

**September 2019**

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

Reef Regulations voted in, thinking ahead, and more....

## **CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**



Sunshine coast growers , MSF Sugar Representatives & local council meet to review the road network and access issues.

Hi All

Not much variation seen in the local weather conditions for August and September. DRY has been the only setting. The crush has continued to run very smoothly with the only serious breakdown losing a couple of days from a broken roller. The allocation of lost time for rain is not under pressure at present and will see us finish crush around the end of October if nothing changes. CCS has been good this year and the last few weeks are seeing numbers around 14.5 for the weekly average.

With our busy time planting and getting ratoons away it would be great to receive some rain and return moisture to the soil.

What does the future look like for Cane in the area? Last week's newspaper headlines shows the community interest. With still no decent price for our end sugar product with Market price for sugar currently at \$380/tonne and the Indian government making no attempt to reduce or remove their subsidised sugar regime.

The mill remains committed to this District and all of the cane supply areas feeding to it. While we may not be searching for the million tonnes going forward , we can develop a consistent supply with some better positioned water assets in the area.

A range of fallow crops are looking attractive again with strong market prices due to reduced planting in traditional areas. If these areas do not receive rain than market prices may even rise further. Fingers crossed we receive rains and can take the opportunity of some good fallow crop income. Soybeans were the main crop last year and may be the majority again this year. Peanuts were good for some last fallow but weather at harvesting was not ideal for some. It will be interesting to see how many peanuts are in the region this coming fallow. Other fallow crops we may see are corn, cotton and grasses for fodder. Sadly our potential fallow crop income comes due to the unfortunate conditions others are experiencing across Australia.

Jeff Atkinson, Chairman



## **MANAGER'S UPDATE**

Reef regulations have been voted on and passed in the state parliament with a vote of 48 to 40. The current timeline expects completed guidelines to be in place by December 2019.

For our region, the likely format sees Minimum Practice Agricultural standards come into effect in 2022 (three years grace for Burnett Mary Region)

We can confirm our local member voted on all stages of the Reef Regulations and supported the bill on all votes. This is despite numerous meetings by the local board & District manager seeking his support to vote "no".

### **Senate Enquiry– Reef Water Quality**

Many of you are aware of the state Government announcement 19th September that the Revised Reef Regulations have been passed but on the same day the Federal Senate has agreed to refer the following matter to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for inquiry and report by **1 October 2020**.

The Terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows.

*The identification of leading practices in ensuring evidence-based regulation of farm practices that impact water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef, with particular reference to:*

- a. *the existing evidence-base on the impact of farm water runoff on the health of the Great Barrier Reef and catchment areas;*
- b. *the connectivity of farm practices throughout the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas to water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park;*
- c. *relevant legislation and regulation, including in relation to impacts of water quality, farm management and soil runoff;*

a. *proposed changes to regulations that would impact on farm productivity and the potential benefits and costs of such proposed regulation;*

b. *the wider economic and social impact of proposed regulations to restrict farm practices; and*

*any related matters.*

Submissions close on **8 November 2019 & CANEGROWERS will be providing a submission**. Stay tuned...

### **Transport access to Sunshine Coast**

Cane Hauliers have settled into using the council provided loading pad at Bli Bli for de-coupling and an extra prime mover has been brought in to ensure quick collection continues for the remainder of the season.

### **Paddock to Reef - integrated Science Forum**

Every year, BMRG hosts a regional integrated science forum, bringing together scientists, modelers, industry groups, extension officers and government representatives to present the latest research and findings regarding the health of the Great Barrier Reef. This year's forum has been hailed as the most successful forum to date with almost 80 participants gathering in Bundaberg's Multiplex Centre for a day of informative and interactive sessions.

As one of the participants, I found the information frustrating as the reliance of Modelling for assessing conditions in this area is very high. There is a lack of testing sites for actual water quality assessments & this is leading to small sample volumes being calculated to represent the statistics for the whole of the region.

Of interest, the Office of the Great Barrier Reef has now added a Social Psychologist to their team mimicking a program called "Cane Changer" that was trialled in Far north Queensland for the last two years. There will now be 6 additional Questions on Paddock to Reef Surveys to help understand the mental pressures being experienced.

