

Researchers call for grower ideas to reduce farm vehicle accidents

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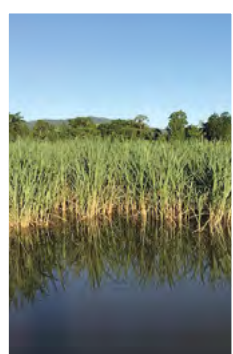
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rethink



Harvester  
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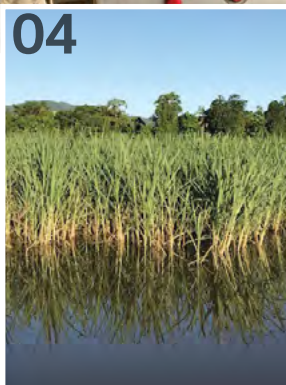


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**Editor:** Wayne Griffin

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Jacqui Segond

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Level 6, 100 Edward Street, Brisbane,  
Queensland Australia

ABN 94 089 992 969

Postal Address: GPO Box 1032, Brisbane,  
Queensland 4001 Australia

Telephone: 07 3864 6444; Fax: 07 3864 6429

Email: [info@CANEGROWERS.com.au](mailto:info@CANEGROWERS.com.au)

Website: [www.CANEGROWERS.com.au](http://www.CANEGROWERS.com.au)

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# Over the horizon issues

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

Considering the recent drenching suffered across Queensland's northern cane-growing regions, many members may be struggling to recall what a clear horizon looks like. Our thoughts are with all those affected and I trust that together we can support you as we prepare for the harvest season ahead.

Almost at the same time as the rainclouds were darkening over the north, our CANEGROWERS Policy Council met to focus on long term strategic issues.

The topics covered included research and development priorities, storage and handling arrangements, marketing information services, membership services, the future of communication tools, and moving beyond sustainably sourced sugar.

With just one year left in the council's three-year term, it is a good time to pause briefly, reflect, and plan for issues that might await us over the horizon.

It's also an important step in our preparation for a new council, and perhaps some new leaders, to be engaged on both persistent and emerging challenges.

Strategic planning is critically important in any business. However, the old adage that culture eats strategy for breakfast is also important to consider.

Like any team or group seeking to achieve something together, the way we work together, respect each other and the processes by which we drive toward a common purpose, is as important, if not more so, than the strategy we wish to execute.

It is not just what you do, it is also how you do it that is important. Particularly if you wish to do it collaboratively. The core values we maintain at CANEGROWERS are:

- Accountability to our members
- A focus on issues relevant to our members
- Credibility, integrity and professionalism
- Open and effective communication between growers, organisational units and external publics
- Community consciousness

These are pretty powerful statements. I don't claim that we always achieve our desire to operate within the context of these values. None of us are perfect.

But it is my strong view that if our organisation is to be successful we must strive to always operate with these values in mind.

They are the yardsticks against which our people can measure whether or not they are working with or against the tide of the organisation.

These value statements can be tested at any given time. Our recent positions in relation to vegetation management and reef science have required us to benchmark and explain our views against these very principles.

On both accounts I am comfortable with the positions that we have taken on behalf of our members.

Through the execution of a clear strategy, built on effective, broad and collaborative engagement, we know we can deliver services to our industry as a whole.

We want our staff, our members and the communities that we operate in, to be proud of CANEGROWERS as a valued contributor to the hugely important agricultural sector.

Our most important stakeholders are our members and their families. It is for them that we work towards securing a future for the industry and it is to them that we are ultimately accountable.

As a result of the work of our policy council you will see CANEGROWERS engaging on new issues and doing so in different ways.

We want to open the door to allow people to engage with us in as many ways as possible and for more people to see value in belonging to the voice of the growers of this industry. ■



*"It is not just what you do, it is also how you do it that is important. Particularly if you wish to do it collaboratively."*





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# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Call for speedier disaster recovery effort

In the week prior to Easter, the Queensland sugar industry marked a year since Tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed the coast.

The anniversary passed with wide areas of cane land between Cairns and Townsville inundated from a series of wet weather events.

CANEGROWERS is working with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to assess the impact to determine if threshold criteria for assistance under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements have been met.

**"To reduce the effects of natural disasters and to improve resilience, we need long-term, strategic recovery planning."**

The Queensland Farmers' Federation, of which CANEGROWERS is a member, used the anniversary to call for amendments to the NDRAA process to ensure it better meets the needs of modern agriculture.

The QFF's Agricultural Recovery and Resilience project in response to TC Debbie commenced after joint federal and state government funding was secured six months after the event.

"While QFF understands and appreciates the need for government processes to be transparent and accountable, this was another example of the restrictive nature of the NDRRA process," President **Stuart Armitage** wrote in the *Queensland Country Life*. "Disaster recovery on the farm is different to other sectors of the economy, and therefore needs to be treated differently."

QFF is calling for a 'shovel ready' disaster recovery program to deliver technical assistance in the initial stages after an event so resources can hit the ground running and help farming businesses start the recovery process right away.

"Natural disasters are stressful and emotional times for farmers. Severe cyclones, such as Debbie, can wipe out years of hard work in minutes," he wrote. "To reduce the effects of natural disasters and to improve resilience, we need long-term, strategic recovery planning."

"This will help farmers recover faster and stronger and be better prepared for future events. The desire and evidence to support an immediate and efficient on-farm recovery program are there; the government just need to support a change to the system." ■

## FARMING THE SUN

Queensland's farmers are being urged to help develop new planning and community engagement guidelines for solar farms.

It follows concern in the Burdekin about the use of high value agricultural land for a large-scale solar farm and the approval of a solar facility covering 264 hectares just a few hundred metres from a Chinchilla melon farmer's home.

The Queensland Government says five new solar projects have started operating in the past 16 months and another 17 are under construction.

"Large scale solar brings jobs and economic benefits for communities, but they can also bring their own set of planning challenges," Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Minister Dr **Anthony Lynham** said.

"The right planning guidelines need to be in place to ensure communities, developers, councils and investors are all on the same page about what is best for Queensland."

The release of the Queensland Solar Farm Planning Guidelines by the Government has been welcomed by QFF as a good first step in properly managing solar expansion while maintaining and protecting prime agricultural land.

