New Ag Minister rules out sugar tax - Growing demand for sustainable sugar



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COVER IMAGE: Drew Watson, CANEGROWERS Mossman Chairman, is reaping the benefits from one-on-one nutrient planning being delivered by the Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership. Read more on page 6.

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A New Year to tackle some enduring challenges

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

On behalf of everyone at CANEGROWERS, I'd like to begin the New Year by wishing readers a happy and prosperous 2018.

I hope all members of our industry had an opportunity to spend some precious time with family and friends over the Christmas - New Year period. I know this can often be challenging while trying to finish the season.

While the season drives most of what we do in agriculture, the turning over of a new year is an important time for reflection and planning for our organisation.

With the support of our members, CANEGROWERS works in the interests of the whole industry, planning for and responding to issues that affect the grower community.

While we can't predict the future, we can a be assured of one thing - 2018 will be a year of ups and downs.

Many of the things we plan may not eventuate, while issues that we have never contemplated will present themselves as either opportunities or challenges.

It may only be January, but already there are a number of issues on the horizon that will require our attention in 2018.

State Election

The recent State Election has yielded a parliament that will have its challenges for the Government.

As a result we expect to see a number of sugar-related issues around environmental management, transport, electricity and marketing make their way onto the agenda at some point.

Now that the incoming Ministers have their feet under their desks, it's time for a new, positive, proactive and frank engagement on issues of importance to growers.

Health and nutrition

This year has started much as the previous one ended in relation to the management of health and nutrition issues, with the Australian Medical Association seeking the introduction of a sugar tax and a ban on advertising and some distribution of sugar sweetened beverages.

While these issues are not new, cane growers can be assured that as an industry body we have made significant inroads into resolving each of them.

Setting the record straight

Because of the good work done by growers and the industry, our communication channels are primed with good information to share.

The assistance of growers in sharing their stories, hosting politicians and trade delegations, speaking out on issues and being part of public discussions is critical if we are to inform and shift the debate.

Farmers have credibility and are consistently seen as a trusted voice by both the community and decision makers.

We hope that as the year unfolds you will see your industry body continue to represent your interests with diligence and integrity and with a view towards a positive future for all industry participants. ■

"The assistance of growers in sharing their stories, hosting politicians and trade delegations, speaking out on issues and being part of public discussions is critical if we are to inform and shift the debate."





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NEWS IN BRIEF

Queenslander is new national Agriculture Minister

The Federal Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud MP is Australia's new Agriculture Minister.



Mr Littleproud took up the portfolio in a Federal Cabinet reshuffle in December when Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce was given Infrastructure and Transport responsibilities.

The National Farmers' Federation has had its first official meeting with Mr Littleproud and President Fiona Simson said she valued the opportunity to have a lengthy sit-down with the Minister to go through a number of big ticket items so early in the new year.

"Issues like water, energy, land-use management, trade and market access, labor, telecommunications, digital connectivity and the opportunities of 'ag-tech' need to be progressed by Government and industry if agriculture is to continue to grow and prosper."

"Issues like water, energy, land-use management, trade and market access, labor, telecommunications, digital connectivity and the opportunities of 'ag-tech' need to be progressed by Government and industry if agriculture is to continue to grow and prosper."

Ms Simson said the NFF had a goal for agriculture to be a \$100 billion industry by 2030 - a 67% per cent increase on the 2016-2017 production value of \$60 billion.

"Our discussion with the Minister centred on this ambitious, but we believe. achievable objective," she said.

The need for energy policy certainty and an approach that delivers energy reliability, affordability and sustainability was also discussed.

"We explained the very real impact rising electricity prices are having on farmers," Ms Simson said.

"Some farm businesses are facing power bill increases of 100% or more. These types of increases are very hard to absorb for any business.

"As an export-dominant industry, trade must be a part of any conversation about the future of agriculture.

"We had a wide-ranging discussion about the key trade priorities and opportunities for agriculture including the need to vigorously tackle non-tariff trade barriers and to pursue trade agreements with the United Kingdom, the European Union, India and of course, Indonesia.

"Based on today's conversation, I believe, together, we can achieve highly valuable outcomes for our sector.

"The NFF looks forward to working with Minister Littleproud in 2018 and beyond," Ms Simson said. ■

Pictured above: NFF President Fiona Simson, Agriculture Minister David Littleproud, and NFF CEO Tony Mahar.

JANUARY END TO 2017 SEASON

One Queensland mill has crushed into the second week of 2018 rounding out a season in which close to 31.5 million tonnes of sugarcane have been harvested.

While final statistics will only be tallied after the Rocky Point mill ceases production for the season, it appears the state's CCS will average 13.42 for 2017.

As at 6 January 2018 Queensland's most southern mill had crushed 381,818 tonnes with a further 10,000 expected to go through the rollers at Rocky Point before they're stilled.

Close to 20% of the district's estimate will be stood over, with breakdowns again affecting operations and thunderstorms impacting the final weeks.

The Herbert River district was the only other Queensland region to run close to Christmas this season, crushing out on 21 December with a total of 5.03 million tonnes including 6,308 tonnes of under 7 CCS cane as rain impacted the final weeks. ■



BOARD VACANCIES

Nominations are now open for vacancies on the boards of two northern CANEGROWERS districts.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region and Tableland CANEGROWERS have vacancies and members are encouraged to consider stepping up to represent their fellow growers.

More information and the relevant forms are available from each district's office or the Returning Officer via jodie_ mittelheuser@canegrowers.com.au ■

New year sugar tax call

The Australian Medical Association kicked off 2018 with a renewed push for a tax to be introduced on the sugar content of soft drinks. It's call was quickly dismissed by the Federal Government.