Targets for the Mary River catchment will aim to reduce levels of fine sediment, Nutrients (nitrogen & phosphorus) & pesticides flowing to the Sandy Straits. These will apply to all agricultural activities along the length of the catchment and take full effect in 2022.



**Joke of the Day :** A man was driving for hours through desolate country when he passed a farmhouse, and before he could react, a cat ran out in front of him and \*splat\* — he flattened the cat. Out of kindness and consideration, he stopped, turned around and drove back to the farmhouse to notify the occupants. When the housewife came to the door, he said, “Pardon me madam, but I just ran over a cat in front of your house, and assumed that it must belong to you. I know this might be hard to hear, but I wanted to let you know instead of just driving off.”

“Not so fast,” she says. “How do you know it was our cat? Could you describe him? What does he look like?”

The man promptly flopped down on the ground, and said, “He looks like this” as he gave his best shot at a dead cat impression.

“Oh no, you *horrible* man,” she replied. “I meant, what did he look like *before* you hit him?” At that, the man got up, covered his eyes with both hands and screamed, “Agggghhhhhhhhh!!!!!!” **(when sharing this joke , make sure you do the actions!)**

## Activities from the Office

Meetings since last edition.

1. Southern Districts SRA meeting and committee meeting held in Childers 02/08/19
2. Ongoing discussions with State member for Maryborough on Reef Regulations.
3. Grower Representative Pricing meeting held in Cairns 16/08/19
4. BMP Team conference attended in Brisbane 19 & 20/8/19.
5. SRA demonstration & board discussion at Petersen Farms 28/08/19.
6. Regional Cross Industry Adoption workshop by SRA 17/09.
7. Regional Integrated Science Forum in Bundaberg 19/09/19.

## Upcoming Events

- 4 October– Model T Ford association meeting at Geoff Harris Farm, Yerra.
- 9th October-
- Sugar Shack Crafters meet 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month at CANEGROWERS hall.
- 31<sup>st</sup> October –hopefully, close to end of season.
- 12th & 13th November– Next CANEGROWERS policy Council Meeting in Brisbane.



## Calling all ag innovators

Are you working or studying in an agriculture, fisheries or forestry related industry?

Are you aged between 18 and 35?

Do you have an original research project idea and need \$22,000 to make it a reality?

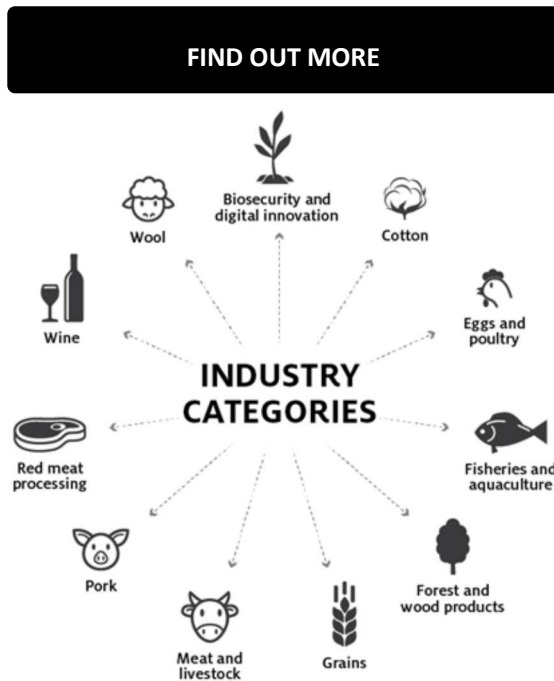
Why not apply for the Science & Innovation Awards?



Interested?

Here's what to do next:

1. Go to [GrantConnect](#), log in and search for GO2850 to access the application form.
2. Check the full list of [eligibility requirements](#).
3. Check out our handy [questions and answers](#) for applicants.
4. Read the Science Awards [partner profiles](#) to learn more about what they are looking for.



## Next Crop

Congratulations to Leyton Petersen completing Leadership program

Next Crop is specific for the Australian sugar industry and has helped emerging leaders build their skills and contribute to future leadership roles, delivering a benefit for the whole industry. The graduates focused on two project concepts aimed at creating a more positive and sustainable sugarcane industry .





