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*COVER IMAGE: Isis cane grower Michael Russo is using the latest yield monitoring technology to help assess the results of a large-scale fertiliser efficiency trial at his Farnsfield farm.*

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# Time to be all in for industry good

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

As this year's harvest gathers steam over the coming weeks, we can only hope our industry will see high yields, matched with high sugar content, that may help offset the perilous state of the world sugar price.

Price, weather and production costs – it's a trilogy of stress and anxiety that we talk about a lot.

Indeed, the core business of CANEGROWERS as an organisation must be helping farmers manage these issues.

Dealing with the current and near term seasonal challenges cannot be forgotten, even as we look for ways to tackle the underlying longer-term challenges facing our industry.

For many months CANEGROWERS has been working, through the Australian Sugar Alliance (ASA), to ensure that we stay ahead of these underlying threatening issues.

ASA is not an organisation that has a high profile within the industry. It is simply a forum for CANEGROWERS, as a grower organisation, to work with SRA, QSL and the peak bodies of the sugar milling sector to identify issues that affect us all, but cannot be addressed by one organisation.

Over recent years a central focus of the group has been to build a social licence to operate strategy (focusing on nutrition and environmental issues management), as well as establishing a resilient trade policy and market access function.

However, responding to these issues requires resources, in terms of both people and finances.

That's why CANEGROWERS has been working closely with other grower groups to build support for an Industry Good Fund (IGF).

There is some way to go until we have agreement by everyone in the industry, but that is what is required. Everyone must agree and everyone must be involved.

Industry good initiatives will be projects that go to the heart of our future, so it's vital that those groups within the industry who see a future for our industry, come together to both identify the challenges and determine how they must be responded to.

Whether it is nutrition, trade, biosecurity or research and development – all current issues – or the wide array of issues on the horizon, we need to come together as an industry and collectively be involved in setting priorities and determining how we all respond.

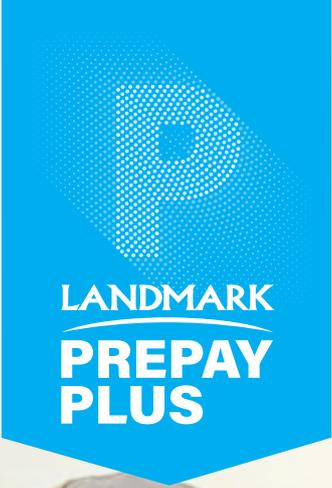
Our current dire market circumstances mean that this must be done with a razor-like view on profitability, but equally this will drive us to be focused and pragmatic.

Importantly, the issues that challenge us cannot be ignored while we work through the disagreements that drive us apart as an industry.

There is, in my opinion, tremendous goodwill for industry leaders to come together on these issues and over coming months we will hopefully see a renewed capacity for all of us to work as one on the challenges that will define our future. ■

*"There is tremendous goodwill for industry leaders to come together on these issues and over coming months we will hopefully see a renewed capacity for us to all work as one on the issues that will define the future for us all. "*





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# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Hands-on fun at Rural Discovery Day

Six class groups of school children were educated, entertained and got their hands dirty as CANEGROWERS again joined in the RNA's Rural Discovery Day at the Brisbane Showgrounds in May.



CANEGROWERS participates in the event each year to help students connect the sugar they're familiar with in bags in the supermarket with the people and processes that get it there.

The underlying message of the presentation is that sugar is a natural product grown with skill and care by Queensland farmers.

Students had the opportunity to plant fresh billets in a dirt box and discuss with growers Lindsay and Samuel Mischke and CANEGROWERS staff what cane needs to grow - sunshine, good soil and water.

The technology and machinery used on farm for land preparation, fertilising, pest protection and harvesting also engaged many of the students.

Tasting cane juice squeezed from a stick was very popular while a video took them from inside a harvester in a paddock through the milling process.

As well as sugar, the staff and growers talked to the groups about the uses of bagasse, mill mud and other products such as ethanol and garden mulch.

The first hand knowledge of Lindsay and Samuel was in demand as the students, parents and teachers asked questions about the crop cycle, yields, cane burning and many more topics.

CANEGROWERS appreciates the Mischke family's ongoing enthusiasm for and contribution to Rural Discovery Day. ■



## 2018 CRUSH GETS UNDERWAY

Mackay growers have kicked off Queensland's 2018 harvest with mills starting to crush from 29 May.

Tully will be the next region off the mark with the mill set to fire up from 1 June with Mossman scheduled for three days later.

Queensland sugarcane growers are expected to harvest a total of just over 32,450,000 tonnes before the end of the year. That total would be just ahead of the 2017 result.

## DROUGHT STATUS REVOKED

The Queensland Government has revoked drought declarations in areas including the Tableland, Burdekin, Maryborough, Isis and Bundaberg sugarcane regions.

This means that relief from the fixed charges on Ergon electricity accounts will cease and Ergon will return each customer to their previous tariff unless directed to do otherwise.

This provides irrigators with an opportunity to review and match their needs with the available tariffs.

## WIN A \$100 FUEL VOUCHER

CANEGROWERS Reef Programme project will be coming to a close at the end of June.

The five year project has supported articles on best management practices, CaneTube video competitions, Farmers Teaching Farmers on-farm activities and Virtual Bus Tour DVD's and YouTube video's on farming practices.

CANEGROWERS is seeking feedback on the project and has prepared a survey as part of the evaluation.

We are keen to get your opinion so please respond and go into the draw to win a \$100 fuel voucher.

The survey can be accessed at:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZBSWJCG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZBSWJCG) ■

*Pictured: (top) Matt Kealley of CANEGROWERS, Jade from Beenleigh SS, Samuel Mischke, Tristan from Bundaberg Central SS and Lindsay Mischke. (left) Students get to taste fresh sugarcane juice.*

# Growers rally against vegetation management laws

Sugarcane growers and cattle producers staged a rally in Mackay recently to tell the Queensland Government its new vegetation management laws will stifle agricultural production.

Wearing green to symbolise farmers as environmentalists, the rally of around 100 AgForce and CANEGROWERS members was peaceful and lawful but the Premier avoided it by using a side entrance to a function she was attending with Cabinet Ministers.

From a makeshift podium of pallets, **Ellie Boyd**, whose family grows cane at Plane Creek was one of the producers to address the rally (the video is on the CANEGROWERS Facebook page).

"I'm the third generation of my family to dirty my boots, I have a daughter and I'm hoping that she'll be the fourth," she said. "We've lost our ability to diversify, we've lost the ability to make our own choices for our own property.

"Nobody wants to destroy the land – if we don't have productive soil we don't have productive crops, that's the bottom line.