A sugar tax was among a number of measures the doctor's organisation proposed to tackle growing levels of obesity in the community. Other proposals included removing vending machines and banning advertising which targeted children.

CANEGROWERS acknowledges that Australia is facing a challenge in tackling increasing rates of obesity and supports programs which promote healthy diet and exercise choices.

In media interviews Chairman Paul Schembri said demonising one ingredient was a dangerously simplistic attempt to address the health conditions linked to obesity.

He said a tax would cause enormous damage to the industry's reputation while not solving a complex set of health issues.

"Slapping an extra 40 cents on the cost of a can of soft drink will not stop people drinking soft drink, nor from buying a doughnut instead ... Increasing the family grocery bill will not magically make Australians skinny."



Australia's new Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud, agreed in a statement that a soft drink tax would not solve Australia's obesity issue.

"Government should not dictate the diet of its citizens," he said. "Individuals choose what they eat and drink, not the Government. Personal responsibility is key here."

He said the Coalition had created a \$100 million Sporting Schools program and the Healthy Food Partnership which involves industry, public health groups and government talking about healthier formulation of foods.

"Slapping an extra 40 cents on the cost of a can of soft drink will not stop people drinking soft drink, nor from buying a doughnut instead," Mr Littleproud said. "Increasing the family grocery bill will not magically make Australians skinny.

"The AMA has made many sensible suggestions on this topic, but a soft drink tax is not one of them."



Answer to Win!

Australian Canegrower strives to meet your needs for sugarcane industry news and information. To keep us on track, we're asking readers to complete a short online survey.

Pop in your CANEGROWERS membership or subscription details and you'll go into the draw to win a CANEGROWERS prize pack of umbrella, polo shirt, pen and bucket hat!

Find the survey here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5TLFG85

NUTRIENT PLANNING HELPS REDUCE FERTILISER BILLS

Supplied by WTSIP

Cane growers across the Wet Tropics region are reaping the benefits from one-on-one nutrient planning being delivered by the Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership.

Funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust III program, WTSIP's team of 11 Extension Officers is providing individualised support to growers to help them improve farm runoff by refining their fertiliser use.

Drew Watson operates several cane farms throughout the Mossman district and says he finds his whole-of-farm nutrient management plan a valuable tool that saves him time and hassle.

"I use my nutrient management plan all the time, it just makes sense to have everything all in one place. And, with different staff working on different farms, it makes it easier to keep things on track," he said.

"It also makes it a lot easier to order fertiliser. I don't have to chase up individual soil samples and

recommendations to work out what I need on a particular block. I can just refer to the plan and confidently order a truck load of fertiliser, knowing the right product is going onto the right block."

Daryl Parker, WTSIP Regional Extension Officer based in Mossman Agricultural Services, said the idea of nutrient management plans wasn't new but that the current format being used by WTSIP had been specifically developed by local cane experts.

"Developing a whole of farm nutrient management plan is a very consultative process between growers and our extension officers.

"They work together to analyse soil tests and farm maps to match inputs better to crop requirements and save on costs," he said

"It maintains the integrity of the Six Easy Steps process and importantly, at the end of the process, the plan belongs to the grower so they can give the information to other advisors to use."

Growers in the Wet Tropics who are interested in developing a Nutrient Management Plan are encouraged to contact their local WTSIP Extension Officer. Visit www.wtsip.org.au/team to find your local contact. ■

Pg 6: (Top) CANEGROWERS MOSSMAN Chairman Drew Watson. (Bottom) Gordonvale grower John Ferrando discusses the development of his nutrient management plan with WTSIP Extension Officer Joel Tierney.

Pg 7: Paul Mizzi and WTSIP Innovation Extension Officer Suzette Argent at the project trial site where soya beans have been planted in preparation.

"It also makes it a lot easier to order fertiliser. I don't have to chase up individual soil samples and recommendations to work out what I need on a particular block. I can just refer to the plan and confidently order a truck load of fertiliser, knowing the right product is going onto the right block."





DIGGING DEEP FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

An innovative Ingham cane farmer will dig deep for the Great Barrier Reef by creating new farm machinery.

Third-generation cane grower Paul Mizzi is designing a prototype ripper to reach soil more than 1m beneath the surface and he hopes the end result will be a win for farms and the Reef.

The 2017 Herbert Grower of the Year has received an innovation grant from the Australian Government under its Reef Trust III programme to design and manufacture the zonal ripper that will break through compacted layers of soil and reduce water and fertiliser run-off.

"The roots of the cane can only get down so far before hitting a hard pan. If we can loosen that soil at depth, it'll increase the area for healthy root growth and create an artificial sump for water and nutrients."

"Over the years cane haul-out machinery has got significantly bigger and heavier," Paul says.

A move to 30-tonne instead of 12-tonne machines has led to soil compaction.

"The roots of the cane can only get down so far before hitting a hard pan. If we can loosen that soil at depth, it'll increase the area for healthy root growth and create an artificial sump for water and nutrients. It'll also decrease run-off, and ideally improve fertiliser usage."

Paul says deep ripping had been used in other agricultural industries.

"The issue is that our depth has always been limited by the amount of linkage lift of the tractor to get it from the 'down position' to an 'up position' for turning and travelling," he says.

This is the issue the new design will address. Paul has two cane blocks set aside for a trial where sova beans have been planted and where the soil will be monitored through sampling and electromagnetic mapping.

He says he came up with the idea years ago when drainage trenches were dug on the farm at a depth of 1m and he saw the effects on cane directly above the digging work.

He has since been working to reduce soil compaction by using controlled traffic GPS for planting and harvesting.

Paul says it has noticeably increased cane productivity.

The long-time innovator — who has successfully designed and built new machinery in the past including a tworow harvester, a zonal ripper rotary hoe and a high-rise spray unit — says the financial and technical support of government and industry bodies is helping the industry to improve land management practices.