## **P & J TYRE**



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## Useful Contact Information

### Maryborough Cane Productivity Services

- Yolande Kliese– Mobile 0487 017 811

#### **Maryborough CANEGROWERS Office**

106 Bazaar Street, Maryborough Qld 4650

#### **2019 Office Hours:**

- 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

#### **Postal**

PO box 172  
Maryborough  
Qld 4650

Cameron Waterson	District Manager	Mobile: 0427 577 557 Office: (07) 4121 4441
Email address:	Cameron_Waterson@canegrowers.com.au	
<b><u>DISTRICT</u></b>	<b><u>DIRECTORS</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Number</u></b>
Jeff Atkinson	Chairman	Mobile 0428 212 792
Ashley Petersen	Deputy Chair	Mobile 0418 787 032
Roger Bambling	Director	Mobile 0419 788 376
Adam Doyle	Director	Mobile 0407 627 424
Isaac Schmidt	Director	Mobile 0417 868 377





### Operations as of 20th September

Crushing operations commenced 22nd July with a year-to-date total of 366,459 tonnes at 13.79 CCS. Favorable cane quality has resulted in satisfactory milling operations and performance however lower fiber content is a concern which is a unit below the 5 year average.

Apart from No. 2 Mill delivery roller major failure, a reliable factory operation is achieving an average of 43,500 tonnes cane crushed per week over the last 8 weeks.

### Cane Supply

At the 10 week mark of the season, the average cut to estimate across all groups is sitting at around 94%. This could decline further as the hot dry weather continues, and a downward revision of the original 625,000 tonne forecast is to be expected.

Most harvest groups are now sitting at around 60-65%, with some roster rescheduling of some groups needed to bring all back into equity. Groups harvesting predominantly low yielding dryland cane have the biggest challenge in supplying their daily allotment, and we are assisting where we can.

Another challenge we have had this year has been an increase in restrictions for B Double access on some local roads as well as the Sunshine Coast. While we have managed to get some restrictions overturned, it has increased harvester waiting times, particularly on the Sunshine Coast but also in other outlying areas.

### What's Happening on the Corporate Farms?

Our Corporate Farm planting program is progressing well, with 253 Hectares of the planned 582 Ha spring plant now complete, on top of the 66 Ha autumn planting completed last April. A total of 120 trays of tissue culture comprising 9 different varieties have been established in autumn and spring this year.

Our weed and nutrient management is all on track, with our practice being to follow behind the harvesters with fertiliser, pre-emergent and irrigation immediately after harvest.

## What's Happening in the Mill?

### Maintenance and Capital Program

The maintenance and capital programs have proceeded well during the year. Some of the major jobs undertaken to improve safety and mill reliability include:

New cooling towers for the turbine and milling cooling system (Photo below)

Power House HV Interconnector Circuit Breaker Upgrade

Prepared Cane Elevator Drive Replacement

Refurbished Air Heater for the Babcock Boiler

Babcock Boiler Under grate Tube Replacement

Upgrade Molasses loading facility

Guarding and Access Improvement projects

Installed two 324,000L tanks for the Fire Safety System

John Thompson Boiler ID fan replacement will commence following the cease of 2019 crushing operations. This will take 6-8 weeks to complete the project using mill employees and contractors.

Work is in progress to finalise 2020 Capital and Maintenance program and funding approval process.

### Recruitment

Advertising for the 2020 Apprenticeship intake opportunities for Maryborough Mill has now been listed on "Seek" as well as the MSF Sugar website under Careers. Boilermaking, Mechanical (Fitting) and Electrical apprenticeships have been advertised. **Applications Close 11th October.**