"All I want to see is a fair go for everybody, everybody deserves the chance to do the right thing and we all want to do the right thing, that's why we're here because we want our kids to be able to have a chance and we want everyone to understand that we're not going to give up, we're doing the best we can all the time."

CANEGROWERS Mackay chief executive officer **Kerry Latter** told the crowd all of agriculture would maintain the campaign against the laws until the next election in 2020.

"We need to have the people understand that we can't have food and the clothes on our backs without farmers," he said.

CANEGROWERS has opposed the vegetation management law amendments warning they put at risk sugarcane industry expansion to grow jobs in regional areas and contribute to the State Government's vision of new biofuel and other manufacturing.

The recent amendments:

- Removed provisions that allowed clearing for High-Value Agriculture and Irrigated High-Value Agriculture;
- Include anything that hasn't been cleared for 15 years in the definition of High Value Regrowth;
- Require growers to get a riverine protection permit before removing vegetation in a watercourse; and
- Replace self-assessable clearing codes with Accepted Development vegetation clearing codes which require government notification prior to clearing. ■



*Pictured: Mia Borg of Plane Creek (above) and Frank Perna (below) with CANEGROWERS Mackay CEO Kerry Latter.*



# Policy Update

Industry with Burn Ashburner

Economics with Warren Males

## 10 Year Roadmap for Queensland Agriculture

The Queensland Government has released its Queensland Agriculture and Food Research, Development and Extension 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan.

The roadmap identifies a number of actions in three key areas:

### 1. Increase innovation and commercialisation:

- support commercialisation of AgTech start-ups, develop funding models, develop enabling regulations and favour innovation with respect to climate change and sustainable biofuels.

### 2. Identify and promote agriculture and food RD&E opportunities:

- promote future career opportunities in agriculture and food, encourage information sharing, skill development and collaboration through online portals and provide relevant fellowships and scholarships.

### 3. Support the existing sector to grow and develop new business:

- RD&E to support supply chain access to current and new markets;
- partnering with industry to refine and further develop best management practice approaches, particularly for industries in sensitive GBR catchments;
- continue to deliver biosecurity research and develop control strategies for pest animals, weeds and major diseases.

It also refers to the need to collaborate more with industry, other RD&E providers and the private sector to get the most out of RD&E for the Queensland ag sector. A QDAF RD&E Strategic Plan for agriculture and food, fisheries and forestry will also be developed, addressing

- collaboration with other RD&E providers,
- collaboration with key stakeholders such as RDCs in the context of the national industry plans,
- continued support for CRCs, and
- strategic investment in agriculture and food RD&E including extension and infrastructure

While there is little new or revealing in the Road Map, CANEGROWERS is hopeful that existing working relationships will at least be maintained.

Collaboration seems to be a key word, but what this translates to and how the sugarcane industry will benefit is yet to be seen. ■



## Matching Electricity tariffs to individual and state needs

### Revoked Drought Declarations

The drought declarations in parts of Queensland, including sugarcane regions, were revoked on 17 May.

This means the waived charges and deferred payments that applied during the drought period no longer apply.

During the drought, many irrigators switched electricity tariffs to T66 to take advantage of the low variable charge for pumping.

With the high fixed cost component of this tariff waived during the drought, this was a useful strategy.

As a matter of course, Ergon will return each customer to their previous tariff.

The drought revocation provides irrigators with an opportunity to review their electricity requirements and match their needs with the available tariffs.

Now is the time to check that you are on an electricity tariff that suits your energy needs.

The changes will be effective from the customer's next meter read date post 17 May 2018.

### Energy Queensland Tariff Structure Statement

In early 2017, based on evidence from Ergon and Energex's own Distribution Annual Planning reports about forward forecast demand relative to capacity, CANEGROWERS demonstrated to Energy Queensland that propositions on which Ergon's current Tariff Structure Statement were not evidence-based.

Simply put, the analysis which underpins the existing tariff structures fails to distinguish between maximum demand and maximum capacity.

Aside from a limited number of locations, spare capacity remains substantial, despite the record demand over the 2018 summer.

This means there is little need for demand tariffs.

To support Queensland's economic development, CANEGROWERS is calling on Energy Queensland to use the information contained in its own reports to develop an efficient network tariff structure. ■



## Ray Zamora wins 2018 Mangrove Jack Award



CANEGROWERS Tully Chairman **Tom Harney** said the Mangrove Jack Award recognises growers who help the industry grow while being mindful and caring for the surrounding environment.

"Ray Zamora's excellent farming practices are worthy of this prestigious award and we congratulate him," Tom said.

Ray farms 142 ha in the Riversdale/Murray district with his mother Val and wife Debora. 110 ha is under cane with 22 ha fallow for legumes to improve bioactivity in the soil. His cane blocks have been laser-levelled to send water to grassed drains leading to four man-made nutrient and silt trap lagoons.

Across the Tully region, the Top Producer awards for each district went to:

El Arish - JM & TM Faulks	Murray - PF & S M Grimaz
Feluga - L Lee	Lower Tully - ERD & LMD Collins
Euramo - GJ Dore	Riversdale - L & R Collins & Sons
Syndicate - PS & JA Gilbert	Kennedy - F & AJ Corradi

*Pictured above: Val and Ray Zamora accepting the Tully district's Mangrove Jack Award.*

## Money Matters

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### YOUR LOCAL FUND

AustSafe Super has welcomed Rebecca Assman to the team as the Far North Queensland Regional Manager. Rebecca fills the shoes of well-known and long-term serving Regional Manager, Anthony Brick.

Being local and available to support our members and employers is top of mind for Rebecca. She's been in the financial services industry for over 10 years, and covers the Far North Queensland region north of Townsville, including the Northern Territory (NT).

After growing up in Charters Towers on a cattle property, Rebecca is now based in Mossman and is ready to work with business owners and local farmers to support them with their super needs.

On a day-to-day basis Rebecca will be on the road assisting employers and members with all aspects of superannuation, including:

- Keeping them up-to-date with the latest news in super
- Helping employers understand their super obligations and choosing AustSafe Super as their default fund
- Providing employers with tips on how to use AustSafe Super's online payment portals
- Helping employees with consolidating and rolling over lost super and reviewing their insurance and investment options
- Hosting employee lunch time shed meetings.

If you have any superannuation queries as either a member or employer, you can contact Rebecca on 0408 706 064 or [rassman@austsafe.com.au](mailto:rassman@austsafe.com.au)

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## Case studies show bottom line and environment win-win as growers adopt Smartcane BMP

Collaborating with sugarcane growers and industry stakeholders in north Queensland, agricultural economists from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Rural Economic Development (RED) team have analysed the economic implications of Smartcane BMP adoption.