Written feedback on the draft guidelines are invited from growers and five community forums are being held including three in or near sugarcane areas:

**Bundaberg 18 April**  
**Mackay 2 May**  
**Townsville 3 May**

Visit <https://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/> for more information.

Mackay region CANEGROWERS members **Andrew** and **Melissa Deguara** are among the growing number of sugarcane growers installing solar panels to reduce their electricity bills. Read their story from page 14. ■

*Pictured:  
12 days and counting. This sugarcane in the lower reaches of the Babinda region had been inundated for almost a fortnight when this picture was taken. The Russell catchment is full and all floodwater is receding very slowly.*





# Farmer ideas wanted to help cut ag vehicle accidents

James Cook University researchers want farmers to help them find ways to improve road safety by minimising accidents involving large agricultural vehicles.

JCU Associate Professor **Richard Franklin** said that while Australian accident data is patchy and incomplete, over a decade there were at least 577 crashes involving agricultural vehicles and trailers, resulting in 24 fatalities and 278 injuries.

These figures illustrate that the presence of agricultural vehicle on roads may raise a unique set of safety concerns, he said.

JCU's new research is being funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and The National Farmers' Federation in an effort to fill the information void.

CANEGROWERS recently held a series of transport workshops across cane growing district from Mackay to Mossman.

One thing that was apparent at these workshops was that many growers were unfamiliar with the rules and regulations they are required to adhere to when moving large agricultural machinery on public roads, CANEGROWERS Industry Manager **Burn Ashburner** said.

"At the most basic level, growers need to know that any heavy agricultural vehicle or machine over the general access dimensions will need to travel under some sort of authority i.e. a guideline, notice or permit," he said.

*(More information available in Burn's Industry Spotlight column on page 22)*

Dr Franklin said previous studies had suggested the most common crash

types of large agricultural vehicles involved them running off the road, being rear ended, or hit during overtaking maneuvers.

"It's not clear why this is. While the length and width of a large vehicle may be a factor in them being hit as they are being overtaken, speed differentials may have been a factor, particularly in the rear-end crashes," he said.

He said it was likely the future would see even larger agricultural vehicles on roads, driven by the need for greater efficiency and productivity.

"Our overall aim is to improve the safety of all road users," he said.

The survey takes about 10–15 minutes to complete, and responses are anonymous.

This survey will remain open until 15 April 2018. To complete the survey visit: <http://bit.ly/2GK5n1d> ■

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# Money Matters

with AustSafe Super

## CLOSING THE SUPER GAP: PART 2 OF A 2 PART SERIES

In the last issue of Money Matters, we looked at ways women can address the Australian gender pay gap, and in particular, the gender super gap. Finding lost super and making contributions were two options. In this issue, we discuss three additional considerations.

### 3. Understand your options

When investing your super, regularly monitor your options. Consider your age, stage of life and retirement goals and whether these are reflected in the level of risk and return in your current investment option. You can visit [austsafe.com.au](http://austsafe.com.au) to look at the different AustSafe Super investment options and read our Investment Choice Guide for helpful insights.

### 4. Stay informed

Keeping up to date with changes to super is a great way to ensure you're maximising your super. Check out AustSafe Super's Member Hub at [austsafe.com.au/memberhub](http://austsafe.com.au/memberhub) for articles on budgeting, insurance, and super tips to get you started.

### 5. Consider a financial planner

When considering maximising your super the guidance of a Financial Planner can be very beneficial. They can guide you on how to grow your super based on your individual circumstances.

For more information, please visit [austsafe.com.au](http://austsafe.com.au)



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Pictured: (above from top) Colin Boyce (Member for Callide), Allan Dingle (Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Chairman), David Batt (Member for Bundaberg) and Stephen Bennett (Member for Burnett) at the 2017 Season Awards Dinner; Tapcorp's Greg and Shevina Skopp were the winners of two awards – Highest Actual CCS – Bingera Mill area, and Best Farm Presentation for Harvesting; David Pickering (Bundaberg Sugar) congratulates Bingera Mill area Champion Tony Dahl. Page 7 (top) Awards Committee Chairman Allan Pitt presents the perpetual trophy to District Champion Niyab Holdings' Martin Richter; Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Director Tony Castro, seen here sporting a newly polished dome after participating in the Shave for a Cure charity fundraiser, was awarded the Service to Industry Award.





## Bundaberg celebrates industry leaders

Bundaberg District has crowned a new productivity champion with CANEGROWERS member **Martin Richter** (Niyab Holdings) taking out the top gong at the Annual Bundaberg Sugar Industry Productivity Awards held at Across The Waves Sports Club recently.

Martin's Millaquin farm pipped the competition to claim the District Champion title with a three-year average of 17.60 tonnes of sugar per hectare.

**Tony Dahl** and **Janine Weston's** Bingera farm was a close second with a three-year average of 16.78 tonnes of sugar per hectare.

Awards Committee Chairman **Allan Pitt** congratulated the new champion who had managed to win the top award only once before, in 2006.

Other award winners on the night included: Young Industry Achiever - **Sam Ford**; Cane Growing Excellence Award - (up to 60ha) **MGBJP Pty Ltd** and (over 60ha) **C&L Townson**; and Highest CCS Award - **M Brillante** (Millaquin) and **Tapcorp** (Bingera). Tapcorp's **Greg** and **Shevina Skopp** also picked up the Best Presented Farm for Harvesting Award.

One of the most important awards on the night, the Service to Industry Award, was presented to Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Director **Tony Castro**.

Tony has served growers at district and state level for almost quarter of a century, volunteering his time and experience in numerous board and committee positions.

He was also a CANEGROWERS Queensland Director and Policy Council member from 2007 to 2016. ■



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# Policy Update

Environment with Matt Kealley

Economics with Warren Males

## Case IH StepUp Conference

I recently attended the Case IH StepUp Conference in Mackay, as part of a CANEGROWERS team presenting at the event. This conference is run by ACFA and supports their Next Gen young farmers program.

The two-day conference was a fabulous mix of science, technology and ideas. It showcased the future of cane farming and encouraged a younger generation of growers to get involved and help drive the technological and sustainable development of our industry.

A number of existing and emerging technologies were featured, such as GPS, unmanned aerial vehicles, autonomous machinery and more.