### Cane Supply Contacts (estimates, mapping etc):

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

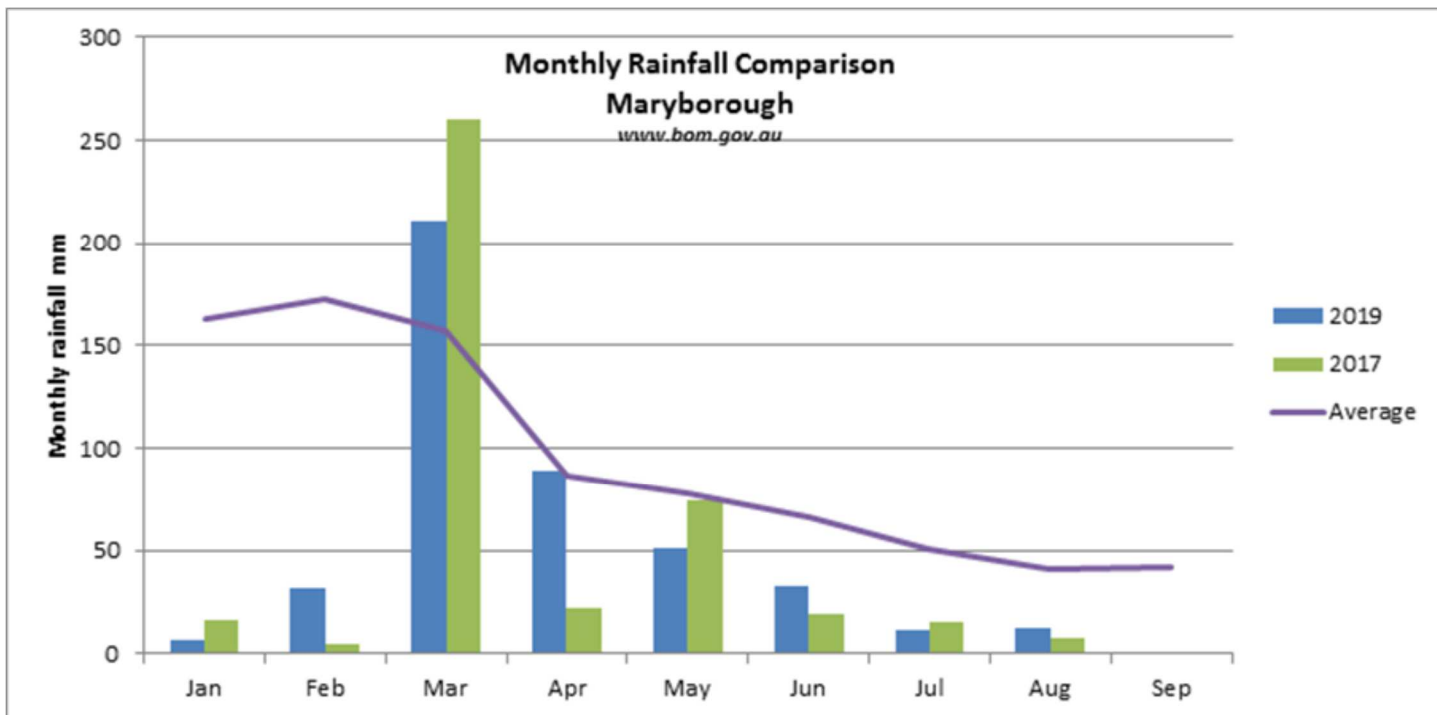
Dannielle Nitschinsk..... 0417 247 020

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



## It will rain

It has been brought to my attention that the similarities with the 2017 rainfall are significant:



I am certain it will rain and hopefully sooner rather than later. There is a theory that after a prolonged extreme dry winter that we will see a mass hatching of armyworm. What happened in 2017 was the perfect example. I have seen some minor Armyworm damage in some blocks in the past week. Symptoms are eaten leaves with the midrib left and if you look under the trash you may see larvae or pupae. From the SRA Info Sheet "Armyworms and Loopers"—Spraying is not normally done as one attack on a healthy crop in early spring will not cause significant yield reduction. Early spraying kills beneficial parasitoids and reduces



natural build up of diseases that infect armyworms. A series of attacks in early to mid-summer in weedy or weak crops may cause enough leaf loss to warrant spraying. Always identify caterpillars prior to spraying, if you have night feeders spray late afternoon. If you require assistance with identification let me know or refer to the SRA Pests of Australian Sugarcane Field Guide pages 64-66. Most common choice for spray control is 700 or 900mL/ha of 500g/L Chlorpyrifos product (such

as Strikeout 500EC, Lorsban 500EC). Only spray if significant leaf loss/damage and large continued attack.

The Beatsheet reported on Armyworm outbreaks in barley crops from southern NSW to the Darling Downs on 2 August 2019. Large numbers of moths are being seen around lights at night. It is not unexpected that armyworm would be abundant this Spring as some of their source areas (Channel Country, North Western Qld) would have received significant rainfall or flows earlier in the year.