"These kind of grants give you the opportunity to accelerate things," he says. "There are many unknowns at this stage and a bit of a road ahead of us but if all goes well this (project) will lead to both environmental and productivity outcomes."

The Australian Government's Reef Trust III grants in the Wet Tropics region are being delivered by the Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership. ■





Industry Spotlight



Matt Kealley CANEGROWERS Manager -**Environment & Sustainability**

"Buyers of sugar are now demanding sustainably produced sugar, sourced from a producer/marketer who can demonstrate sustainability through a certification system."

Sustainable sugar - 2020 and beyond

A decade ago, the global demand for sustainably produced sugar was rather small and insignificant - a distant voice on the horizon that was given little attention. That voice is now louder, and the horizon is 2020.

Buyers of sugar are now demanding sustainably produced sugar, sourced from a producer/marketer who can demonstrate sustainability through a certification system.

CERTIFICATION

Bonsucro is the preferred sustainability standard for many of the world's Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies, as well as buyers of sugar. It has 480 global members and certifies nearly 3 million tonnes of sugar annually.

Bundaberg Sugar, Sunshine Sugar and Wilmar all have Bonsucro-certified mills providing sustainably produced sugar to domestic and international customers. Both Coles and Woolworths use Bonsucro sugar for their private label brands.

CANEGROWERS has been working with closely with Bonsucro for a number of years and in December 2016, Smartcane BMP was recognised as having full alignment with Bonsucro's sustainability indicators.

Major players recognise Smartcane BMP

CANEGROWERS is currently working on certification equivalency for Smartcane BMP and Bonsucro, to reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

The Coca-Cola Company has implemented a sustainable sourcing policy to ensure 100% of its sugar is from sustainably produced sources. Their preferred sustainability standard is Bonsucro.

However, in 2016 Coke recognised Smartcane BMP sugar as meeting the on-farm component of its sustainable sugar needs. This is currently being reviewed, based on the work CANEGROWERS has undertaken with Bonsucro, with a view to extending this endorsement until the end of 2019.

Kellogg's, as part of its 2020 Global Sustainability Goals, has committed to responsibly sourcing its 10 priority ingredients by 2020. Kellogg's has engaged Proforest to help the company gain a better understanding of its suppliers' operations. Proforest is aware of Smartcane BMP.

American Sugar Refining is a large cane sugar refining company, with a production capacity of 6.5 million tons of sugar annually. Australia provides approximately 90,000 tonnes of sugar to the US through the US quota.

ASR customers in the US, Canada and EU require assurances that ASR is assessing their supply chains through social audits and other sustainability standards.

ASR uses the ProTerra verification audit (GAP analysis) to measure progress towards achieving this. CANEGROWERS has met with ASR and has had discussions with ProTerra about alignment with Smartcane BMP.

GOING FORWARD

2020 is just around the corner, but Smartcane BMP is well placed to help cane farmers meet the growing domestic and international demand for sustainably produced sugar, thus ensuring the viability of Queensland's sugar industry well into the future. ■



Brazilian ethanol swing could buoy global sugar market

A predicted second consecutive year of raw sugar surplus may not eventuate in 2019 if Brazil's sugar industry swings towards ethanol production, according to Rabobank's quarterly report.

The report says the 2017/18 global surplus, forecast by Rabobank to reach 4.3 million tonnes (raw value), could be followed by a second surplus in 2018/19, according to preliminary supply/demand balances.

"This has seen sentiment in the market deteriorate and raw sugar futures take an abrupt tumble back below USc14/lb, which is also likely to have been prompted by the strength of the



US dollar and comparative weakness of the Brazilian real," says Rabobank commodity analyst Georgia Twomey.

"This could be positive for alobal markets as a shift towards ethanol implies lower sugar production and export availability,"

Given the decline in the market and the current outlook, Ms Twomey says pricing pressure is expected to be heavy in the near-term if the market returns close to USc15/lb.

"Looking forward, much of the sentiment in global sugar markets will be driven by whether the surplus eventuates in 2018/19, and much of this will hinge on Brazilian production," she says.

"While some observers predict the Brazilian 2018/19 crop will be the same as 2017/18 ... the biggest watch factor will be whether there will be a strong swing to ethanol next season.

"Preliminary views point to a significant swing in Brazil's production mix to ethanol in 2018/19, owing to expectations that world sugar prices will remain subdued and local ethanol prices will be buoyed by firm oil and gasoline prices."

Ms Twomey says that for every 1% swing in the mix from sugar to ethanol in 2018/19, sugar production in Brazil would decline by 0.75 million tonnes.

"This could be positive for global markets as a shift towards ethanol implies lower sugar production and export availability."

> Pictured: Rabobank commodity analyst Georgia Twomey

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Research gets back to the **BASICS ON SOLDIER FLY**

By Neil Fisher, CEO, SRA



In 2017, we announced that SRA research would go "back to basics" on soldier fly, to better understand what the larvae are doing to our cane and what this means for the growing season and ratoon crops.

As part of that, we are pleased to announce that Dr Kayvan Etebari has started his work as a post-doctoral researcher on soldier fly, as part of a placement at the University of Queensland (UQ) funded by SRA.

Dr Etebari, Dr Andrew Ward (SRA) and Dr Karel Lindsay (SRA) have already met with stakeholders in the Southern and Central regions in 2017 and Dr Etebari is busy scoping the work of the new project.

He is new to soldier fly and sugarcane, but has significant experience in agricultural crops and insect pests.

He comes to this position with 15 years of experience in scientific research and development organisations and a PhD in Insect Molecular Biology.

Recently, his main research focus has been studying insecticide resistance in one the world's most notorious insect pests, diamond back moth.