Attendees also learned about biofutures (including biofuels and plastics), block chain technology, and the challenges we face with data ownership and management as our farming systems become more technologically advanced and interlinked.

During a field trip to Phil Deguara's cane farm, growers got to see the application of drones in farming, and also learned about a number of sustainable practices that Phil has adopted.

Back at the conference, I presented an update on the growing global demand for sustainably produced sugar and on the activities that CANEGROWERS is undertaking to ensure Smartcane BMP can provide a pathway that enables growers to meet this demand.

More and more end-users are requesting sustainable sugar, with some of the biggest users, such as Coca-Cola, setting a 2020 deadline for sourcing 100% of their sugar from sustainable farming and production systems. This is putting growing pressure on buyers and producers, who will look to ensure the cane being used is sourced from accredited farming businesses.

There are multiple sustainability frameworks to choose from and determining which is best can be time consuming.

CANEGROWERS is addressing these market access issues through Smartcane BMP, which has full alignment with Bonsucro. Smartcane BMP is recognised by end-users including Coca-Cola and Unilever as fulfilling their sustainability requirements.

CANEGROWERS is also working on alignment with other frameworks to avoid duplication and unnecessary costs to growers.

The goal is to ensure Smartcane BMP becomes the on-farm program to meet sustainable sugar needs for Queensland sugarcane growers.

While there is currently no premium on sustainable sugar, it may soon become a minimum requirement for selling our product. ■



## To trade or not to trade

The real threat of a trade war between the United States and China is making the news.

It all began when the US imposed a 25% import tariff on steel and a 10% import tariff on aluminium. China was a target. The sanctions have escalated. Not surprisingly China has retaliated, imposing tariffs on 128 US products.

### What's this got to do with sugar?

Australia exports around 80% of our sugar production each year. Without access to markets, who will buy our sugar?

The inclusion of sugar in trade agreements that operate effectively, providing access to markets is vital for the long-term prosperity of our industry.

To this end, the Australian industry has pursued a strategy to secure outcomes in which trade in sugar flows freely.

The World Trade Organisation has been helpful. The WTO Agreement on Agriculture prevented the US from becoming an exporter of subsidised sugar and it has led to the European Union no longer using sugar export subsidies, a significant market change.

Other trade agreements have also been helpful. Sugar is included in trade agreements with our major export customers – Japan, Korea, Malaysia and through AANZFTA, Indonesia.

Sugar is also in the Australia-Peru FTA and in the recently concluded TPP-11, a feature of which is further improvement in the terms of trade for high pol sugar to Japan.

There are strategic, tactical, offensive and defensive reasons for having sugar included in all trade agreements, including the forthcoming FTA negotiations with the EU and, following Brexit, the United Kingdom.

The inclusion of sugar sends a clear message that sensitive commodities can and should be included in all trade deals.

Trade agreements increase the opportunities for refiners in our export markets to access Australian sugar. Increased competition amongst buyers, increases the demand for our sugar.

Should one market close, for whatever reason, trade agreements provide other opportunities for our exports. ■





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## Growers and harvester drivers invited to take part in **2018 HARVESTING DEMONSTRATION TRIALS**



Sugarcane growers and harvester operators across the industry are invited to see first-hand how they could avoid losing valuable sugar from mechanical harvesting by participating in real-world harvesting research demonstration trials.

Trials over many years have shown that there are potential losses of sugarcane and juice (sugar) from common harvester settings. In the 2017 season, similar results were obtained in the first phase of this project.

As part of a major integrated program to help optimise harvest efficiency, Sugar Research Australia is offering sugarcane harvesting groups (growers and contract harvesters) the chance to see this research for themselves, in their own conditions, and with their own machinery.

According to Project Leader, **Phil Patane**, SRA is targeting about 10% of the harvest groups in each region for the coming 2018 harvest season.

These volunteer groups will collaborate to run a demonstration trial on one of the group's farms and review the results to decide whether measures need to be taken to reduce losses.

"This project is designed to answer questions growers and harvester operators have about cane and juice loss with actual data and hard economics, specific to individual harvesting groups," Mr Patane said.

"It will provide groups with the information to help optimise harvesting and on-going support through facilitated meetings and access to information."

SRA will run the trials to international scientific standards and will coordinate the activity with our milling members.

"This practical assistance from our milling member companies, as well as the enthusiastic support already coming from many industry stakeholders, is vital in rolling out this ambitious project," Mr Patane said.

The project is looking for harvester groups to participate in collaborative trials and workshops to help reduce losses.

"In the 2018 season SRA is looking for about 60 groups to participate statewide."

Tully grower **Chris Condon** was an eager participant in the trials in 2017, because he wanted to examine his local harvesting conditions and practices, and then work with SRA to optimise his harvest.

"We had experienced harvesting trials before, but this new project offered

the advantage of serious follow-up," Mr Condon said.

"Sometimes in the past we would receive data from harvesting trials, but we were unsure what to do with that data. In this project, we are receiving the follow up to help us make changes.

"There are a lot of factors to work out, but now we've got hard data in our own conditions to base the discussion around."

The trials will be facilitated by a local group that will assist in recruiting and selecting the participating harvesting groups and arranging the logistics of the trials with the mill.

Growers or harvester operators who would like to be involved are invited to contact **Phil Patane** on **0431 818 482**.

The project is funded with assistance from SRA and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Rural R&D for Profit Program. ■

*Pictured: Tully grower Chris Condon and Project Leader, Phil Patane, discuss results from 2017 harvesting demonstration trials.*



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By Bryce Wenham, QSL Finance Manager – Supplier Relations

*"QSL's 2018-Season Pricing Declaration Date is almost upon us, with nominations for this season's pools closing on 30 April 2018."*

## Time running out to finalise QSL pool choices

QSL's 2018-Season Pricing Declaration Date is almost upon us, with nominations for this season's pools closing on **30 April 2018**.

While this new, later Pricing Declaration Date applies to most growers, those growers supplying Isis Central Sugar Mill, Bundaberg Sugar and Mossman Mill should note that they must finalise their nominations prior to this date and will be notified of their local deadline by their miller.

Growers can change their QSL pool nominations at any time up to their Pricing Declaration Date, including moving unfilled 2018-Season Target Price Pool pricing to other QSL-managed pools.