For the full Beatsheet article click on this link <https://thebeatsheet.com.au/armyworm-outbreak/>



## Soybeans:

With the market looking strong again for the upcoming soybean crop, new varieties about to be released, herbicide research and other interesting information. I have invited some people to share their knowledge about soybeans with us. It will not just be about listening though, there will also be time for sharing information between ourselves about things people have tried that have worked and not worked over the years for them. **Dinner and drinks will be provided, please RSVP to Yolande for catering.**

### **Monday 21st October 5:00pm Canegrowers Maryborough**

Come along and listen to and ask questions of:

- Andrew James, Soybean Breeder with CSIRO and leads the National Soybean Improvement Program. Andrew and his team bred the new varieties about to be released—New Bunya and Kuranda. Andrew will speak about the new varieties, key factors influencing variety choice, news from the breeding program.
- Neil Halpin, DAF and GRDC Grower Solutions Group. Neil and his team do a lot of research on soybeans and peanuts. Neil will provide an update on the herbicide trial and discuss planting density. I am sure Neil would be happy to answer peanut questions as well as soybean questions on the night.
- Nikki Seymour, DAF Principal Soil Microbiologist. Nikki will talk about the do's and don'ts of inoculation.
- Hugh Brier and Trevor Volp, DAF Entomologists, will talk about insect management & coastal challenges.

I wanted to have this early enough so you could base variety and planting time decisions on the information. Being in the crush still I thought an afternoon/evening might enable more people to come along. Our guest speakers have generously given up their time to travel and share their knowledge with us. Your attendance would be appreciated.

I do apologise for two meetings so close together, Monday then Tuesday—Soybeans and Feral Pigs. It was when people were available.



## Feral Pigs:

Feral Pigs continue to be an issue. We need to work together in a more coordinated approach to reduce the population. Feral Pigs are the second fastest breeding animal after rabbits. To truly impact the population we need to control 70% in a small timeframe. Please come along to a meeting on:

### **Tuesday 22nd October 5:30pm Canegrowers Maryborough**

Everyone is invited, not just canegrowers. Spread the word—we all need to work together. Bring the people who help you to control Feral Pigs. Darren Marshall, who was on Landline Sunday 29/9—watch it on iView if

you missed it, will be speaking. Fraser Coast Regional Council will be speaking as well about resources available and how to access them.

It is not just about listening to people speak at this meeting though, we want to listen to you to understand what could assist you to control the Feral Pigs.

I ask you to come along so we can make a plan together. We cannot do it without you!!!



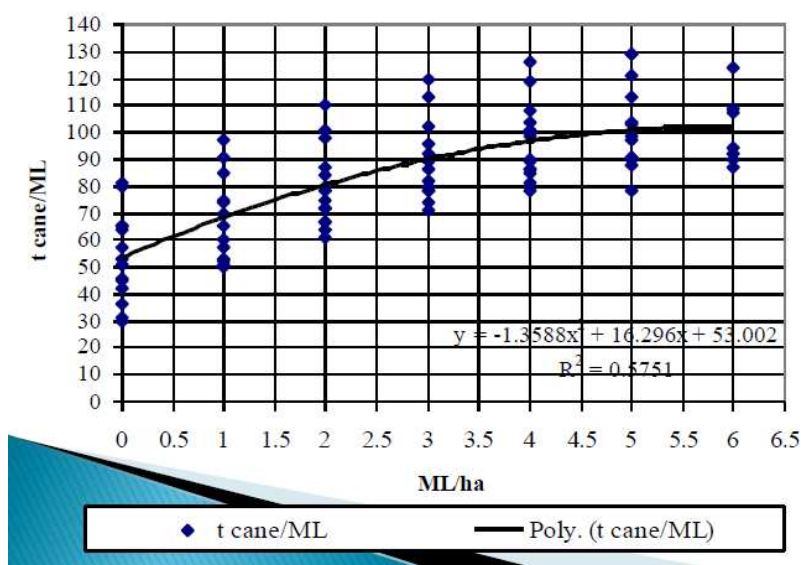
## Working Wisely with Water— Information from Wednesday 21st August