The project, funded by Sugar Research Australia, saw DAF economists work with senior scientist **Marguerite Renouf** (lifecycles) to incorporate the environmental implications of Smartcane BMP adoption into six case studies.

"The results indicate that BMP adoption can result in win-win (economic and environmental) outcomes, adding value to farming businesses," said DAF economist **Caleb Connolly**.

"The economic analyses for the six case study farms indicated overall economic benefits ranging between \$25-\$220 per hectare per year, through lower operating costs and/or productivity improvements.

"After accounting for capital costs, payback periods ranged from 2-10 years depending on the changes made, how they were implemented and the size of the farms.

"The environmental analyses indicated that the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions after making the changes were also beneficial - between 7-23% and for one of the larger farms was the equivalent of taking up to 86 cars off the road.

"The analyses also considered environmental performance indicators

related to fossil fuel use and water quality (nutrients and pesticides) over the lifecycle of sugarcane production.

"Each farming system and business is unique and the economic and environmental outcomes of changing practices can vary between farms and be sensitive to changes in yield, so it's important that any associated risks are carefully managed.

"Growers shared insights during the project as to how they manage these risks, including seeking the expert advice of agronomists, progressively implementing changes using approaches suited to local conditions, and sharing the costs of investment between neighbours or completing joint funding applications."

In recent weeks, Mr Connolly and fellow economist **Mark Poggio** have presented the results of these studies to well over 100 growers and industry stakeholders in cane growing areas in north Queensland.

The results were also presented at the Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists conference in Mackay in April.

Mark Poggio, DAF Manager Agricultural Economics, said that DAF would like to

acknowledge the substantial support received from SRA and participating growers, extension officers, industry organisations and stakeholders over the duration of the project.

"Growers provided their time and data about their operations, and members of the steering group provided guidance and technical advice. SRA, TCPSL, HCPSL, local milling organisations, CANEGROWERS, Lifecycles and our staff provided ongoing support throughout the project.

"There are a number of tools available to assist growers in working towards profitable and sustainable outcomes such as the Farm Economic Analysis Tool (FEAT) which is available free of charge on the DAF website." ■

*The publications in the project (final report, summary factsheet and case studies) can be downloaded from DAF's "Best Management Practices for sugarcane" publications portal. [www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/best-management-practices-for-sugarcane](http://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/best-management-practices-for-sugarcane)*

*Pictured: DAF economist Caleb Connolly discusses the project with DAF agronomist Angela Marshall and SRA researcher and KFA leader Dr Jason Eglinton.*

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## SIGHTS SET ON AN OPTIMISTIC FUTURE FOR CAIRNS GROWERS

Growers throughout the Cairns Region recently participated in a series of workshops designed to bring together growers from across the generations to discuss industry issues and plan for the future.

The sessions focused on how best to enhance the on-farm role of the younger generation, and identify ways to attract younger growers to the industry.

Workshop facilitator Dr John Pickering believes events like these are an important opportunity for growers to have their say and contribute to building the future of the cane industry.

"Growers had some great ideas on how to attract younger generations into the industry," he said.

"The sessions revealed a lot of optimism about what the industry could look like in the future."

"There is no doubt that the industry is facing some challenges at the moment, especially as the average age of growers is increasing and younger generations entering the system are getting harder and harder to find.

"However, what stood out most was the belief in the industry's ability to tackle these problems and their optimism for the future as the industry invests in technologies that seek to do more with a stick of cane."

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Chairman, Stephen Calcagno took part in the workshops and believes that it is this forward-thinking that will attract more young growers.

"There are a lot of exciting opportunities around the corner as groups such as MSF Sugar are investing in co-generation plants to convert bagasse and the agave plant into renewable energy.

"This is an important opportunity for younger growers to get on board. If we can grow a crop that fully supports renewable energy, it could completely revolutionise the industry."

Looking ahead, Stephen believes that the industry has a lot to offer younger growers and highlights the importance of supporting them wherever possible.

"Older growers have a wealth of experience and knowledge. That is the most important resource we have to draw upon and learn from, however, the industry won't get very far if we can't attract younger growers in the near future."

"There is plenty to look forward to," he said.

"The Government and public are now using more positive language when speaking about the industry, and growers are getting on board, setting the record straight for a brighter future."

The workshops were run as part of Project Cane Changer, a CANEGROWERS initiative funded by the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science, which is highlighting the positive changes taking place throughout the sugarcane industry.

Project Cane Changer has now launched in all six growing districts of the Wet Tropics. To find out more, you can visit your local CANEGROWERS office or go to [www.canechanger.com](http://www.canechanger.com) ■

*Pictured: CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Chairman Stephen Calcagno with Behaviour Innovation founder Dr John Pickering.*



**Matt Kealley**

CANEGROWERS Manager -  
Environment & Sustainability

*"With every problem comes an opportunity and for CANEGROWERS members at Rocky Point it is Smartcane BMP with its productivity focus and alignment with the international sustainability standard."*

## IT'S ALL ABOUT LEARNING FROM OTHERS

I recently spent three days in the Rocky Point District with Smartcane BMP's Innisfail Facilitator Deb Telford, as she guided growers through the benchmarking process.

Driving around Rocky Point you wouldn't know you were in the Gold Coast region, only 40 minutes south Brisbane. The thing I noticed immediately was the rural setting and the quiet. At 7.45am it was very peaceful sipping coffee in the sunshine at Cabbage Tree Point.

However, a drive soon highlighted the obvious — Rocky Point has its fair share of challenges.

Urban development has changed the way water drains in the district, while traffic and large vehicles on the roads create issues for growers moving farm equipment.

A lack of understanding by some of the newer residents about cane growing means there are complaints about the practices used in the district.

I also noted a helicopter buzzing around over the area.

The growers I met were bittersweet about seeing it, as it meant the Red Imported Fire Ants they've been reporting were being treated. It also meant that the problem is far from being resolved.

Mulching and soya beans have become an important part of the farming system in this region, so the containment and treatment of Fire Ants needs to be carefully managed.

The Rocky Point mill has had two seasons of breakdowns in the mill and cogeneration plant, as well as a fire, meaning that growers have had to stand over and then burn cane, which hasn't been popular with urban neighbours.

This year the mill, which is seeking Bonsucro certification, has requested that growers produce sustainable sugar and is including this as a condition of the cane supply agreement.

Unfortunately, due to the size of the district, growers have had limited access to extension officers, agronomists and other services that could improve productivity.

Yet, with every problem comes an opportunity, and for CANEGROWERS members at Rocky Point it is Smartcane BMP with its productivity focus and alignment with the international sustainability standard.

For that reason, they asked **Deb Telford** to make the 1,600km trip from Innisfail to facilitate benchmarking sessions for growers in the three core BMP modules and the sustainable sugar module that aligns to Bonsucro.