Unfilled pricing for 2018-Season Individual Futures Contract Pool can also be moved prior to the Pricing Declaration Date, if no portion of the nominated tonnage has been priced.

For the 2018 Season, growers using QSL's marketing services can choose either the QSL Harvest Pool or the QSL Harvest Pool in combination with one or more of the following QSL pools and pricing products.

Please note that the descriptions below provide a high-level summary only and growers should read the full Pricing Pool Terms (available at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au)) before committing to any QSL product.

### 2018 QSL Harvest Pool:

A QSL-managed pool designed to manage a limited amount of production variation throughout a season.

All growers who nominate QSL as their Marketer must allocate to this pool 35% of their expected Grower's Economic Interest in sugar (GEI Sugar) for which QSL is to be the marketer.

Growers are only paid for the final sugar delivered into this pool. If QSL growers make no other pool allocation their GEI Sugar defaults into this pool.

### 2018 QSL Actively Managed Pool:

A committed-tonnage pool that targets the best return over the Season by

pricing more frequently as short-term market opportunities arise.

### 2018 QSL Guaranteed Floor Pool:

A committed-tonnage pool that provides a guaranteed minimum return with the potential for higher returns across the Season.

Growers using this option receive an Accelerated Advances program (up to 90% of the value of their completed pricing by the end of crushing).

### 2019 QSL 2-Season Actively Managed Pool (previously known as the 2-Season Forward Pool):

A committed tonnage pool for the 2019 Season, with pricing undertaken across the 2018 and 2019 Seasons.

This pool aims to target the best return, with some pre-set price triggers. It has been designed for growers who seek exposure across multiple seasons.

### QSL Target Price Pool:

Enables growers to price their GEI Sugar during the current season and up to three seasons ahead.

This pool features the rolling of unfilled orders until 19 April (15 January for MSF growers) in the year after crushing commences for the relevant season.

Growers using this option can also choose an Accelerated Advances program (up to 90% of the value of their completed pricing by the end of crushing) or the standard QSL Advances program once they have completed their pricing for the season.

### QSL Individual Futures Contract Pool:

Enables growers to price their GEI Sugar incrementally during the current season and up to three seasons ahead, with separate pricing decisions for each individual futures position. Pricing is to be completed by 16 April in the year after crushing commences.





In addition to the pools and products noted above, QSL operates a US Quota Pool. Participation in this pool is automatic, with a mandatory tonnage allocation of up to 5%.

Please read the QSL US Quota Pool Pricing Pool Terms, available at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au), for full details.

#### The QSL Shared Pool:

Unless otherwise stated in a product's Pricing Pool Terms, QSL does not charge direct fees for grower-managed pricing products or QSL-managed pools. At the end of the season all QSL pricing products will receive an allocation of revenues and costs associated with the export and marketing of sugar from the QSL Shared Pool. ■

## QSL Breakfast Information Session - Innisfail

If you're planning to attend this year's Innisfail Agricultural Field Day, or if you just want to get an insight into the sugar market and your QSL pricing options, make sure you don't miss the **QSL Breakfast Information Session** on Thursday 19 April.

This free breakfast event will feature QSL's Treasury Manager **Ginette Barrett** (pictured below) and will be held in the Russ Hinze Building at the Innisfail Showgrounds from 7am.

Numbers are limited, so bookings are essential and can be made by contacting QSL FNQ Grower Relationship Manager **Daniel Messina** on 0429 660 238 or via email at [daniel.messina@qsl.com.au](mailto:daniel.messina@qsl.com.au). ■



## CEO to meet with Mackay Sugar growers

QSL's Marketing Choice plans for Mackay Sugar growers will be discussed at a series of shed meetings with Growers in the Mackay and Mossman milling districts this week.



Each session will be hosted by QSL Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director **Greg Beashel** (pictured right), who will answer grower questions and update them on the steps required for Mackay Sugar growers to continue accessing QSL beyond the 2019 Season.

"There are a few hoops to jump through before QSL Marketing Choice becomes a reality for these growers, but we're keen to get things moving and bring growers up to speed about what's coming their way," Mr Beashel said. ■

All Mackay Sugar growers are welcome to attend any of the following sessions:

<b>MONDAY 9 APRIL</b>	9.30am	West's Leagues Club, Walkerston
	12 noon	Eton Rural Fire Shed
	3.30pm	QSL Office, 36 Broad Street, Sarina
<b>TUESDAY 10 APRIL</b>	9am	Marian Rural Fire Shed
	12 noon	Old Catholic Church Hall, Finch Hatton
	3.30pm	Farview Tavern, Farleigh
<b>WEDNESDAY 11 APRIL</b>	9am	St Helens Bowls Club
	12 noon	Kuttabul Rural Fire Shed
<b>THURSDAY 12 APRIL</b>	5.30pm	Jackaroo Motel, Mareeba
<b>FRIDAY 13 APRIL</b>	11am	Mossman Bowls Club

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# SOLAR ADDS UP INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH IMPROVED IRRIGATION

By Kim Kleidon

From solar farms to on-farm solar, the rising cost of electricity is creating a demand for renewable energy solutions.

Electricity charges for irrigation have risen by around 7% per annum on average over the past five years. Farmers are increasingly frustrated by inputs eroding profit margins, whilst commodity prices fluctuate in a global market.

Unable to influence overhead costs like machinery and infrastructure, many growers are looking to reduce inputs through improved efficiency.

Andrew and Melissa Deguara cultivate 330ha of cane at Pinevale west of Mackay, producing an average of 28,000 tonne a year.

Andrew says the industry has faced a number of challenges in recent years.

"Certainly price, but we can't control that too much. Input costs, irrigation mainly and labour, since the mining boom it's hard to retain skilled labour."

Having spent 42 years on the family farm, Andrew appreciates living in the tropics means an annual rainfall averaging 1.5m, with most of it falling between December and March.

For the rest of the year, irrigation is not an option, it's a part of life.

"We've got a water allocation so there's no reason we shouldn't be utilising it," Andrew said.

"We have the infrastructure as well, but it's the energy costs that hold us back," he said.