### Prepare the crop in Spring, Grow it in Summer, Ripen it in Autumn

Our future seasonal rainfall forecast is not great and it is at times like these you hope the models are wrong. I attended Working Wisely with Water, which focussed on irrigation of sugarcane in dry weather conditions, and below are the main things I took away from Maurie Haines, Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited, Andrew Jakins Isis Productivity Limited and Pat Daley's presentations:

- Maintain soil moisture prior to harvest for weight, CCS and quality and to improve ratoonnability, irrigate 6 to 8 weeks prior to harvest.
- Irrigate soon after harvest to establish the ratoon crop with trash blanket. Crop water use is low at this time 1.5mm/day. A trash blanket will get you to Christmas with less water use - approx. 1ML/ha saving.
- Retain a minimum of 30% trash where baling for soil moisture conservation and weed control.
- If water is limited irrigate as little as possible until December, give the crop a drink before Christmas and then go hard in January and February to meet crop demand (6mm/day) and actually grow the crop. Irrigating and not meeting demand the crop doesn't die but it doesn't grow either.
- Lighter soils may only hold 7 days of readily available water (RAW) when the crop is using 6mm/day in summer at full canopy. Length of rotation is very important to maintain crop growth. Each day of stress, moisture below readily available, reduces yield by 0.7t/ha. Know your system capacity and if you cannot get around quick enough consider irrigating a smaller crop area and seek greater production per hectare.
- With soybean prices and other pulse and grain crop prices looking favourable again conserve moisture for fallow crops and consider spraying out the cane crop rather than cultivating (spray out healthy knee high cane not moisture stressed for optimal control). If cultivation is required consider strip cultivation rather than full cultivation.
- Irrigation can produce 6 to 13 tonnes cane/ML if well timed and the irrigation is refilling the soil deficit of Plant Available Water. Maurie Haines presented the below graph and table—

**Yield and Water Use Relationship**  
**Bundaberg 5 year average (1998–2002)**



ML/ha	tc/ha
0	53
1	68
2	80
3	90
4	96.5
5	100.5
6	102

## Crop Water Use and Irrigation Scheduling

There are many methods to schedule irrigation, such as automatic soil moisture monitoring probes, tensiometers, using evapotranspiration and crop factors (demonstrated below):

$$\text{Crop Water Use (ETc)} = \text{Evapotranspiration (ETo)} \times \text{Crop Factor (Kc)}$$

**Evapotranspiration rates (ETo)** for Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Gympie are on the BOM (Bureau of Meteorology) website. Link to ETo on BOM website <http://www.bom.gov.au/watl/eto/>

Maryborough 16/9 to 22/9—3.7, 4.2, 4.2, 3.9, 4.5, 4.9, 4.0 = 29.4mm for 7days = 4.2mm/day average

Crop Cover (%)	Bare Ground	25% Canopy	50% Canopy	75% Canopy	Full Canopy	Maturing
Crop Factor (Kc)	0.1	0.35	0.65	0.95	1.25	0.7