This involved identifying novel ways to suppress insecticide resistance using molecular biology, genetics, bioinformatics and classical entomology.

We welcome his experience and expertise to the sugar industry and the soldier fly challenge.

There has also been ongoing work on our existing trials at Mackay and Bundaberg, led by Dr Lindsay.

Two separate trials in the Mackay district at Pinnacle were established in 2017.

One is assessing eight varieties and their response to soldier fly, including several recent varieties that we as an industry haven't had an opportunity to explore in relation to soldier fly.

This trial was established in collaboration with the SRA Mackay plant breeding team and Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS).

The chemical trial is looking at some new chemicals, as well as new rates of previously trialled chemicals.

This trial is narrowing down the rates of previous chemical trials that showed some promise in earlier work. The variety trial is at Richard Ross's property and the chemical trial will be at Doug Mitchell's property.

Bundaberg also has both variety and chemical trials. We will be in a position to share the results once the data is assessed.

If you have any questions about this investment, please contact Key Focus Area Leader, Dr Andrew Ward, on award@ sugarresearch.com.au or 0401564312. ■

Photo: Soldier fly larva and adult.



Growers get \$7 million to help deal with Debbie's destruction

Cane farmers across Queensland's central growing region have received almost \$7.2 million in government grants to help them overcome the devastating impact of 2017's Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

When applications for the Natural Disaster Recovery Grants closed on 12 January, almost 900 claims from sugarcane growers had been approved, with another 50 still in the pipeline.

The cane sector was by far the biggest recipient of the Category C funding, accounting for almost half of the 2195 grant applications submitted to the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA).

Most of those applications (705) came from Mackay-region growers, with a further 265 from the Whitsundays, and 18 from Isaac, according to QRIDA reports.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine Manager Mike Porter said growers were relieved to be eligible for Category C funding and happy with how the program was run.

"For a while it looked like it could be Category B, which would have meant much less funding for affected growers, but getting lifted to Category C assisted a lot of members who suffer significant damage," Mr Porter said.

"Overall members were very appreciative of the funding and of the way that QRIDA oversaw the program.

"We had a dedicated industry recovery officer here in the office who helped around 146 members gain access to the Category C grants, more than 50% of whom received the maximum \$25,000."

QRIDA Regional Area Manager Peter Crowley said that while applications had closed for the grants, growers could still apply for low interest loans to help overcome any expenses or income shortfalls resulting from Cyclone Debbie.

"National Disaster Assistance loans of up to \$250,000 are available to help with replanting, restoring land, repairing property and machinery, things like that,



Mr Crowley said. "Loans can be taken out over seven years at a low interest rate of just 1.16%.

"We've already approved a few of these loans, but growers have almost a year and a half to apply. They just need to show that they need the loan as a result of the cyclone." ■

For more information on National Disaster Assistance loans, visit www.qrida.qld.gov.au





Extended deadline and new products for 2018



Robert Hines, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

QSI has made a number of improvements to its pricing products and services for the coming season. QSL has made a number of improvements to its pricing products and services for the coming season.

MORE TIME TO MAKE YOUR **POOL NOMINATIONS**

Following feedback from growers, QSL has pushed the 2018-Season Pricing Declaration Date back from the traditional deadline of late February to 30 April 2018. This later deadline gives growers an additional two months to assess how their 2018 crop is shaping up before they have to finalise their nominations to QSL's pools. Nominations for the 2018-Season QSLmanaged pools will be accepted from 1 March 2018, however growers keen to get pricing using the QSL Target Price Pool or QSL Individual Futures Contract Pool can nominate tonnes and start pricing using these growermanaged pricing products at any time.

MORE TIME TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

Growers who have elected to use the QSL Target Price Pool for the 2018 Season but have not achieved their targets, now also have until 30 April 2018 to take up the option to transfer their unfilled orders to other QSL pools. Growers in QSL's Individual Futures Contract Pool can also transfer unfilled 2018-Season orders from this product to other QSL pools by 30 April 2018, as long as they have not priced any portion of their nominated tonnage.

NEW EARLY-START ACTIVELY MANAGED POOL

We appreciate that our new later Pricing Declaration Date gives the QSL Actively Managed Pool less time to price its nominated tonnage. To counter this and provide an option for growers who'd prefer to keep a longer pricing window, we've introduced an

additional pool – the QSL Early-Start Actively Managed Pool - which, as its name suggests, starts pricing two months earlier than the standard QSL Actively Managed Pool. To participate in this pool during the 2018 Season, you just need to make your pool nomination by 28 February 2018.

Just like the standard QSL Actively Managed Pool, the QSL Early-Start Actively Managed Pool is an in-season Committed Pool and has a minimum tonnage nomination of 10 metric tonnes.

TWO-SEASON ACTIVELY MANAGED POOL

We've changed the name of the QSL 2-Season Forward Pool to the QSL 2-Season Actively Managed Pool to better describe how the pool operates. Just like the standard QSL Actively Managed Pool, the QSL 2-Season Actively Managed Pool aims to target the best return, with some pre-set price triggers, but has been designed for Growers who seek exposure across multiple seasons.

Tonnes are nominated to this pool in the 2018 Season for delivery in the 2019 Season, with pricing undertaken across the 2018 and 2019 Seasons. The minimum tonnage nomination for this pool is 50 tonnes (1 Lot).

For more information about any of the pools mentioned above, please read the Pricing Pool Terms available on the QSL website or contact your local QSL Grower Services Team member. ■



Changes reflect new approach to external customers



Aaron Searle. Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The new year has brought some organisational changes at QSL. There have also been some physical changes at our Brisbane headquarters.

The new year has brought some organisational changes at QSL.