Limiting irrigation times to between 9pm Friday and 7am Monday, and only irrigating overnight on weekdays, is a familiar routine for growers using tariff 62, which will be phased out in 2020.

The biggest issue for larger farms like the Deguara's is the limited time available for irrigating different landscapes in a cost-effective manner.

"We use flood, centre pivot and soft hose irrigators, because not all of our land suits flooding or overhead irrigation.







*"We use flood, centre pivot and soft hose irrigators ... the problem overall is, that we can't get enough water on, quickly enough in the off-peak hours."*

"30% of our farm would be soft hose – high pressure, which is not ideal, but that's all that fits in the scenario," Andrew said.

"The problem overall is that we can't get enough water on quickly enough in the off-peak hours."

It's an industry-wide issue prompting some innovative solutions.

Following a recent audit, Melissa and Andrew made the decision to address their irrigation input costs.

Initially this included upgrading some of their main lines to bigger pipes to reduce friction losses and installing Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) to ensure the pumps operate at maximum efficiency.

"Allocation costs we can't control, they're fixed, and the static costs of our farm elevation, you can't change, but things you can change are energy sources, like diesel, or solar, which we're getting into."

Melissa is responsible for costing the initiatives to ensure there will be a financial benefit, and it certainly looks like it adds up.



*Pictured top: Andrew and Melissa Deguara have installed eight solar panels on their Pinevale farm to generate up to 30kw of energy even in cloudy conditions.*

*Pictured left: Variable Frequency Drives ensure the pumps operate at maximum efficiency to reduce electricity costs.*

Continues page 16 ►



By limiting the number of pump sites and installing solar, they can potentially irrigate 24 hours a day, seven days a week with 60% of their irrigation set up.

"We had achieved the other goals around the farm to set up with water, the wetlands and underground pipe upgrades, so the next step was to fine-tune the input costs," Melissa said.

"It was just a natural progression - solar prices have come down from when we first looked at it.

"The feed in tariff's gone up and the infrastructure prices have come down and through the media, farms adopting solar are just so positive about it."

Making the decision to invest in solar, meant considering more than just the cost of installation and savings of around 50% through daytime irrigation.

Utilising storage capacity, Andrew can flood lift using solar alone during daylight hours to further reduce costs and increase productivity.

"We calculated the increase in production by getting the extra water, using our full allocation and we've since installed more water storage infrastructure, another wetland, we're storing more water and we've just got to put it on at the right time and quicker," Andrew said.

"There's 30 metres of static head before we can get to a stick of cane, that's a cost in its own right, just getting the water to the crop and not even applying it - solar will do that for us."

On-farm solar has been gaining traction since 2015 particularly on sugarcane farms around the Bundaberg and Mackay regions.

Andrew and Melissa are among those who've been working with Electrical Engineer, **Ron Coomer** from Suncrop.

According to Ron, the couple stand to reduce their pumping costs on many of their pumps by over 50%.

"The Ergon Solar feed-in tariff limit was increased from 5kW to 30kW in September 2017," Ron said.

"Farmers can now earn 10.2c/kWh (plus GST) when they are not pumping. If they install a 30kW system and do not pump at all they can earn over \$7,000 per year.

"When they pump during the day on tariff 62 they can save approximately 50c/kWh - that's a \$15 per hour power saving for a 30kW pump operating during the day."

Irrigation systems and energy use vary from farm to farm, so there are many considerations when designing solar solutions.

Ron manages everything from farm irrigation efficiency audits, through to approvals from Ergon and submitting paperwork to the Clean Energy Regulator to get STC credits for the farmers.

Ron is working with other growers at Bloomsbury, Mirani, Homebush, Sarina and Victoria Plains.

Along with electricity cost savings for the farm, Ron says increased crop yields from increased irrigation also impact on farm profitability after the installation



*Pictured above: Black's Creek, a tributary of the Pioneer River, runs through Andrew and Melissa's property. Water is lifted 30m to reach the cane crops.*





*"The feed in tariff's gone up and the infrastructure prices have come down ... farms adopting solar are just so positive about it."*

of a solar system. And he says each 30kW solar system reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the environment equivalent to 12 typical households.

Andrew and Melissa have achieved many of their upgrades over the past couple of years through Ron's expertise.

"When you look at irrigation, there's four or five times more operating hours than any other machinery on the farm and they accumulate more kilowatts than the biggest machine on the farm, so we need to consider their energy usage.

"It may be a small cost per hour, but it adds up to a lot when you consider it over the hours they do," Andrew said.

Melissa expects to see tangible figures in twelve months of solar operation.

"We will be able to compare energy costs to another year with similar rainfall, where we've pumped a similar amount of time.

"I'll go back through our records to evaluate what our savings are between those two years." ■

*Pictured above: GPS mapping provides a visual overview of the 840ha property for planning and information sharing.*



## INNOVATIVE FARMING ON SHOW AT SUGAR TUESDAY

CANE growers with a keen interest in emerging technologies are invited to a special agriculture session being held in conjunction with the Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT) conference in Mackay this month.

**Sugar Tuesday – Agriculture Session** is being held at the 500 Pavilion, Mackay Showgrounds, on Tuesday, 17 April.

The ASSCT conference itself kicks off the following day at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre.

ASSCT president Danny Van der Berg said **Sugar Tuesday – Agriculture Session** aimed to give growers, industry technicians and researchers the latest information on emerging applications and technologies that could change the way farming is carried out in the future.

"One of the highlights will be the potential use of drones for cane variety assessment including experimental plot yield and characteristics," he said. "There'll also be a presentation on driverless tractors, which will give attendees an insight into how remote farming will soon be very much a part of our agricultural systems."

James Cook University's IoT (Internet of Things) will explore connectivity and linked farming systems as the technological world becomes increasingly interconnected and what this interconnectivity and data collection might mean for farmers.

Mr Van der Berg said there would be displays and demonstrations of precision agriculture including chopper drums and the soil zipper – which closes the soil over applied chemicals.

The novel technologies session is an introduction to how technologies such as Apps are, and can be, used in agriculture.

**Sugar Tuesday** will also include a Manufacturing Session aimed at the milling sector.

Those interested in attending **Sugar Tuesday** need to book a place by emailing [admin@assct.com.au](mailto:admin@assct.com.au) ■



# Quad bike regulations

Farmers urged to have their say

Farmers have until May 4 to have their say on proposed changes to quad bike safety regulations.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has released a consultation paper outlining a number of different regulatory options to improve the safety of quad bike operation.