As a result, approximately 30% of the cane area in the Rocky Point district is now benchmarked in the Smartcane BMP program.

Deb also took the time to conduct two on-farm pre-audits.

CANEGROWERS Policy Council representative **Michelle Fischer** and her husband **Ross** showed Deb around their farm and learnt what records and information they need to become Smartcane BMP accredited.

**Ben Spann**, a young Rocky Point Director also took up Deb's offer and both businesses are now working towards accreditation.

Heading to the airport for her flight home, Deb told me she had loved the opportunity to meet the growers and learn about their local challenges and practices.

"It's all about learning from others," she said. ■



## SRA appoints Regional Coordinators as part of strategy for **INDUSTRY-LED ADOPTION**

SRA has taken major steps forward in the delivery of the industry-led Adoption Strategy for the Australian sugarcane industry with the appointment of Regional Coordinators in six regions.



The Adoption Strategy has been developed in consultation with the Australian sugarcane industry and SRA's Government investors and stakeholders over the last 12 months.

It aims to provide a more strategic focus to increase the uptake and implementation of new and existing technologies in the sugar industry.

*We have also announced 12 new research projects that will begin from 1 July 2018, to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers.*

The Strategy identified the need for Regional Coordinators in six regions to work with the local industry and all stakeholders to deliver strategic outcomes.

The original intent was to progressively appoint the Regional Coordinators.

However, the quality of the candidates coupled with the momentum that the Adoption Strategy has generated has meant SRA has decided to appoint all six regional coordinators now in order to maintain the impetus of the Adoption Strategy.

The Regional Coordinators are Mr **Sebastian Garcia-Cuenca** (New South Wales and Rocky Point), Mr **James Ogden-Brown** (Southern Region), Mr **Phil Ross** (Central Region), Mr **Anthony Curro** (Burdekin Region), Ms **Caroline Coppo** (Herbert Region), and Mr **Daryl Parker** (Far North Queensland).

As the key contact in each region, the Regional Coordinators will work closely

with the local industry including, millers, growers, productivity services, local CANEGROWERS, the Australian Cane Farmers' Association, NRM groups and others to deliver strategic outcomes in each region.

### **NEW RESEARCH TO DELIVER OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN SUGARCANE GROWERS AND MILLERS**

We have also announced 12 new research projects that will begin from 1 July 2018, to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers.

These new projects complement the existing portfolio of research investment by SRA and will address critical research gaps and requirements that have been identified in SRA's five-year Strategic Plan.

The new research investment would see research providers from several leading research institutions undertake work to address critical issues for the Australian sugar industry.

These projects have an emphasis on new and innovative research.

For example, CSIRO will be looking closer into the genetics of sugarcane and molecular markers, which will help us to continue to modernise the SRA breeding program, leading to better varieties for growers and millers.

We are also investing in a major project with QUT to improve pan design and how pans operate.

The pan stage of milling is where syrup is converted to sugar, and there is an opportunity with this research to improve the efficiency of this critical component of the milling process, and to do so in a way that minimises the capital investment for our milling members.

Our investments are also looking at other key topics including improved irrigation system selection, nitrogen use efficiency, and improved farming systems.

We are also investing in a project led by SRA to ensure our industry is prepared for the possible biosecurity risk posed by moth borers, which exist in neighbouring sugarcane growing countries and would

cause serious problems for our industry if we faced an incursion.

This type of preparation is a vital insurance policy for the future of our industry

The full portfolio of SRA's research investment is available via the SRA website: <https://sugarresearch.com.au/research-portfolio/>

### SRA ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT IN TARGETED MILLING RESEARCH

We have also announced the inaugural investment in a new research program called the Small Milling Research Program (SMRP) scheme.

The SMRP scheme was launched in 2017 as a way for SRA to invest in small milling sector projects that develop a product, service, or process that would solve targeted problems in sugar mills and deliver tangible outputs with almost immediate outcomes.

SRA is funding four new projects under the scheme in partnership with our Milling Members and their research partners.

The project investment is:

- Isis Central Mill to work with QUT and Neltec to evaluate the Neltec Colour Q for measuring the purity of magma from C centrifugals;
- Wilmar to work with QUT, Tully Sugar and Sugar Gateway Labs to understand the cause of high sugar colour;
- Mackay Sugar to work with QUT to improve the impact of evaporator calandria noxious gas bleeding arrangements on evaporator rate and condensate quality at Racecourse Mill; and
- Wilmar to work with TropWATER on optimising the operation and technology of activated sludge plants.

The scheme will strengthen collaborations between industry and research through the direct involvement of the milling sector in SMRPs and increase research skills and capability in sugar mills.

The SMRP will be conducted again the 2018/19 financial year. ■

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## A quick guide to pool prices, matrices and payment forecasts



By Bryce Wenham, QSL Finance Manager, Supplier Relations

As we head towards a new season, all eyes are on QSL's 2018-Season indicative pool prices. It is important to note that these prices are indicative values only, especially so early in the new production year? To understand what these values represent, it's important to know some basics around how QSL's pools work.

### QSL'S PRICING POOLS

A QSL pricing pool is generally an amount of sugar that is managed in a particular way.

For example, QSL's Actively Managed Pool is made up of hundreds of individual tonnage contributions from growers throughout the state that are all banded together and managed as a total amount under clear guidelines defined in that pool's Pricing Pool Terms.

These terms determine how the pool will operate, including when pricing will start and finish, the financial instruments that can be used, and the parameters that the QSL pricing team must follow when pricing that pool's tonnage.

These guidelines are used to establish a benchmark – that is, the level of sugar and currency that must be priced or locked in throughout the pricing period for that pool.

The terms of each pool also outline the amount of discretion the QSL pricing team has to deviate from the pool's benchmark to reflect their view on the market.

For example, if the pricing team believes sugar prices will fall, they might use their discretion to price more sugar than the benchmark level earlier in the season to take advantage of available rates.

With the benchmark as a guide and the Pricing Pool Terms determining the key rules of operation, the QSL pricing team then prices each pool's sugar progressively across the pricing period.

Selling sugar in this way is a deliberate strategy to try to allow grower

participation in favourable market moves right across the pricing period (*Note: The exception to this is the QSL Guaranteed Floor Pool, which does not progressively price its sugar but instead sets a floor price at the start of the season*).

Provision is also made in some pools to enhance potential returns through short-term trading opportunities, if available, that exploit short-term volatility.

Different pools have different features, pricing periods and restrictions within their Pricing Pool Terms, resulting in different results for different pools. Detailed QSL Pricing Pool Terms for each pool are available on QSL's website ([www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au)).

Growers should read these terms in full before making any pricing decisions or decisions about which pool to select.