Up until this point, QSL's corporate structure has seen responsibility for the management of both our supplier relationships (i.e. millers and growers) and our customer/marketing relationships separated within different parts of the business. In order to better integrate the activities of our Grower Services and Marketing, Trading and Risk Teams, we've combined these groups under a single consistent marketing and sales strategy.

This newly created unit, which also incorporates our treasury, pricing risk and payment teams, will be accountable for how we service and create value for all of our external customers, namely:

- · Growers who elect us to market their GEI sugar
- The growers and millers who supply sugar under RSSA arrangements, and
- · International refiners who seek to buy our quality product

Overseeing this group is a new position - the Chief Operating Officer (COO) who is accountable for our origination, physical marketing, and trading and risk strategies, as well as the management of all associated functions that service our offerings to these customers.

Robert Hines, who already had oversight of parts of this new group in his role as Chief Financial Officer (CFO), has been appointed COO. Rob is no stranger to Queensland cane growers and millers, and his sound understanding of the business together with a long history in banking and finance leave him well positioned to hit the ground running.

QSL Financial Controller Aaron Searle has assumed the role of CFO and will

have oversight of liquidity and credit management, compliance, corporate risk management, middle office, group funding /working capital, IT, Company Secretary and Legal.

Unfortunately the structural changes outlined above meant that the role of GM Trading and Risk took on a different and reduced scope, and so Dougall Lodge has finished his time with QSL. Dougall was a passionate and valued member of the QSL team for the past four years and was very supportive of the advantages of bringing together our origination, marketing and trading risk strategies. Prior to his departure he worked closely with QSL's Executive Manager Marketing and Risk Mark Hampson to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. Mark is already well known amongst growers and will continue to spearhead our marketing and pricing activities.

There have also been some physical changes at our Brisbane headquarters, with our Brisbane-based staff relocating to new premises within the IBM Building in Edward Street.

The QSL corporate office is now located on Floor 12/348 Edward Street, Brisbane, while our Brisbane QSL Operations Division Team is now co-located with Sugar Terminals Limited on Level 11 of the same building.

This change helps to further cement the ringfencing associated with our Strategic Operating Agreement with STL while also enabling us to secure reduced rental costs.

Please note that all of our Brisbane phone numbers remain unchanged.

DISCLAIMER:

This document contains information of a summary/high level nature and therefore does not purport to be comprehensive on this topic. Growers should read the relevant Pricing Pool Terms before participating in any QSL pool. While care is taken in the preparation of this document, QSL does not make any representations as to its accuracy or completeness. Information about past performance should not be relied on as an indication of future performance, nor should this Statement be taken to include representations as to future matters. This Statement does not constitute financial or investment advice. The information in this document is current only as at the date of the document.

ON-GROUND INVESTIGATIONS BEGIN FOR BIOREACTOR SITES Supplied by Terrain NRM

The Cassowary Coast will soon be a trial area for bioreactors and other catchment repair technologies to better protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Up to \$15 million is being invested in the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (the MIP) – and on-ground investigations have begun for repair and treatment trial sites.

These have the potential to significantly reduce the load of nitrogen, pesticides and sediment entering the Reef lagoon.

Until the MIP, which is funded by the Queensland Government, there have been no systematic approaches to trialling and monitoring some of the newest repair and treatment technologies in the Wet Tropics, such as bioreactors, constructed and landscape wetlands, and high efficiency sediment basins.

Systems repair expert Mark Bayley, from Australian Wetlands Consulting, recently joined landholders to talk about trial sites.

"At the end of the day, bioreactors are a proof of concept. There's a question mark over if and how well they'll work when they're applied here. We're definitely in for a journey - but if these do work, we've then got a great opportunity to roll them out across the entire reef catchment." he

The effectiveness of the technologies is highly dependent on location and landscape conditions.

In the design phase of the MIP, initial landscape assessments were carried out via spatial analysis. While this is immensely useful in the early stages, getting out in the field and groundproofing sites is a critical next step.

While the bioreactors don't work everywhere ... MSF Sugar is always looking at what we can do to contain runoff on our farms.





In the Johnstone basin, six initial potential bioreactor sites were identified around the Liverpool and Cowley areas. Of these, one was deemed suitable for further investigation as a bioreactor site.

MSF Sugar's Operations Manager for South Johnstone Farms, Alan Cross, said the Cowley location holds the most potential as the success of a bioreactor is very dependent on soil type.

"While the bioreactors don't work everywhere, for environmental purposes MSF Sugar is always looking at what we can do to contain runoff on our farms and this particular tool is an option that we're considering.

Bioreactors are shallow trenches that are filled with a carbon source (like woodchips) that intercept groundwater and denitrify it. Denitrification is the microbial process of converting nitrate to gas.

"After some ground proofing, our 4KZ Farm site in Cowley was identified as the best location to trial a bioreactor while our Cowley Farm was best suited to a constructed wetlands trial," said Mr Cross. ■

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Keeping farming in the family

Supplied by QRIDA

Growing up in rural Queensland not only offers a unique lifestyle, it teaches respect for the land and an understanding of exactly where food comes from.

But this lifestyle does not come without its challenges, and all too often young aspiring farmers reluctantly leave the family business seeking other employment.



As a fourth generation farmer, Simon Ricciardi's goal was always to have a property of his own and build a sustainable, viable enterprise in the local area. When a property close to his father's farm came on the market Simon knew this was his chance.

"I decided to buy a run-down farm that was adjacent to my old man's farm, and buy an adjoining property to combine the two," Simon said.

"I farm sugar cane, but I'm using the [QRIDA] First Start Loan to expand the avocado farm as well. That way I don't have all my eggs in the one basket and it provides me with a bit more certainty for the future."

Simon also grows peanuts as a rotation crop to make the best use of farm property. It may have seemed like a lofty ambition for a 23-year-old, but Simon had the vision to diversify and purchase additional country with the help of a QRIDA low interest First Start Loan.