Options include some or all of the following elements:

- *applying a mandatory safety standard to quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles (SSVs) – akin to a 'safety star' rating;*
- *additional warnings on vehicles highlighting rider risks;*
- *the requirement to fit operator protection devices and mandatory performance tests for mechanical suspension, stability and dynamic handling.*

“Quad bikes are a staple piece of equipment for most farming operations. But ... if not operated correctly ... tragedy can result.”

NFF President **Fiona Simson** said quad bikes remained the leading cause of death on farms and welcomed the ACCC's commitment to improving this.

“Quad bikes are a staple piece of equipment for most farming operations. But, as we've seen, time and time again, if not operated correctly and in line with safety guidelines, tragedy can result.

"Since 1 January 2011, 114 people have died in quad bike-related incidents.

“Too often we're seeing children riding quad bikes and passengers and in appropriate loads being carried – which place quad bikes a great risk of roll-over.”

Ms Simson said the NFF believed rider education, regulation and manufacturer changes were the keys to saving lives from quad bike incidents.

The ACCC's regulations cannot extend to operator behavior such as a ban on children from operating adult quad bikes or and mandating the use of personal protection equipment, such as helmets.

However the Commission has encouraged the consideration of such 'complementary regulatory measures' by other jurisdictions and agencies.

Farmers are urged make a submission in response to the ACCC's the proposed options to improve the safety of quad bikes by Friday May 4. ■

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# CASE IH STEP UP!

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR A NEW GENERATION?

More than 150 cane growers along with agribusiness suppliers, advisors, researchers, millers and innovators got together in Mackay recently for the Case IH StepUp! Conference.

The conference is an extension of the NextGen program which aims to build capacity and leadership in the future of the sugarcane industry.

It was originally scheduled for 2017 but was postponed because of Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

The 2018 event was themed *Transition and Innovation* and featured 17 speakers.

**Kerryn Fewster** from Change 2020 set the tone with the keynote address telling the delegates, "In times of rapid change, the most dangerous thing you can do is stand still".

She urged the younger growers to be curious and passionate about learning while respecting the past, to bet on technology, build resilience and not give up.

Major sponsor **Case IH** highlighted precision agriculture and the company's progress in developing autonomous, driverless, technology.

**Robert Johnson**, Regional Marketing Manager for Precision Solutions and Telematics with Case IH parent company CNH Industrial, said technology offered improved productivity, along with quality and yield while enhancing sustainability with less wastage.

"We believe that this is the start of something amazing for agriculture," he said.

"Sugar is the second largest export crop in Australia after wheat, and Australian producers have always been at the forefront of innovation and adoption of technologies that continue to drive the industry's productivity."

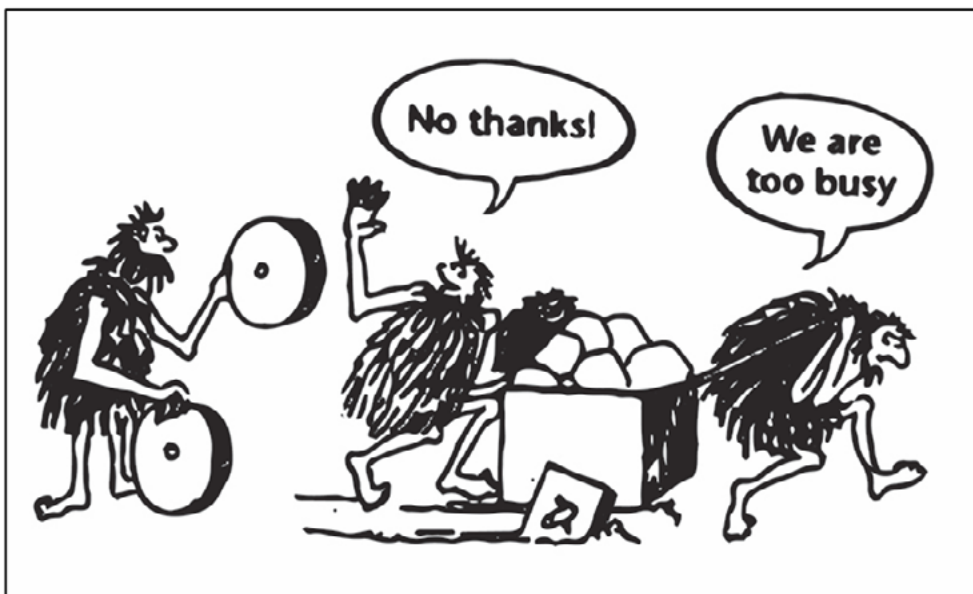
Technology was also theme picked up by **Dr Karen Joyce** of James Cook University and the schools program *She Flies*.

Dr Joyce explained why she believes that flying drones with a range of imaging and sensing equipment will become an everyday farming practice within a short time.

*"In times of rapid change, the most dangerous thing you can do is stand still."*

It was a theme she returned to a Women in Agriculture lunch held in conjunction with the conference saying new technology meant that most roles in agriculture were now open to women where in the past physical strength may have been a barrier.

Sugar Research Australia, as well as being a sponsor and supporting a group of New South Wales growers to attend as part of its Travel and Learning Awards development program, contributed research updates to the conference with **Phil Patane** (harvesting efficiency demonstration trials) and **Dr Danielle Skocaj** (nitrogen management in the Wet Tropics).



Pictured: (left) **Kerryn Fewster** of Change 2020 used this cartoon telling delegates, "Don't be too busy to innovate and experiment"; (p.21 top) **Matt Kealley's** presentation for CANEGROWERS on the future of the market for sustainably produced sugar was supported by the Smartcane BMP stand in the trade show area which gave delegates information on the program and contact details for their local facilitators; (p.21 centre) Three generations looking to the future: NextGen Officer and conference organiser **Gerard Puglisi**, with his father **Angelo Snr** and son **Angelo Jnr** who farm near Mossman; (p.21 bottom) Representatives of the Mackay Network Women in Sugar group **Jill Fox** and **Ann Jansen**.





