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CHAIRMAN PAUL SCHEMBRI



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CANEGROWERS

Editor: Wayne Griffin

Design and classifieds: Angela Linhart

Articles appearing in *Australian Canegrower* do not necessarily represent the policies or views of CANEGROWERS

Published monthly by

CANEGROWERS
Level 6, 100 Edward Street, Brisbane,
Queensland Australia
ABN 94 089 992 969

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Queensland 4001 Australia

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AUSTRALIAN CANEGROWER ISSN 0157-3039

Volume 42 Number 6

Subscriptions

Yearly subscriptions for 12 issues (postage included)

Within Australia \$160 inc GST

Overseas (AUD) \$250

Tariff move is good news for sugar

While other agricultural industries have seen their trading relationship with China sour over past weeks, the Australian sugar industry has had some good news.

China has not extended a so-called safeguard duty imposed in 2017 which had pushed up the tariff on some international sugar imports to around 85%.

At the time the Chinese sugar industry said it was being damaged by a surge in imports. The Chinese Government investigated and alleged sugar from Australia and other countries was being dumped in China and it imposed an extra duty. Australia vigorously denied the claim.

With the safeguard measure of 35% now lapsed, the tariff on over-quota sugar falls to 50% while the tariff on in-quota sugar is 15%.

Australia currently sends around 170,000 tonnes of sugar to China, valued at \$100 million, each year but the changed tariff environment removes constraint on that trade and enables Chinese refiners to compete with others in the region for access to high quality Australian sugar.

Australian Trade Minister Senator **Simon Birmingham** told the Sydney Morning Herald he welcomed the decision.

"Australia welcomes this decision and the fairer market opportunities it will create for sugar producers from around the world, including those from Australia," he said. ■



Show your support and win

CANEGROWERS sticker spotters are now out and about in all sugarcane regions looking for vehicles proudly displaying their CANEGROWERS Growing Together bumper sticker.

Each month from July a list of anonymous vehicle registration plates will be published in the *Australian Canegrower* magazine. If yours is listed, you'll be able to claim a prize!

Can't find your CANEGROWERS bumper sticker?

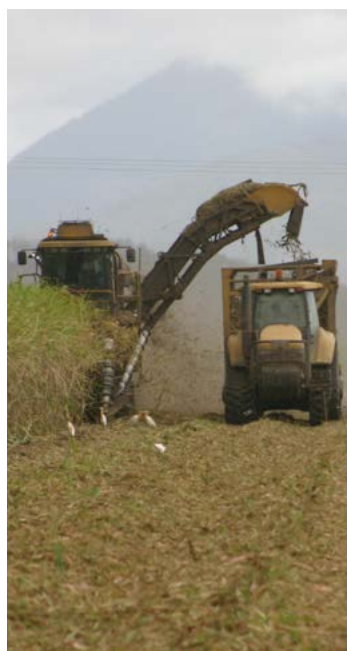
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Contact your local CANEGROWERS office or email info@canegrowers.com.au

How to enter:

- Make sure your CANEGROWERS bumper sticker is on your vehicle
- Hope that one of the CANEGROWERS sticker spotters sees it as you drive around your district
- Check the next *Australian Canegrower* magazine for a list of number plates
- If yours is there, contact CANEGROWERS to claim a prize. ■

Harvesters ready to roll amid COVID-19 restrictions



With 2020 shaping up to be a harvest like no other due to social-distancing, sanitising and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, CANEGROWERS has been working hard to ensure that growers and harvesting contractors have all the information they'll need to complete this year's crush as safely and smoothly as possible.

A dedicated COVID-19 webpage on the CANEGROWERS website is providing regular industry updates, health and safety advice and cane industry-specific information ahead of the commencement of this crush.

"The webpage brings together all the information growers, farm workers, harvester operators, haulout drivers and anyone else associated with the on farm side of the harvest needs to know about their personal obligations and keeping themselves safe during this unprecedented crushing season," CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** said. "I would encourage everyone to check this page regularly for updated information."

Visit www.canegrowers.com.au for more information. ■



Water price freeze a temporary reprieve

Representation from CANEGROWERS and other irrigators' groups has led to a one-year reprieve from steep water price rises.

The Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) had recommended to the State Government that irrigation water prices rise by between 3% (Burdekin) and 44% (Mackay) over the four years commencing 2020-21, with further costs if irrigators had to contribute to dam safety upgrades.

While deliberating on his decision to approve the increase or otherwise, the Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Minister Dr Anthony Lynham met with the CANEGROWERS Policy Council where he heard from growers about the impact the increases would have on family businesses and regional economies.

When his announcement came, Mr Lynham had adopted one of CANEGROWERS calls, for a freeze on water prices although only for a year and not the full four-year price path recommended by QCA. Dr Lynham said consultation with industry bodies had made clear irrigators' concerns around affordability and the Government had responded.

"The freeze is a temporary relief measure, just as other Queensland businesses are receiving because of COVID-19," he said. "The government will monitor conditions over the next 12 months before it re-assesses and decides on prices to apply from 2021-22."