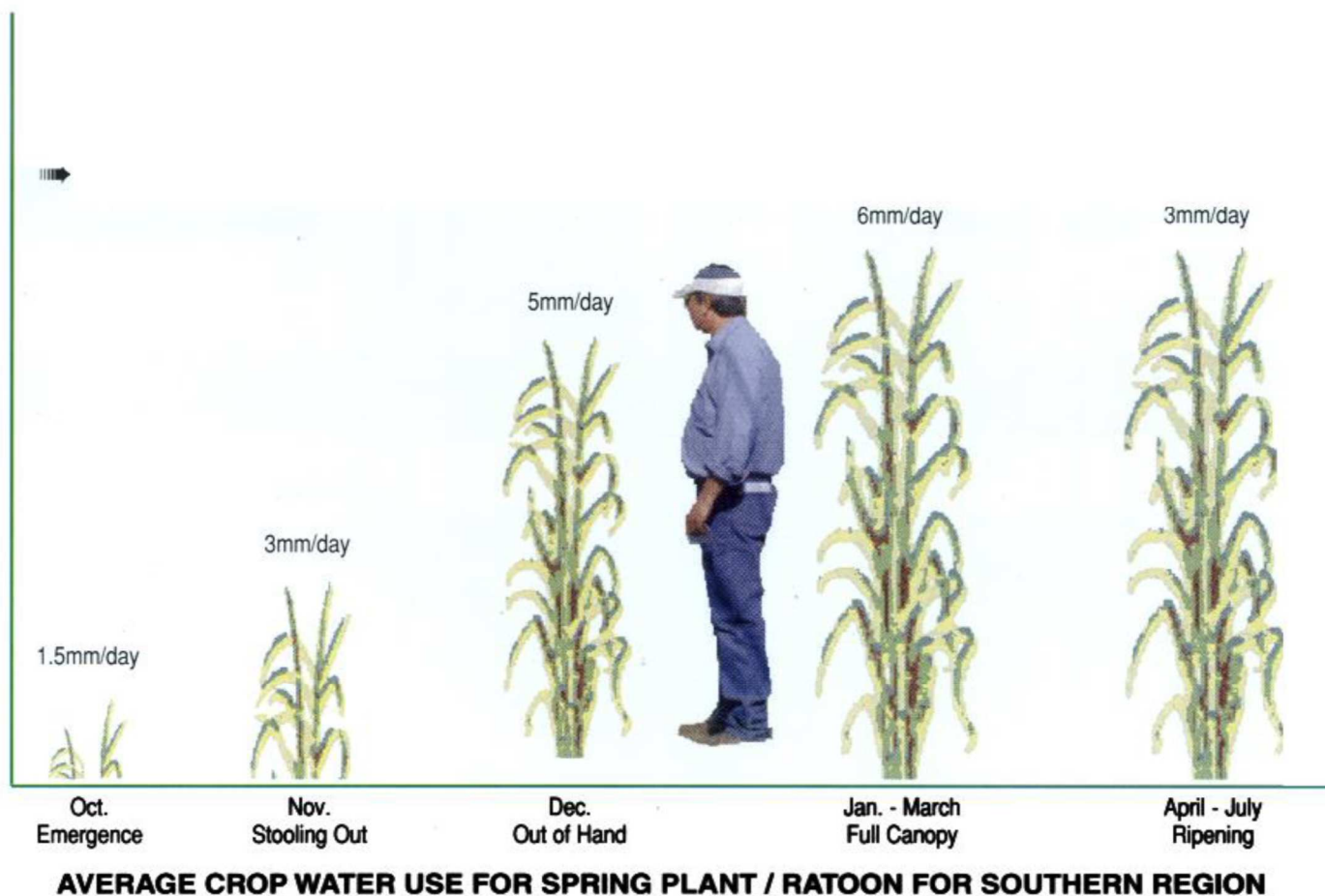
### Crop Factors (Kc)

**For example** - Crop Water Use (ETc) for 25% canopy crop = 29.4mm (ETo) x 0.35 (Kc) = **10.3 mm per week**

By understanding Readily Available Water (RAW) in the root zone then you can schedule irrigation to maintain the soil moisture. If you had 30mm RAW then you would not need to irrigate at this point in time. Using tools such as probes and tensiometers can make it easier to monitor the RAW in your blocks.

**SMS Text Message Crop Water Use Information** - I am able to send a text message throughout the season with Crop Water Use for early and late harvested crops determined from the above method. I understand some growers may not wish to receive this text, so if you would like to receive this text message please let me know so I can include you in the group. You can opt in or out at any time by letting me know.

## HOW MUCH WATER DOES MY CROP USE?





**GPS Base Stations:** Just a reminder we have 6 base stations operating and you can use difference brands of systems with the bases. I know some growers are using Precision Technology (previously Farmscan Ag and AgGuide) and Trimble systems. Please let me know if you are using any other systems so we can share what is working. My understanding at this stage is John Deere will not use our base station network but if enough people keep asking maybe they will. Frequencies for the base

stations are in the table and also on the ACMA website, as all of our frequencies are registered. Bandwidth is 25.0 kHz. When talking to tractor suppliers about GPS ask them if they will use the existing base network and provide them the frequency and bandwidth. If they require more information put them in touch with me.

Later this year the base at the Mill will be moved to Granville to reduce interference and improve reception. Nothing will change other than location and you will not need to do anything when this happens.

Thank you to the growers that have these base stations on their sheds.