Professor Ian O'Hara from the Queensland University of Technology and CANEGROWERS Manager Environment and Sustainability Matt Kealley took the conference theme of transition beyond the farm gate.

Professor O'Hara asked the delegates to consider if they saw their future as a sugar industry with markets growing 1% a year or a new biotechnology industry with markets growing at 16% a year.

He said the bio-based products market had been predicted by the USA to be US\$1.4 trillion by 2025.

As one example of the opportunities, Professor O'Hara said consumers were demanding renewable and sustainable packaging and big corporations were responding with bio-based plastics for which sugarcane could be the feedstock.

Consumer demand for sustainable products is also behind a push by large food and beverage manufacturers to source certified ingredients, including sugar, and Matt Kealley listed some of the companies which had set a 2020 target for achieving this.

He outlined the work of CANEGROWERS to have the Queensland industry's best management practice program Smartcane BMP recognised and aligned with the key international benchmarks for sustainable sugar to ensure local sugar could meet the changing market demand.

*A special Technology feature in the next edition of Australian Canegrower later this month will contain articles from a number of the key speakers at the conference on the topics of farm data and privacy and the opportunities for the sugar industry of blockchain technology. ■*







**Burn Ashburner**  
CANEGROWERS Manager - Industry

*"What was apparent is that the regulations are complex and many growers are not sure what authority or regulation they are traveling under."*

## Confusion on ag road rules

More than 140 members from Mackay to Mossman have attended a series of CANEGROWERS transport workshops designed to explain how oversize agricultural vehicles can move legally on our public roads.

Staff from the Queensland Transport and Main Roads (TMR) provided information on the requirements for oversize agricultural vehicle access, while the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator demonstrated the permit application portal that is planned to come into effect late this year. They also explained impending changes to the Chain of Responsibility.

One of the real benefits of these workshops was that they gave growers an opportunity to ask questions about their own particular concerns or issues.

What was apparent is that the regulations are complex and many growers are not sure what authority or regulation they are traveling under.

At the most basic level, growers need to know that any heavy agricultural vehicle or machine over the general access dimensions in the table below will need to travel under some sort of authority i.e. a guideline, notice or permit. Most haulouts are within these general access dimensions.

*The Guideline for Excess Dimension Agricultural Vehicles and Agricultural Combinations Vehicles and Drivers Form Number 14, Version 4, October 2013, known as FORM 14, is the regulation*

under which most sugarcane agricultural vehicles in Queensland (Zone 1) travel.

This provides for access to public roads at dimensions greater than the general access dimensions as shown in the table. Most harvesters are within these dimensions.

FORM 14 imposes conditions for access, such as on-vehicle flags, lights and signs, daylight hours travel, travel on public holidays, curfew at Easter and Christmas, pilot requirements, etc.

This is a specific agricultural set of regulations and has been in place for about 20 years and growers are encouraged to make sure they are familiar with FORM 14.

However, an agricultural machine greater than 3.5m width will need to travel under one of three gazetted notices specific to agricultural vehicles in Zone 1. If the agricultural machine is greater than any of the other dimensions, then a permit is required for travel.

Members have access to a tool in the members-only section of the CANEGROWERS website, which takes growers to the online guideline or notice they need to travel under depending on the width of their vehicle. I recommend you download this as a reference. ■

### Comparison of general access and Form 14 zone 1 dimension:

Dimension	General access dimensions	FORM 14 Zone 1 dimensions
Width	• 2.5m	• Agricultural machine 3.5m
Length (single vehicle)	• 12.5m	• Agricultural machine (not a harvester) 12.5m • Harvester 14.5m
Length (combination)	• 19.0m	• Articulated ag machine 19.0m • Agricultural combination 25m
Rear overhang	• 3.7m or 60% or the wheelbase (the smaller)	• Agricultural machine (not a harvester) 4.5m • Cane harvester 7.8m



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Next deadline is **16 April 2018**.

\* 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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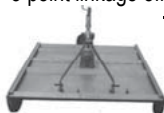
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1 x J.A.M Stainless Steel Fertiliser Box, 1.5 tons drop on stool (nearly new) \$7000 plus GST. Ph. 04067 1250 after 7pm

Heavy Duty 6ft Howard Slasher, 1.25t Trash Incorporator, 1t Fertiliser Box, Howard 80" Rotary Hoe Parts. Ph. 0458 553 038

6ft Howard Slasher, Heavy Duty, Galvanised, G.C. \$3,850 GST Inc. Mob: 0428 514 779

Spicer Dolly, Rims 14 DW 21 X 32 689, Edbro Hoist (truck). Complete s/h chains, sprockets, idlers and rollers to suit track cane harvester. Mulgrave area. Ph. 0407 160 673 or 07 4055 4449

2 of Goodyear 14L-16.1 New 10 ply, 4 of s/h Olympic 14.9.28 6 ply, 2 of s/h 340-70-18, 1 of s/h 520-85-R42 radial Goodyear. Mulgrave area. Ph. 0407 160 673 or 07 4055 4449

Tractor tyres & rims: Four Alliance 4WD matching, suit New Holland and others. Rear: 13/6 R48, 70% tread; Front: 12/4 R32, 40% tread: \$5000. Two Olympic (rear only) to suit Massy or Ford, 13/6/38, 90% tread: \$2000. ONO Mareeba Ph. 0418 184 146

### Herbert River-Burdekin

Ripper 4 legs with 4 curly tynes 1 1/4"; Rotary Hoe 100"-good cond; Fiat 1300 Super 2wd 150hp; Spreader Vicon 1/2 good for beans or fertilizer-500kg. Irrigator Trailco 4"-200m hose-good cond. Ph. 4777 4650

Good amount of 4" and 5" aluminium pipes; 3000lt tank on cradle; 5000 l poly rain tank; 10,000 l Rain tank; 1 Quick Hitch; 8 only 1 1/4" Ripper Legs. Ph. 4777 4650

J250 Full Stick Harvester, 6 Trailers, 2 Planters double disc and conventional. Thrash Blower with Topper. \$5000+gst for the lot. Located in Home Hill call Mick on 0437 346 341

John Deere 9420 tractor & 12ft (3.6m) JN&R HDB laser bucket. POA Phone 0407 822 121