### INDICATIVE PRICES

Throughout the course of every season, QSL provides updates on the indicative value of its pricing pools, even though not all of the sugar in each of the pools has actually been priced. So how do we do this?

Indicative gross pool prices are made up of two components:

1. The average value of the sugar already sold by QSL; and
2. The value of the remaining sugar yet to be sold. For this, we make a 'mark-to-market' valuation of a pool's unsold sugar based on that day's sugar price (also known as the spot price).

Although QSL generally starts publishing indicative pool prices once a pool's nomination have closed, it is important to



note that the value of a pool can change right up until the pool closes at the end of the financial year.

This can happen for a number of reasons, including the fact that the Shared Pool element applied to every QSL pool is not finalised until July each year.

However, it is also because the ratio between what has been priced to date in a pool and the valuation of the pool's unpriced sugar is constantly changing as the season progresses. QSL is progressively pricing more sugar and/or currency in the pool, effectively revaluing tonnage previously only valued using a mark-to-market approach.

Indicative pool values can also change as a result of market movements, which alter the valuation for the mark-to-market proportion of the pool.

For example, the same sugar valued at \$400/t today could potentially only be worth \$390/t tomorrow if the market falls or exchange rates take an unfavourable turn.

As an example, Figure 1 shows that the 2018 2-Season Forward Pool has priced 62% of its sugar tonnage (the Sugar Hedge Ratio) and locked in 59% of the currency exchange required.

We can see that this is more than the pool's benchmark of 58%, which indicates that QSL's pricing team has a market view that prices may fall and so has slightly increased pricing to lock in favourable levels.

The average price achieved for the sugar already priced in this pool is \$425/MT IPS.

When combined with the market value of the pool's unpriced sugar, the current indicative value of the pool is \$401 (the mark-to-market value).

Figure 1: 2018 2-Season Forward Pool information – Indicative Example Only

QSL Pool	% Pool priced			Gross Price AUD/T IPS	
	Benchmark	Sugar Hedge Ratio	FX Hedge Ratio	Average price Achieved YTD	Mark-to-market value
2018 2-Season Forward Pool	58%	62%	59%	\$425	\$401

### SENSITIVITY MATRICES

Early in the production year, QSL's pools are generally not substantially priced, which means the majority of the quoted indicative price is based on the mark-to-market value of the pool.

As more sugar is priced and currency rates for the pool are locked in, the ability for substantial fluctuations in the pool's indicative price reduces.

To help growers understand the potential impact of sugar price and currency fluctuations on a pool's current indicative price, QSL publishes a sensitivity matrix for each pool on the QSL website, along with details of the

amount of sugar and currency priced to date.

As shown in Figure 2, each matrix highlights the current indicative pool price in bold and then shows the potential impact on the pool of changes to the AUD/USD and sugar price (the world market indicator US.lb).

We recommend that growers regularly refer to these matrices, especially early in each season, to gain an understanding of the potential market impacts upon QSL pools and their associated QSL Advances should the market take a turn for the worse or better. ■

Figure 2: Sensitivity matrix for 2018 2-Season Forward Pool

2-Season Forward Pool Sensitivities (AUD/tonne IPS)			
AUD/USD Exch. Rate	World market indicator (US c/lb)		
	11.4	<b>12.4</b>	13.4
0.70	\$ 396	\$ 408	\$ 419
<b>0.75</b>	\$ 386	<b>\$ 396</b>	\$ 407
0.80	\$ 376	\$ 387	\$ 397

*DISCLAIMER: This guide contains information of a general or summary nature only and should not be relied on to make any pricing or pool selection decisions. Nothing in this guide constitutes financial or investment advice, and growers should seek their own independent advice before making any such decisions.*



# PRESCRIPTION FARMING

## IT'S JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

By Wayne Griffin

In an age when farming practices are becoming increasingly tailored, not just by region or district, but by specific zones within a paddock, Isis grower Michael Russo is combining old-fashioned trial work and the latest in yield monitoring technology to determine the optimum inputs for his farm.

A fourth-generation farmer, **Michael** operates a cane and macadamia farm at Farnsfield, 20 minutes north of Childers.

With his father **Joe** and brother **Jack**, he grows around 37,000 tonnes of cane annually and recently planted 70 hectares of macadamia trees.

"Dad still focuses mainly on the cane and my brother Jack and I help him run the farm on a day-to-day basis," Michael said when *Australian Canegrower* visited the Russo farm recently.

"I've got two other brothers who live in Brisbane, but we've all got farms together and we grow in a big group basically.

"We grow around 37,000 tonnes between Dad's farm and our farms, and probably average about 110-120 tonnes per hectare."

The family also operates a contract planting and harvesting business, cutting up to 110,000 tonnes of cane per year.

In recent years, Michael has been closely involved with a number of SRA trial projects, particularly their ongoing work on harvester efficiency.

In 2016 he secured a Reef Trust Innovation grant to undertake a large-scale fertiliser trial that he is hoping will help boost the farm's productivity while also cutting input costs.

"Previously we were all granular fertiliser. We'd do one pass straight on top of the stool and water it in," Michael said.

"Then in 2016 we started moving away from granular and into liquid fertiliser.

"We're currently trialling a system where we split the stool and inject a liquid fertiliser straight into the root zone."

The fully replicated trial, which is being overseen by SRA, covers about 1500 tonnes of cane.

"We still use a granular fertiliser up front, just a little bit, for pot ash and nitrogen. It's a basal-type mix that we put on top and water in. Then, after about eight weeks, we start going through and splitting the stool and putting liquid fertiliser on."

Simple economics was the driving force behind the switch, with the brothers determined to get "as much bang for our buck as possible", Michael said.

"When my dad and his brothers farmed together it was a massive operation, so they had no choice but to go in and broadcast a granular, just so they could get the ground covered.

"But when they went their separate ways



*"We'll harvest the trial strips this year and that will give us the official SRA results, but we used this system last year, which was a drought year for us, and we got a really good crop."*

*Caption: Childers cane grower and harvesting contractor Michael Russo is using the latest yield monitoring technology to help assess the results of a large-scale fertiliser efficiency trial at his Farnsfield farm.*

a few years ago, my brother and I decided that now we'd less ground to cover we'd try to optimise our fertiliser use.

"All the research we've done points to the potential loss of nitrogen to the atmosphere by applying it on top of the stool, so injecting it seemed the way to go."

The project will trial a number different fertiliser treatments, including one strip of a traditional one-shot granular application and three strips of a custom blend granular applications followed by varying rates of liquid fertiliser. *(Full trial regime outlined on page 18)*

"We've undertaken a detailed process for the trial, from modifying the coulter on the liquid applicator to reviewing the 2017 harvest yield map, undertaking soil sampling and electromagnetic mapping, and agreeing on appropriate ratings for the trial with SRA," Michael said.