Now 33, Simon is one of many young farmers QRIDA has helped to enter a

family business or purchase additional land and equipment - buying into their first farm earlier than they anticipated.

"Our generation need two jobs to get by, that's what I try to explain to the city folk. But it's about what you want, and if farming is it — do everything you can to make it happen."

"Our generation need two jobs to get by, that's what I try to explain to the city folk. But it's about what you want, and if farming is it - do everything you can to make it happen," Simon said.

Funded by the Queensland Government under the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme, First Start Loans provide finance of up to \$2 million, have no fees or charges and loan terms can extend to 20 years.



QRIDA have nine Regional Area Managers based across Queensland who are available to help applicants through the application process. Simon reflects on his experience with QRIDA and gives some valuable advice to other young farmers looking to turn their farming dream into a reality.

"The application process did seem a little bit daunting at the beginning of the process, but all worth it! Meet your local Regional Area Manager - they're a great help, and having the low interest loan can only benefit you at the end of the day."

The realities of primary production often mean an off-farm income is required to support and grow an agri-business. QRIDA understand this reality and is able to tailor repayment plans and offer low interest rates.

The Ricciardi family has been actively farming cane in the Bundaberg area for more than 60 years. By providing low interest loans, QRIDA has helped Simon extend the family tradition.

For more information about eligibility and how First Start Loans can help you pursue your own agribusiness goals sooner, look online at www.grida.gld.gov.au or Freecall 1800 623 946. ■

> Pictured: Kelly and Simon Ricciardi with children Bella, Ayden and Tyson.

NSW GROWERS WRAP UP DIFFICULT SEASON

New South Wales 2017 crush came to an end on 17 December, with 1.9 million tonnes of cane going through the rollers at the Broadwater, Condong and Harwood mills.

While the total cane crushed was down on 2015-16 figures, Sunshine Sugar CEO Chris Connors said it was a testament to the resilience of the industry that growers were able to overcome adverse weather conditions and damaging floods in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie to produce a another impressive harvest.

Mr Connors also flagged a change in direction for the industry in 2018.

"We have a cohesive industry and sound business model here in NSW, and we will be looking to build on that by reducing our dependence on traditional crystal sugar and developing new commercial streams such as a Low-GI Sugar, Cane Juice and a boutique Distillery." ■

BIRTHDAY FOR KAFTA

The Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA) marked its third anniversary in December.

Member for Dawson, George Christensen MP, said the event was a cause for celebration for the sugar industry.

He said exports under the deal continued to grow, and was pleased sugar producers continued to reap benefits under KAFTA.

"The landmark agreement which completely eliminated a 3% tariff on sugar has strengthened our trade and investment relationship with the Republic of Korea and put our sugar industry in pole position to capitalise on a growing market that wants Australian sugar," he wrote.

Mr Christensen said in the first three quarters of 2017 Korean imports of sugar grew by 22% to \$780.1 million.

"The elimination of a sugar tariff means our sugar exporters have an advantage over their international competitors," he said.

"The Republic of Korea is our third-largest goods export market and fourth-largest trading partner, and the more they're exporting from North Queensland, the more local jobs there will be." ■







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Cancer risks on the Job

Supplied by the Cancer Council Australia.

Diesel engine exhaust (DEE) is a known cancercausing agent. It is estimated that people regularly exposed to diesel fumes at work can be up to 40% more likely to develop lung cancer. It has also been concluded that DEE could possibly cause bladder cancer.

A recent survey found that around 94% of agriculture workers are exposed to DEE in their workplace. So what does that mean for Queensland cane growers? It's important to understand workplace hazards and how to lower your risk of getting cancer.

You can be exposed to DEE wherever diesel fuelled motor vehicles like trucks and tractors are being used, especially in enclosed spaces such as workshops and sheds.

Workers using diesel fuelled power sources (e.g. compressors, generators or power plants) may also be exposed. No matter what the job - if you are in a confined space with diesel fumes, you need to be aware and take action.



To reduce DEE exposure, take simple steps such as:

- · Engine selection: Replace diesel engines with other energy sources.
- Fuel selection: Use low sulphur and other low-emission diesel fuels.
- · Emission control devices.
- Ventilation: Natural ventilation is NOT adequate. Both local exhaust and forced dilution ventilation should be
- PPE: Wear air supplied or air purifying respiratory protection that filters particulates.
- · Wind up the window and turn on the air-conditioner when inside diesel powered vehicles.

Where can I get more info?

Cancer Council has developed free resources outlining workplace cancer risks; you can find them at cancer.org.au/ workcancer. If you have any concerns you can also contact Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

Remember, without adequate controls DEE can cause cancer. No one wants to clock off and head home knowing that their risk of cancer has increased.

Diesel engine exhaust: a danger to your health on the farm

Six facts about diesel engine exhaust (DEE) you may not know.

- 1. A recent survey found that around 94 per cent of agriculture workers are exposed to DEE in their workplace.
- 2. Every year around 130 Australians are told they have a lung cancer which would have been caused by DEE at work.
- 3. In 2012 the International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded DEE causes lung cancer and possibly bladder cancer in humans.
- 4. DEE is a mixture of gasses and soot. Carcinogens (cancercausing agents) can stick to this soot. The soot particles are small enough to be breathed into the lungs and this is how DEE can cause lung cancer.
- 5. DEE causes the third most number of workplace cancers only behind solar ultraviolet radiation and silica dust.
- 6. There are simple things you and your employer can do to reduce your cancer risk; such as using extraction pipes for vehicle exhaust in workshops.

