvants. This subject can be complex, however a good understanding of them is important- spray adjuvants are specially formulated to mix with herbicides etc to enhance performance of those chemicals. A grower meeting around adjuvants is planned for the near future- watch this space.

Pests:**Armyworm:**

Happily, there appears to be very little army worm damage seen to date this year. This trend should continue as the ratoons are growing well after the rain and once the ratoon leaves toughen up, the army worm tends to move away.

Small areas of light damage have been noted around Tiaro. Spraying does not appear necessary at present



Slight army worm damage.

Canegrubs: From discussions with growers very few cane beetles have been seen to have flown-so far. The time for beetle flights is usually after the first spring storms- we have had these! The decision to use a product for control of cane grubs is there for dependent on grower knowledge of his/her blocks history, along with the monitoring results. Very few cane grubs were found during autumn/winter, which could indicate very low pressure-monitoring is always the best strategy.

Varieties: By now most growers are aware of the decision to remove SRA 1 from the recommended planting list. This decision, not taken lightly was after extensive field milling trials were completed, in Maryborough and Bundaberg. A lot of work went into trying to improve the fibre qualities of SRA 1 (delaying harvesting, growing under tough conditions) however the mill will be unable to process volumes of SRA 1 in a cost-effective way.

The Tissue Culture story: An article on the history of the development of tissue culture in the Maryborough/Morton region is discussed below-The system of tissue culture went ahead for the following reasons

- A high level of resources required to maintain mother plots and hot water treat (HWT) cane for distribution
- HWT cane does not guarantee disease free planting material- consider RSD
- Tissue culture technology was rapidly developing

After receiving an RCP Federal Government grant, the Little Tinana nursery materials (fence, pump, tank and irrigation system) and transplanters were purchased (Frank Sestak).



Growers in Maryborough are used to receiving a premium product from that impressive local production nursery-Wide Bay Seedlings, and this will continue.

The process: Once orders from the Productivity Service groups are received by SRA the following occurs:

1. Orders are compiled and checked by Dr Clair Bolton- SRA Burdekin.
2. The true-to-type varietal cloned mother stock is developed by SRA. To achieve this, the mother stock is generated in tissue culture whereby the “meristematic” material (growing tips of shoots) is sourced from a dedicated clean mother plot, and is DNA and disease tested.
3. TC labs multiply the plantlets to sufficient numbers to fill the orders, growing on an agar nutrient base solution, and sent to nurseries such as Wide Bay Seedlings (primordial roots and shoots are developing).
4. The nursery “teases” apart the plantlets and transplants into trays, grows them on inside the nursery and then hardening up in outside conditions.
5. These are then delivered to the MCPS enclosure at Little Tinana until pick-up by growers.

It is interesting to see how the numbers of T/C seedling orders have gone from 8360 in 2014 to 20920 in 2018.

Surface Drip irrigation system- Demo day

Udi David-Stern from N-Drip will be on site at Alan Otto’s Pocket farm on Wednesday 12 December at 1.00 pm. N-Drip incorporates a new Israeli designed emitter into the tape, which operates on gravity, claimed not to block up, thus eliminating the need for expensive filtration systems. All are invited to attend

For further information please contact Barry Callow on 0487017811

Useful Information

Maryborough Cane Productivity Services

- Barry Callow – Mobile 0487 017 811

Contact

<u>Maryborough Office</u> 106 Bazaar Street, Maryborough Qld 4650 <u>2017 Office Hours:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday: 8:30am – 4pm• Tuesday: 8:30am – 4pm• Wednesday: 8:30am - 1pm• After 1pm Urgent matters call Cam's mobile• Thursday: 8:30am -- 4pm• Friday: 8:30am – 4pm		<u>Postal</u> PO box 172 Maryborough Qld 4650
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Allen Birt	Deputy Chair	Mobile 0428 118 053
Ashley Petersen	Director	Mobile 0418 787 032
Allan Otto	Director	Mobile 0409 632 656
Roger Bambling	Director	Mobile 0419 788 376

Canegrowers



Tariff Initiative for Irrigators

Ergon Network is inviting primary producers to work with us and your electricity retailer to connect certain farm equipment, like irrigation pumps, to a load control tariff (for example Tariff 33¹).

Tariff 33 is cheaper than primary tariffs because the supply is interruptible and Ergon Network controls the times when power is available. For equipment like irrigation pumps that don't need power to be available on a constant basis or at a regular time each day, it makes sense to connect them to Tariff 33 to reduce your electricity running costs.

The aim of this initiative is to help farmers better understand how a load control tariff works and its suitability for your operations. We'll help you understand how to move key loads and ancillary farm equipment to Tariff 33. You must also have a primary small business or residential tariff at the same connection point.

¹ Some Retailers may refer to load controlled Tariff 33 by a different name.

Tariff initiative for irrigators

Tariff 33 details

Tariff 33 is a load controlled tariff which has power available for a minimum of 18 hours per day. The times of day that power is available may differ across regional Queensland, change from day to day and vary in duration. Supply may be interrupted on a daily basis or as required to manage load on the network. In some areas, we use a dynamic network load management system. In these areas, we will only switch Tariff 33 off for genuine localised system constraints to maintain security of network supply.

As part of the application process, we will advise you how Tariff 33 'off' times are generally managed in your area but you won't be notified prior to Tariff 33 being switched on or off, however this may be available at some time in the future. Your electricity retailer will advise you of the pricing and eligibility for this tariff.

Timeframes

Using Tariff 33 in conjunction with a primary tariff is an option that is already available and there is no set end-date. You do not need to be part of this initiative to access this tariff now.

Eligibility

To participate you must:

- Be connected to the Ergon electricity network
- Be classified as a 'small' energy user (using less than 100MWh/year)
- Have a primary small business or residential tariff at the same connection point
- Have connected loads that do not rely on having power available 24/7
- Have a compliant meter box and switchboard that is suitable to install a new meter (if required) and a load control receiver.

Costs

If your meter box and switchboard are not already compliant, you'll need to arrange to upgrade them to current standards before the start of the initiative. This will be at your own expense. We will assess the suitability of your meter box and switchboard from the photos you provide us during the application process.

You may also incur costs for:

- Separating circuits to connect specific loads
- Changing business practices and equipment to accommodate power supply interruptions.

Please note: While your usage and current tariffs will be reviewed for suitability on Tariff 33, the decision to participate in the initiative is yours. There's no reimbursement available for any differences in electricity costs you incur. You'll also be responsible for any damage or loss incurred due to electricity supply interruptions.

How to apply

To apply, complete the online expression of interest form at ergon.com.au/agtariffs and attach photos of your meter box and switchboard. Please ensure you review and agree to the terms and conditions.

As part of the application process, we will provide advice on:

- The suitability of Tariff 33 for your farming needs
- Compliance of your meter box and switchboard
- How Tariff 33 timing is generally managed in your area.

If your application is successful and you would like to proceed, you should then contact your electricity retailer to follow their standard tariff change process. We would also like to understand your experiences during this process and may request your feedback through an email survey.

More information

Speak to your agricultural industry body representative or contact us.

Phone: 07 3851 6218
from 9am to 4:30pm
Monday to Friday

Email: agtariffs@ergon.com.au

Online: ergon.com.au/agtariffs



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