Base Location	Frequency
Maryborough Mill	450.150
Bidwill	463.325
Nikenbah	463.650
Yerra	463.550
Bauple	463.050
Miva/Scotchy Pocket	463.825

### SRA11 Initial CCS data:

Tony McDermott, MSF Sugar, and myself have been small milling samples to look at the CCS over time for 1st Ratoon SRA11 harvested 14/9/18. This is only very limited data but it shows the crop maturing towards 12 months of age. Other areas have had CCS over 14 (July) and over 15 (early September) for 12 month old crops. We will know more as SRA11 starts going through the mill commercially if it is early mid or late.

Date	12/6/19	26/6	10/7	16/8	3/9
Small Mill CCS	10.3	11.0	12.0	13.5	14.3

A big thank you to Georgia Nilon and the team in the mill lab for analysing the small mill samples this year.

### Tissue Culture (Pot Plants) Seedling Trays:

Can you please return seedling trays to either the seedling enclosure at Little Tinana Farm or to the Cane-growers Office. Or if I am visiting please give them to me to take with me. I can then return the trays to Wide Bay Seedlings to be cleaned, sterilised and reused.

### Products I have heard about from growers:

#### Tough measuring Jug

We do handle some chemicals that we need to be very careful with. Breaking handles on measuring jugs, especially when they are filled with chemicals such as Paraquat (Gramoxone) is not ideal. I was recently made aware of a very strong chemical measuring jug. It does come at a price - \$50 including GST plus freight.

Dr Nozzle is the supplier I am aware of for the 6L rota moulded jug designed for long life and balanced so when it starts pouring it helps the pouring process. I understand it can be a little harder to wash out due to the shape and moulded handle. There may be other suppliers.

Link to website: <https://www.drnozzle.com.au/shop/6-litre-jug/ET6L>



## Publications Available—let me know if you would like any

I have the following hard copy publications in my office please let me know if you would like any:

**Australian Sugarcane Nutrition Manual SRA 2018**—good explanation and photos of deficiency symptoms

**Diseases of Australian Sugarcane Field Guide SRA 2019**—good photos of diseases and descriptions

**Good Bug? Bad Bug? 2012** - guide for insects in soybeans, peanuts, summer pulses and chickpeas. Great pictures to assist with identification. Note very limited number of these available

**Irrigation of Sugarcane Manual SRA 2014**—discusses water quality, saline & sodic soils, systems, scheduling

**Weed Management Sugarcane Manual SRA 2017**—presents herbicide options, calibration and nozzle info

**TeeJet Technologies Catalog 51A-M**—good info on nozzles L/ha, drop size, calibration, coverage. Technical information on spraying page 140 onwards

**Precision Agriculture for the Sugarcane Industry SRA 2015**—GPS, Remote Sensing, Yield Mapping, Soil mapping, Variable Rate plus other information

**Harvest Best Practice Manual SRA 2014**—ten tips on improving harvesting efficiency page 33

### Record Keeping Books:

- Irrigation Application Record Book
- Nutrient Application Record Book
- Cultivation Record Book
- Canegrowers Farm Chemicals Record Book

Or if you would like your farm maps emailed to you or hard copies provided for you to write your records on

## Spraying Conditions and Record Keeping—Windmates for Sale

I have 5 WeatherHawk Windmate WM-300 handheld comprehensive wind-meters available for purchase at \$154 including GST each. Isis Productivity Services did a bulk purchase and were kind enough to sell 5 to MCPS at their purchase price of \$154 including GST. Full retail price generally around \$250.

Windspeed (accuracy +/- 3%), digital wind direction, relative humidity, dew-point, wet bulb & Delta T. Humidity Sensor does not require adjustment, it is self-calibrating. Replaceable lithium battery. Contact myself if you would like to purchase. It is important weather conditions are recorded when spraying.



## Sweet Sugar Cane Hit Country Music Song Sung by a Local

I have enjoyed hearing Anita Ree's song "**Sweet Sugar Cane**" on the radio. This is the first single from Anita's latest album 'Not Love Songs'. It made it to number 4 on the Australian Country Music charts.

If you have not heard it, google "Anita Ree Sweet Sugar Cane" and watch the music clip on YouTube or call into "The Barber Shop" on Pallas Street that Anita owns and purchase the CD.

Anita is the daughter of Trevor and Averil Ree, that grow sugarcane at Prawle. I was lucky enough to catch up with Anita at Tiaro Landcare Field Day earlier in the year.

Congratulations Anita on your success with this song. Certain the local industry is proud too!