Visit Cancer Council (cancer.org/workcancer) to view the DEE fact sheet (and more information on other workplace carcinogens). This fact sheet outlines what can be done to reduce workplace cancer risks. ■



CLEAN ENERGY FOR AGRIBUSINESS





The agribusiness sector plays a critical role across the Australian economy, with a well-earned reputation for quality produce, innovative production methods and local employment opportunities – whether producing for the domestic market or extending into the highly competitive global market. This track record makes agribusinesses ideally-suited to capitalise on the growing wave of energy efficient and clean energy technology. Together with some of Australia's most well-known banks, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation is pleased to deliver cost-effective financing solutions to help agribusinesses to make energy efficient and renewable energy improvements to ensure they remain competitive.

HOW CANAGRIBUSINESS BENEFIT?

- Make cost-effective upgrades to energy efficient equipment, buildings and production facilities
- Lower your operating costs and boost productivity
- Insulate your business from volatile and rising energy prices
- Save water, reduce fertiliser use, reduce carbon emissions

CEFC FINANCE IN ACTION

HARVESTING THE BENEFITS OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY



A new windrower has helped a family business in Ballarat, Victoria reduce diesel consumption by about 25 per cent, cut carbon emissions and improve energy productivity. The windrower saves 2 to 2.5 litres of diesel per hectare.



A potato, onion and carrot producer in Parilla, South Australia cut energy use by about 15 per cent and water and fertiliser use by around 20 per cent after investing in a new irrigation system with variable rate centre pivots to control overwatering.



A family apple and chestnut growing business in Wandiligong, Victoria cut energy costs by just under 40 per cent by installing an ammonia liquid recirculation refrigeration plant with smart controls that improved energy efficiency.



A Stanthorpe, Queensland produce farmer installed a roof-mounted solar PV system which provides 38 per cent of daily electricity use. The reduced dependence on grid electricity shaved approximately \$7,500 from the annual power bill.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



- Solar powered irrigation pumps
- Solar hot water and heat pumps
- Rooftop solar systems
- Biomass energy-from-waste



- Variable speed drives, high efficiency motors and pumps
- Smart monitoring and control devices
- Farm and process machinery upgrades
- Efficient refrigeration
- Farm reconfiguration for maximised efficiency
- Efficient lighting, heating, insulation, ventilation and air conditioning



- Farm equipment and vehicle upgrades
- Co-generation and tri-generation systems for processors





ASSET FINANCE

Our asset finance programs with co-financiers are targeted towards the needs of businesses to encourage energy efficiency improvements.

ANZ ?	commonwealthBank		M estpac	
ENERGY EFFICIENT ASSET FINANCE	EQUIPMENT FINANCE ENERGY EFFICIENT BONUS	ENERGY EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT FINANCE	ENERGY EFFICIENT FINANCE	
0.7% p.a. discount on the standard asset finance rate for eligible energy efficient assets	0.70% p.a. discount on the equipment finance rate on qualifying assets for the life of the loan	0.70% p.a. discount on the standard finance rate on qualifying assets	0.70% p.a. discount on the standard interest rate on financing for qualifying energy efficiency projects	
Loans up to \$5m	Loans up to \$5m	Loans from \$10k up to \$5m	Loans from \$15k up to \$5m	
Chattel mortgage, hire purchase and finance leases available	Equipment loan, hire purchase or finance lease options available	Flexible finance arrangements, with up to 100% financing of the cost of the equipment	Finance leases, commercial loans and commercial hire purchase facilities available	
Loan terms up to 10 years, and timing of repayments tailored to suit cash flow	Tailored repayments to suit cash flows and circumstances	Loans terms up to 10 years, with the financed asset usually acting as security	Typically, only security over the equipment is required	
100% finance available	Typically \$0 deposit required	Lending structured to match Loan terms of up to 10 year cash flow cycles		
anz.com.au	nab.com.au/eeb	commbank.com.au/energy westpac.com.au/energy		

AUSTRALIAN BIOENERGY FUND

Much of the fuel for bioenergy comes from agricultural waste, so agribusinesses are well placed to benefit from this emerging technology. The CEFC is providing a cornerstone investment of up to \$100 million in a new +\$200 million equity fund managed by Foresight Group. The Australian Bioenergy Fund is expected to finance technologies including energy from agricultural waste projects and biofuel production.

RATESETTER GREEN LOAN MARKET

The RateSetter Green Loan lending market is an innovative peer-to-peer platform bringing together lenders wishing to support, and individuals and businesses wishing to invest in, qualifying energy efficient and low-emissions assets. The CEFC has committed up to \$20 million to support this market, which offers secured and unsecured personal and small business loans from \$2,001 to \$250,000, with terms from 6 months to 7 years. ratesetter.com.au/personal-loans/green-loans



Important Notice for

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Members

By-Election 2018

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region will be running a by-election early 2018 to fill a current vacancy that now exists on the Board.

If you are interested in nominating, or you know a grower who would make a great contribution to the CANEGROWERS organisation in that role, please contact the Company Secretary – Sarah Standen on 0418 726 831 or call into the District office to pick up the relevant paperwork.

Nominations open on 12 January 2018 and close at 5pm on 31 January 2018. If an election is required, ballot papers will be posted on 2 February 2018.

Important Information

- Nomination forms must be signed by the eligible nominee and not less than six (6) Members as defined in the Constitution.
- · A candidate must be the Authorised Representative for the Member.
- Nomination forms and full particulars regarding appropriate qualifications of nominees can be obtained from the CANEGROWERS Cairns office or direct from the Returning Officer, on application to jodie_mittelheuser@canegrowers.com.au or by telephone 1800 177 159.

Jodie Mittelheuser Returning Officer Jodie_mittelheuser@canegrowers.com.au GPO Box 1032 Brisbane Qld 4001





Important Notice for

Tableland CANEGROWERS Members

By-Election 2018

Tableland CANEGROWERS Ltd will be holding a by-election early 2018 to fill a board vacancy following the resignation of Director and Chairman Thomas Maisel.