2016 John Deere CH570 cane harvester, 2823 engine hours, 10 blade chop, Trimble FmX auto steer GPS, standard topper, floating crop dividers. Very well maintained. Price on application. Ph. Michael 0427 833 634

Bent elevator standard length complete elevator including motors, missing flap. 3306 Cat DI rated at 290hp later model engine sell as unit including pump box and pumps standard pumps. Ph. 0456 041 428

Hodge 6 furrow reversible plow in good condition - \$4000 ono; Page 6ft slasher - \$3000 ono. Ph. Sam on 07 4476 5114 or 0417 638 318 (Herbert River)

Crop dividers sell as a set, springs included, whole topper incl topper poles ram & mount underneath cab, all chyleen motors on roller train + rollers hoses etc, valve blocks also available, both track frames complete with tracks & grouses selling as a set, fuel tank, & heaps more. Ph. Nick 0456 041 428. OFFERS Wrecking Toft 6500 series 3, Toft rotary chop bolt in box with 3 blade chop and 10,000 series chyleen motors, as well as the 4 foot extractor barrel and boot all off a 1994 Austoft cane harvester, would rather just sell complete cut off machine. Ph. 0456 041 428

### Mackay-Proserpine

1989 Toft full track 7700 harvester, recent rebuilt motor, pump aircon in good order \$40,000 plus gst. 4wd M135 New Holland tractor \$20,000 plus gst. Ph. 0428 611 714

MF 35 3cyl with ROPS VGC \$5,500. Plant cutter \$1500. Trash extractor \$1,000. Don Gough stick planter \$1,000. 6x Planting trailers \$200 each. Shed frame 3.5m H x 9m W x 6 Spands. Ph. 0400 583 247

Sprayrite Tempo 1200 Spray Tank, Brand New, 1200L Capacity UV resistant, 170LPM PTO driven Pump feeding 5 section electric controlled spray controller, H Duty 3pl carry frame, \$15,200 Inc. Ph. 0428 236 165

## Rainfall Report

brought to you by AustSafe Super

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Year to date	Average rainfall (mm) January-March
	7 days to 9am 26.03.18	02.04.18		
Mossman	548	65	1892	1371
Mareeba AP	43	118	646	633
Cairns	343	36	1814	1260
Mt Sophia	382	238	2892	1824
Babinda	106	0	1452	2173
Innisfail	434	349	2231	1763
Tully	296	498	2408	2088
Cardwell	172	183	1267	1302
Lucinda	194	131	1305	1258
Ingham	266	172	1446	1195
Abergowrie	256	293	1533	1079
Townsville	58	91	728	747
Ayr DPI	22	75	554	594
Proserpine	150	40	625	787
Mirani	61	27	412	902
Mackay	77	64	455	849
Sarina (Plane Ck)	97	25	621	1028
Bundaberg	6	11	406	431
Childers South	12	9	515	330
Maryborough	35	15	515	494
Tewantin	28	22	594	691
Eumundi	58	19	725	709
Nambour	63	24	547	715
Woongoolba	45	13	497	491
Murwillumbah	56	37	378	641
Ballina	70	25	492	591
Woodburn	22	4	398	491



**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.



Silvan 800l Fire Fighter with Honda pump and hose reel, done little work, \$3600 new asking \$2000 ONO. Ph. 0409 221 601

12T self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder VGC. 6t side/tipper on Leyland tandem GC. Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Howard rotary hoe HR40, 255cm wide - GC. Celli Tiger spike hoe, 2.5m wide with hydraulic crumble roller and oil cooler - VGC. 0438 606 578 (Mackay) 1989 Austoft 7000 Plant harvester, 11024hr, 4 blade chopper, \$36,000. 12T Maclean Elevating bin, \$57,750. Set of Case 8 blade choppers, cut approx 360000T, have been hardfaced, \$1,100. Phone 0417 796 468

## Bundaberg-Rocky Point

Cameco John Deere 3510 track planetary hub, complete, \$5,500. Ph. 0413 584 728

2009 Case 8000 Cane Harvester. 5800 hrs. In Good Condition. For further details phone 41561409 or 0431044022

CASE 7700 cane harvester 1998 model, approx. 5000 hrs, M11 Cummins engine, rubber rollers set up for cutting plants, fixed blade chop, Bladesaver, 4 base cutters set up to cut 1.8-2.4m rows. Currently used for 2m. \$82,000 + gst. Ph. 0428212792

Half-tracks to suit 4000, 5000 or 6000 TOFT harvester. Fair condition. Open to offers. Ph. 0419 717 006

Bonel trash incorporator fertiliser box, plastic bins, stainless steel worm, good condition. \$12,000 + gst; HR40 Howard Rotary Hoe 100inch; Marell trash blower; Marell whole stick plant cutter; Town & Country planter. Ph. 0417 617 084

## 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

Tractor tyres - BUY & SELL. All sizes. Ph. 0418 775 698

Want to buy front axle to suit Massey Ferguson 65. Has to be in good condition. Ph. 0417 774 214

Wanting to swap a Shredder topper for a Standard topper to fit a JD3520 Cane Harvester. Call 0418 187 474

## Positions Vacant

Cane carter/farm hand required for up coming season. Above award rates with a 5 on 3 off roster. Calen area (via Mackay). Caravan parks close by for accommodation. Phone 0408190493

Sugar cane haulout operator wanted for the 2018 season working south of Sarina area. Experience preferred. John Deere tractors with 14t Carta bins. Ph: 0417 611 809

Experienced haulout operators wanted for Calen area 2018 season. Ph 0429 067 022

WANT MORE NEWS, VIEWS  
AND PHOTOS?

Find CANEGROWERS on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/CANEGROWERSAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/CANEGROWERSAustralia)



## Property

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

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

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

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

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







# COULD IT GET ANY SWEETER?

Yes it can. The new Case IH Austoft® Sugar Cane Harvester is the result of extensive consultation and over 18,000 hours of relentless field testing. With over 28 new features, it offers a whole new level of productivity and performance. A larger tank, a lighter machine and a cleaner cane sample; this new harvester will be your next crush.

✓ EASIER OPERATION    ✓ IMPROVED HARVEST QUALITY    ✓ INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Contact your local Case IH dealer today to discover the new Austoft 8010 or 8810.