The brothers began using the system across the entire farm in 2016 and so far Michael has been impressed with the results.

"We'll harvest the trial strips this year and that will give us the official SRA results, but we used this system last year, which was a drought year for us, and we got a really good crop," he said.

The second part of the trial, which Michael is hoping to begin later this year, involves utilising the latest yield monitoring technology to further increase his fertiliser efficiency.

"I've got a brand new John Deere yield monitor in my harvester," Michael said.

"So what that does is give me a live yield report on my screen as I'm cutting. I can see what is going through the machine as I cross the paddock."

*Continues page 18...*



"It's all about prescription farming. They've done it with other crops, like wheat, for years, but we haven't been doing it in cane. We want to see if it's viable to start doing it."

"It tells me how many tonnes I've cut, how many tonnes per hour I'm cutting, percentage of thrash, things like that, then I can pull up a detailed yield map on my phone."

"Once the results of the fertiliser trial come in and we know the optimum rate of fertiliser we need to apply, the hope is then to work with SRA to work out how we can use these yield maps to move towards fully rate-controlled liquid fertiliser applications."

"We've got a lot of soil variability across our blocks, so this technology should allow us to say we need a bit more fertiliser here and a bit less there, to ensure the crop is getting the correct amount of N."

"It's all about prescription farming. They've done it with other crops, like wheat, for years, but we haven't been doing it in cane. We want to see if it's viable to start doing it."

The brothers are no strangers to adopting technology already being used in other ag sectors.

They've recently teamed up with farming app developers Farm Live to help them through the Smartcane BMP accreditation process.

"We're in the process of getting accredited with BMP, like everyone else we're doing the practices already, we just don't have all the records complete," Michael said.

"We've actually started working with the Farm Live app, which is being adapted to use with cane."

"We've recorded all our data on the app – fertilisers, herbicides, irrigation, everything – it's all on there. Hopefully we can then use that to get our accreditation through."

### Fertiliser trial plan

Trt No.	Treatment	Application	N kg/ha	P kg/ha	K kg/ha	S kg/ha	Treatment details
1	Traditional	1	154	13.3	116	25	Granular, Impact 141 (S) @ 665 kg/ha
2	Low N rate	1	36	15	100	27	Granular, Custom Blend @ 390 kg/ha
		2	64	0	0	0	Liquid, Easy N @ 220L/ha
			100	15	100	27	
3	Medium N rate	1	36	15	100	27	Granular, Custom Blend @ 390 kg/ha
		2	94	0	0	0	Liquid, Easy N @ 220L/ha
			130	15	100	27	
4	High N rate	1	36	15	100	27	Granular, Custom Blend @ 390 kg/ha
		2	119	0	0	0	Liquid, Easy N @ 220L/ha
			155	15	100	27	

*Pictured: As well as providing a visual representation of the harvested area, the report generated by Michael's new John Deere yield monitor includes valuable agronomic data such as total tonnes harvested, average tonnes per hectare, average trash, average speed, and total area harvested.*





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## ON-FARM CATCHMENT REPAIR SITES ASSESSED FOR **WATER QUALITY BENEFIT**

More than 40 sites in the Johnstone and Tully River catchments have been assessed as possible catchment repair locations for the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (MIP) – a reef water quality initiative that is the first of its kind in the Wet Tropics.

Catchment Repair Project Officer **Suzette Argent** said 15 sites had been assessed in April alone.

"We've racked up a lot of hours in the field and have covered a lot of ground," she said.

"This month we've focused on wetland sites because they take longer to design and construct so we need more lead time. We're hoping to have two constructed by end of 2018, to get as much monitoring time as possible."

Catchment repair and treatment systems have the potential to reduce nutrient and sediment loads entering the Great Barrier

Reef, and their effectiveness in the Wet Tropics will be trialed and monitored over the life of the project.

The MIP is funded by the Queensland Government and designed by the local community, with a consortium of more than 40 organisations and hundreds of community members pooling their knowledge of Tully and Johnstone catchment landscapes and conditions to design a program tailor-made to the environment.

Walking the Landscape workshops – where scientific information from maps and reports is combined with decades of local knowledge – has helped with the

selection of possible catchment repair sites.

Suzette is working closely with **Mark Bayley** from Australian Wetlands Consulting, who has more than 15 years' expertise in catchment repair. The pair worked together on Australia's first bioreactor, on a Sunshine Coast pineapple farm.

"There are different criteria we need to consider. Most importantly, landholders have to be open to the idea of us working on their land," Suzette said. "We're really encouraged by the level of willingness so far. Growers are keen to drive water quality improvements."



*"We're really encouraged by the level of willingness so far. Growers are keen to drive water quality improvements."*

"We also need to know if the right technology is going in the right spot in the landscape. During a preliminary site assessment, we'll check to see if the site is in a low point in the landscape and if it has the ability to intercept the base flow, or the constant and steady flow of water, as well as storm flows."

"The MIP is all about local knowledge informing action. The success of catchment repair technologies are reliant on knowing how the water moves and who better to know this than the landholders who live here."

Suzette and Mark also take the wetland-to-catchment size ratio into account when making their recommendations.

Wetland size, treatment area size and the amount of land that would need to be taken out of use (if any) all help to give a theoretical dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) reduction rate in kilograms per year, which is compared to the cost of construction.

"In short, this gives a cost per kilo of DIN removed, and provides a good value-for-money check," Suzette said.

First stage sites are expected to be finalised in May. The team will make recommendations based on an assessment matrix, before putting them before the MIP Project Panel for consideration.

"Once the panel has reviewed and endorsed selections, more detailed site investigations will take place to inform the engineering designs of the wetlands and bioreactors.

"This is the rigorous stuff – drilling holes for soil and hydraulic studies; risk assessments; flora and fauna surveys; and cultural heritage assessments," Suzette said.

Information sessions will be held in early June, followed by expressions of interest for construction work. Construction is expected to begin in July. ■

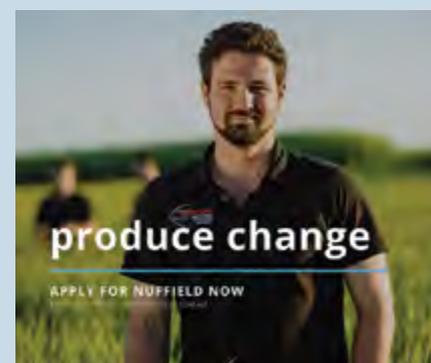
*Pictured: (left) Catchment Repair Project Officer Suzette Argent is working with landholders to drive water quality improvements; Mark Bayley (Australian Wetlands Consulting) and Suzette Argent (Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project) during a site visit, assessing possible catchment repair locations.*

## GLOBAL ADVENTURE TO INSPIRE FARMING'S CHANGE-MAKERS

Nuffield Australia has launched a new campaign to unearth the best and brightest talent in Australian agriculture.