Nominations open 12 January 2018. You can pick up a nomination form from the local office or contact the Returning Officer.

Nominations close at 5pm on 31 January 2018. If a ballot is required, ballot papers will be posted on 2 February 2018.

Important Information

- · Nomination forms must be signed by the eligible nominee and not less than six (6) Members as defined in the Constitution.
- · A candidate must be the Authorised Representative for the Member.
- Nomination forms and full particulars regarding appropriate qualifications of nominees can be obtained from the Tableland CANEGROWERS office or direct from the Returning Officer, on application to jodie_mittelheuser@canegrowers.com.au or by telephone 1800 177 159.

Jodie Mittelheuser Returning Officer Jodie_mittelheuser@canegrowers.com.au GPO Box 1032 Brisbane Qld 4001



World's first robo tractor

receives Good Design Award

Supplied by Case IH



Case IH's Autonomous Concept Tractor has taken out the prestigious Good Design Award at the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design's annual awards ceremony. The awards recognise the world's most innovative and cutting-edge industrial, product and graphic designs.

"From talking to customers in different countries. we see that for the near term, they want to have the flexibility of still having a cab on the tractor. This is the direction we are taking because we want our customers to feel comfortable as they begin to delegate more tasks to the machines."

Case IH first unveiled the world's first high horsepower, cabless autonomous concept tractor at the Farm Progress Show in 2016, marking a revolutionary step forward in tractor design.

The tractor was designed by CNH Industrial's in-house design team and based on the current Case IH Magnum row crop tractor.

The tractor's design focuses on both form and function, reimagining the tractor for a future autonomous era by eliminating the traditional operator cab.

"This award marks a satisfying conclusion to the celebration of our 175th anniversary," said Andreas Klauser, Case IH Brand President.

"The autonomous concept tractor is perhaps the best illustration of how we are living up to the anniversary's tagline - Celebrating the Past by Looking Toward the Future."

Following the reveal at the Farm Progress Show in August 2016, the tractor was shown at trade fairs in France, Brazil, Argentina and Australia.

"Over the past year, we have used this concept tractor as a way to kick off a dialog with our customers as to what the future of farming will look like in five or ten years' time," Mr Klauser said.

"From talking to customers in different countries, we see that for the near term, they want to have the flexibility of still having a cab on the tractor.

"This is the direction we are taking because we want our customers to feel comfortable as they begin to delegate more tasks to the machines themselves." ■

> Case IH's Autonomous Concept Vehicle on display at Australia's largest agricultural field day, AgQuip, in 2017

FIRST 5 LINES FREE* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

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* As a FREE service to CANEGROWERS members, Australian Canegrower will print suitable classified advertisements UP TO 5 LINES FREE, FOR ONE ISSUE ONLY. A charge of \$5.50 will apply for each extra line or part thereof. A charge will apply for advertising of non-cane growing activities. Advertisements must relate exclusively to cane farming activities, e.g. farm machinery etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at \$11 per line incl GST. Only pre-paid ads will be accepted.

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Rainfall Report

brought to you by AustSafe Super

	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Average rainfall (mm)
Location		2017 Rainfall	January-December
Mossman		2227	2249
Mareeba AP		753	911
Cairns		1688	2001
Mt Sophia		3243	3346
Babinda	until Nov 30	3458	4236
Innisfail		3129	3559
Tully		3577	4082
Cardwell		1911	2116
Lucinda		1823	2101
Ingham		1545	2032
Abergowrie		1675	1790
Townsville		791	1117
Ayr DPI		885	932
Proserpine		1572	1379
Mirani		1839	1493
Mackay		1963	1562
Sarina (Plane Ck)		2585	1725
Bundaberg		1208	1007
Childers South		1214	875
Maryborough		1114	1153
Tewantin		1697	1697
Eumundi		1612	1668
Nambour		1479	1694
Woongoolba		1327	1342
Murwillumbah		1716	1573
Ballina		1962	1770
Woodburn		2154	1358





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Bonel whole stick harvester with hydraulic topper and trailers. \$2,500 + gst; MASSEY 205 cane harvester \$6,500 + gst. Ph. 4159 3323

Fiat 640 High Clearance Tractor 31" clearance. Ideal for cane spraying (wide wheel track with excellent stability \$13,500 + GST; Sylvan Spray Tank 900 Litre-new high volume pump & Irvin Hydraulic boom \$3,900 + GST; MF 290 Tractor - Low hours -Very good hours \$12,000 +GST; John Deere 2130 Tractor Good Condition - ready to work \$11,000 + GST. Ph. 4159 9242

Toft 6000 Good condition. 4 blade variable length rotary chop, 7000 topper,4ft Coridini primary extractor. Suit small tonnage or excellent plant cutter. \$15000 Ono. Ph. 0427 590 159

Wanted

STL shares wanted. Genuine grower. Pay market price. Let's keep STL shares in the hands of non-miller growers. Ph 0419 717 006 or 0408 448 227

Trash incorporator Ph. 0439 622 347

Massey Ferguson 201 cane harvester (for plants). Ph. 0439 622 347

Half-tracks to suit MF102 cane harvester. Ph. 0437 266 711

International 574 in fair condition for restoration. North Queensland Region. Ph. 0431458850

Cane to Harvest in the Proserpine Area for the 2018 Season. Phone Bruce on 0408 776 481 Tractor tyres - BUY & SELL. All sizes. Ph. 0418 775 698

Property

INGHAM: Cane Farm for sale. Hawkins Creek. Total Area 48.3ha. CPA 46.6ha. Shed, electricity & water. Genuine enquiries Ph. 0407 635 175

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