The 'Produce Change' campaign is designed to encourage primary producers from around the nation to put their name forward for a 2019 Nuffield Scholarship.

Targeted at farmers and farm managers aged between 28 and 45 year old, the Nuffield Scholarship program gives Australian farmers the opportunity to develop a global network as they study farming practices from around the world - practices they can then implement to produce positive change across their own business and the agricultural sector as a whole.



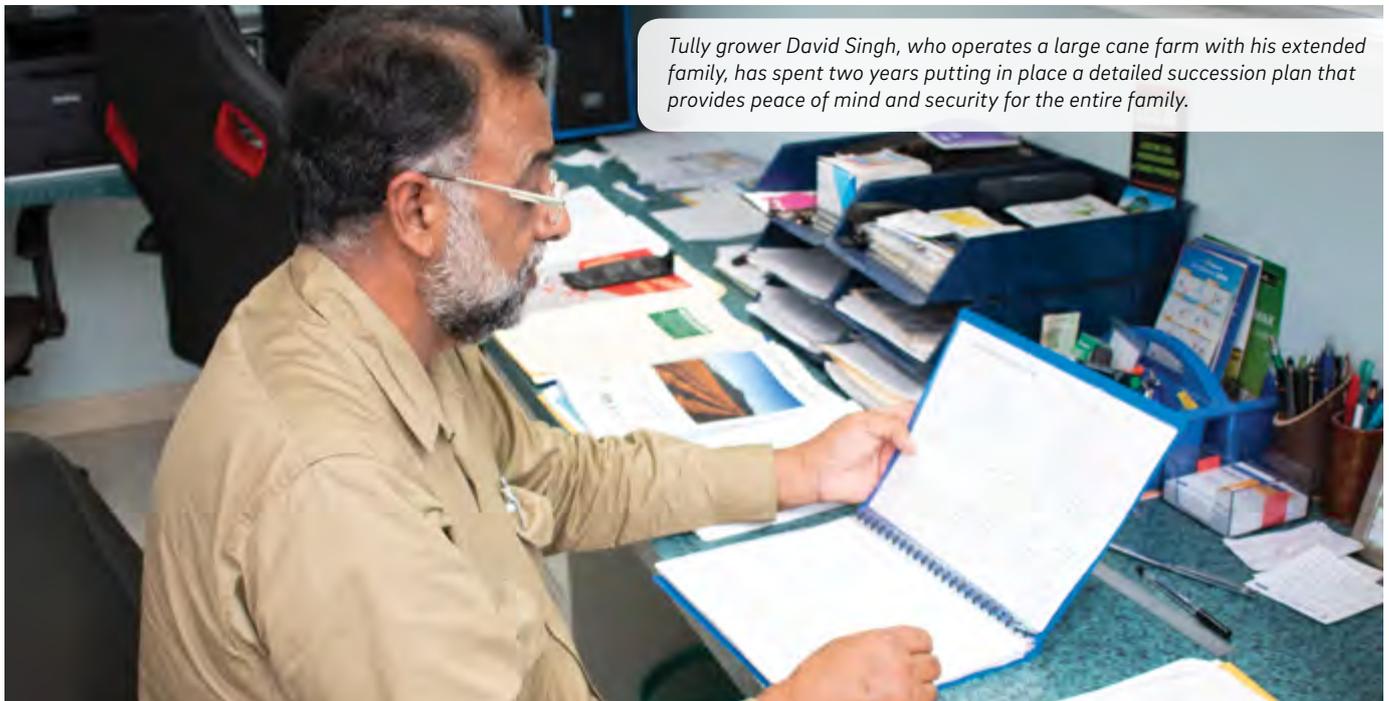
Nuffield Australia CEO Jodie Dean said the theme 'Produce Change' was inspired and encouraged by both the successes of existing scholars and the next wave of farmers, who are redefining agriculture in an age of unprecedented technological advances and globalisation.

"Producing change goes straight to the heart of what we do at Nuffield," Ms Dean said.

"Nuffield scholars research and deliver practical change that adds real value to farm businesses and the Australian community more broadly."

Applications for the 2019 scholarship program close on 15 June 2018. For more info visit [www.nuffield.com.au](http://www.nuffield.com.au)

# FAMILY FARMING – SUCCESSION ISSUES



Tully grower David Singh, who operates a large cane farm with his extended family, has spent two years putting in place a detailed succession plan that provides peace of mind and security for the entire family.

## Representations about future ownership

A number of years ago I wrote an article for *Australian Canegrower* in which I described the outcome of a court case involving a Dalby farming family.

In that case the Court held that even though the parents were the sole legal owners of the farming enterprise, there was a constructive trust such that the son and daughter-in-law were entitled to a beneficial ownership in the farming enterprise.

In another recent court case involving the Browne family in Western Australia in 2017, the Court also found that even though the legal ownership of the farm was in the Dad's name, the Court ordered that the farming property owned by Dad was actually to be held by Dad in trust for his son and the son was entitled to a transfer of the farm into the son's name.

In these cases the Court found that various representations made by the parents over time, such as "this will all be yours one day" could be relied upon by children in certain circumstances to force a transfer to the children even against the wishes of the parents.

*"The Court may enforce such a representation by a parent if it would be unconscionable to permit the departure by the parent from the encouraged representation given to the children."*

The particular facts and circumstances are always relevant, but the Court will have regard as to whether the children relied on those representations and where any departure from those representations would cause detriment to the children.

In summary, the Court may enforce such a representation by a parent if it would be unconscionable to permit the departure by the parent from the encouraged representation given to the children.

### TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Family members need to be careful about family working arrangements and expectations.
- What might seem to be casual family conversations about future ownership may turn out to be legally enforceable obligations.
- Good communication within the family and documenting arrangements is a good start.
- Sensible and timely succession planning, including taking advice from suitably qualified professional advisers will likely provide clarity, certainty and comfort to family members. ■



By Chris Cooper  
CANEGROWERS legal adviser

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## Rainfall Report

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Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Year to date	Average rainfall (mm)
	7 days to 9am 21.05.18	28.05.18		January-May
Mossman	21	0.6	2013	1668
Mareeba AP	0	0	650	702
Cairns	6	18	1891	1551
Mt Sophia	27	36	3099	2470
Babinda	0	0	1460	3055
Innisfail	104	36	2599	2525
Tully	13	5	2614	2953
Cardwell	0.6	2	1335	1608
Lucinda	3	0	1367	1583
Ingham	15	Tce	1558	1509
Abergowrie	1	10	1613	1379
Townsville	1	0	737	847
Ayr DPI	4	0	571	686
Proserpine	0.2	2	800	985
Mirani	0	4	595	1060
Mackay	3	29	634	1104
Sarina (Plane Ck)	0	0	771	1225
Bundaberg	0.4	3	429	560
Childers South	0.2	2	563	472
Maryborough	0	1	583	660
Tewantin	28	79	791	1019
Eumundi	26	21	878	995
Nambour	15	25	694	996
Woongoolba	0	6	603	745
Murwillumbah	0	5	457	938
Ballina	13	27	810	948
Woodburn	0.8	11	557	765



**AustSafe  
Super**



The industry super  
fund for rural and  
regional Australia

Zero indicates either no rain or no report was sent. These rainfall figures are subject to verification and may be updated later. Weather forecasts, radar and satellite images and other information for the farming community can be accessed on [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au). Weather report provided by the Bureau of Meteorology's Commercial Weather Services Unit.

8t Toft hi-lift haulout bin. Quantity of 4" and 5" alum. pipes. Ph. 0423 288 639

## Wanted

WTB: 2 x single disc coulters to suit Renaldo side dresser. Ph 0427 585 631 or 07 4958 5631

Wanted to buy cane haulout trailer, double 5 tonne prefer Westhill, will look at all sizes and styles. Ph. 0427 104 433

Wanted: Bonel 3 row stool finger wheel rake to rake trash off stool. Ph. 0428 591 048

WTB: Trash Fertiliser Box, Irvin Boom Spray or similar with or without spray tank. Ph. 0419 788 376

Wanted irrigation pipe trailer in good order, Mackay and districts Only. Ph. 0458 529 367 or 4959 8283

Looking for an old anvil and blacksmithing tools. Any condition. Will pay cash. 0429 984 920

Wanted to buy: 3 tonne drop side tipper truck – Mackay North Ph. 0488 633 777

## Work Wanted

Looking for haulout contract 2018 season. Ingham area 5 years exp in the sugar industry. Ph. 0420 434 977

Work experience wanted in the Rocky Point, QLD area. Have mechanical experience and licence operating forklifts and irrigation pumps and HR truck driving licence. I am a quick learner and hard worker. Ph. 0419 994 355

Experienced farm worker seeking cane harvest position, any region Ph. 0456 844 115

Looking for haulout driver work in the Cairns region. Can stay the full season. Have HR licence, fork lift ticket, experienced tractor driver. Haven't worked cane before but I am a quick learner. Ph. Lindsay on 0417 427 408

## Positions Vacant

Wanted Haulout drivers, Mirani area, 3 days a week on a rolling roster, must have current license and siding induction or willing to obtain induction, elevating bin experience preferred, please Ph. 4959 1 008

## Property

Looking for small acreage near Mackay for fruits & vegetables farming. Wanted to buy second hand farming implements Ph. 0414 900 121

Wanted to Buy: Farmhouse on separate title (without farm) up to 25klms from Mackay City Gates. Please leave a message on 4954 4869. Thank you.

Wanted: Cane land to lease Mackay Sugar area. Ph. 0407 638 370

HOME BUSH/OAKENDEN cane farm for sale in Mackay region. 100T/HA 5 year average 54HA property. Fully laser levelled farm with a large bore and underground water mains throughout. Block has 2 deeds 90 acre and 50 acre which can be sold separately. This years crop, Machinery shed with 3 phase power and water, tractor, irrigation winch, some implements and tail water pit pump all included in sale. Siding on boundary, great soil and no rocks. Ph. Andrew 0428 597 324

600 acres Cane & Cattle – Sarina, 9 Titles, 2 Large Houses, 2 Sheds, Near new Tractors & Implements, 20 mins City Gates, 5 mins Sarina. Ph. 0418 186 525

For Sale - Cane farm Proserpine 199 hectares total 155 hectares under cane. 2018 crop 10500 ton approx. 495megs of water. 2x hardhoses and half of the farm is flood irrigated. Farm comes with machinery. 3 houses on the farm main house is fully airconed and has a large swimming pool. 0400 794 857

VICTORIA PLAINS CANE FARM 84ha – average 6000 tonne – Kinchant dam allocation and bore water. Irrigation equip, 2 sheds, machinery. Renovated 4-bedroom home. Genuine enquiries 0409 342 123

Cane farm Tarakan Road ABERGOWRIE 270 acres freehold Genuine enquiries pls phone 4777 4633 or 0408 608 664

100ha VICTORIA PLAINS canefarm for sale, 318ml Kinchant dam allocation, this years crop, tractors, irrigation and implements included. 15x9m shed. For more information Ph. 0419 541 372

Cane Farm Cone Creek Road MT CHRISTIAN. Total area 93.43ha CPA 70.81ha. House, sheds, machinery, irrigator with 2 dams. Genuine offers/enquiries only. Ph. 0428 852 279

CANE FARM FOR SALE \$750,000. 507 Eton-Homebush Rd, OAKENDEN (Mackay Region, Central Qld). 6brm home and sheds. 65.58ha (162 acres), 2 freehold titles, WIWO. Irrigated, close cart, flat, no rocks, good soil, 25 mins to town. Ph. Pauline 0428 575 787 or Kent 0427 877 874

Tropical Paradise Cane Farm/Equestrian Training Property, 96 acres 6klms to PORT DOUGLAS. All farmable land, 70 acres producing quality cane, 25 acres set up for horses. More Pics [www.horsedeals.com.au/listings/tropical-horse-paradise-b46ffd33-0236-427b-9f3e-ddaad136bb28](http://www.horsedeals.com.au/listings/tropical-horse-paradise-b46ffd33-0236-427b-9f3e-ddaad136bb28). Easy farm to maintain. Call 0408 880 724 Mandy

WANT MORE NEWS, VIEWS AND PHOTOS?  
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Photographer: Brad Hancock 2018



**Driven by growers.  
Used by growers.  
Owned by growers**

In recent years how we farm has been dictated by others. As Australian farmers, we would much rather have a system which works for us. A system which is about improving our bottom line and one we can use to market our sugar to the world.

The Australian sugarcane industry has worked together and built just such a system. Smartcane BMP.

Smartcane BMP will help Australia maintain its competitive edge in the increasingly competitive world market. Being able to show we are productive and sustainable producers of quality sugar is becoming increasingly important to our customers, and the Smartcane BMP system is the way we are going to show just that.

**Become part of the movement:  
Sign up to Smartcane BMP**

Contact your local Smartcane BMP facilitator. Get recognised for what you are already doing.



[www.smartcane.com.au](http://www.smartcane.com.au)