CANEGROWERS has welcomed the temporary relief the announcement offers and urged the Government to use the year for a systemic review to address a number of issues. These include the relationship between rising electricity and water costs on farmer profitability and putting in place long term plans for irrigation schemes to be productive and viable, particularly those under stress such as Pioneer, Eton and Lower Mary.

CANEGROWERS is also calling on the Queensland Government to pass on to water users the expected savings in SunWater's pumping costs from a electricity price reduction decision expected from the Australian Energy Regulator.

The Government also announced that while price rises were frozen, any price decreases recommended by the QCA would be passed on. This is good news for irrigators in the BRIA, who will see water prices fall in the first year before increasing over the remainder of the price path. It also said it would put an extra \$42 million towards dam safety upgrades over the next four years rather than ask irrigators to contribute.

Recognising that growers are still in the firing line of water price increases from July 2021, CANEGROWERS will keep up the pressure.

"With more than 65% of our \$2.5 billion sugarcane crop in Queensland reliant on irrigation, the resilience and efficiency of irrigation schemes is a huge issue for our industry," CEO Dan Galligan said. "We are an export industry competing in a highly volatile global market and having our cost base increase by local policy decisions is not sustainable long term.

"The Minister should be acknowledged for providing this short-term relief and we look to working with the government on longer term solutions." ■

Pictured: Irrigators have been given a temporary reprieve from spiraling water costs with the government announcing a one-year price freeze.



Reef Regs back in parliament

This month will see renewed debate in the Queensland Parliament about the regulation of farm practices in Great Barrier Reef catchment areas.

The Liberal National Party Opposition has moved a disallowance motion in an attempt to knock out regulations under the ramped up Reef laws passed in September last year – the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2019.

The motion relates to provisions which prescribe catchment maps and minimum agricultural standards and the start date for the measures.

While it has little chance of success, LNP Spokesman for Agriculture **Tony Perrett** said the motion shows that the LNP is the only party in Queensland that supports farmers and backs regional jobs.

"Labor's changes to reef regulations were rammed through by the government and the LNP opposed them then and we still do now," Mr Perrett said.

"Labor's reef regulations don't strike a balance between preserving the environment and protecting local jobs. They treat farmers like criminals and tie them up in unworkable red and green tape."

CANEGROWERS has welcomed the disallowance attempt and the commitment of the LNP to strike a better balance between agriculture and environmental protection.

"We've spent a decade arguing that the regulation of farm practices, wielding a big stick against growers, is counter-productive to delivering a sustainable future for both the Great Barrier Reef and the sugarcane industry," CEO **Dan Galligan** said.

"Our members are achieving great things through voluntarily committing more than 70% of the state's cane farmland to best practice through the globally-recognised accreditation program Smartcane BMP."

CANEGROWERS believes the best way forward is to recognise the achievements of the sugarcane industry and build on them by working with, and not against, farmers and communities.

Read more about CANEGROWERS work on issues of reef water quality on page 41. ■

Close call for Burdekin grower caught up in classifieds scam

Burdekin cane grower **Ian Becke** is breathing a little easier this month following the recovery of \$40,000 he thought was lost forever after being caught up in an internet scam.

Ian had answered a legitimate classified ad for the sale of an excavator in the March edition of *Australian Canegrower* and began email contact with the seller, a grower from Mackay.

However, somewhere along the line their emails were intercepted by an internet scammer who then sent Ian fake account details for the purchase.

"I was very fortunate to get that money back," Ian said.

"The only reason it was recovered is because the account the money went into had already been frozen by NSW Police, who were investigating the person for mortgage fraud."

The scammer, believed to be a woman, left the country for Vietnam before police could apprehend her.

CANEGROWERS legal adviser **Chris Cooper** said the scam was not new and had been doing the rounds in the legal community for a number of years.

"This is the first time I've come across it in the cane industry," he said.

"I would advise growers to err on the side of caution and always confirm payment details with a seller by phone or face-to-face if possible." ■

Pictured: Growers already take measures to ensure chemicals and nutrients do not leave the farm.

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HR licence testing back on the road for ag workers

Haulout drivers awaiting a licence will jump to the front of the testing queue after the Queensland Government listened to CANEGROWERS' concerns and resumed heavy vehicle licence testing.

The decision to not only resume testing from 25 May, but also give priority to applicants in need of a licence for seasonal agricultural work, came as a huge relief in some districts where haulout drivers are in short supply with just weeks to go before harvesters fire up for the 2020 season.

"We need around 60 haulout drivers here to complete the crush and the last I heard we still had 17 drivers who had completed training and were awaiting testing," CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman and harvesting contractor **Phil Marano** said.

"We're in need of new drivers every year, but the problem has been exacerbated this year by the interstate travel restrictions which mean we aren't seeing many drivers coming from down south.

"I'm pleased to see the government has listened to our concerns and taken advice and is not only reinstating heavy vehicle driver testing, but also prioritising the HR licencing process for seasonal agricultural workers."

"The resumption of testing will help a lot with filling those vacant driver positions and ensuring the harvest runs as smoothly as possible."

CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** also welcomed the government's decision.

"Haulout drivers are an integral link in Queensland's annual crush. Without them our cane doesn't get to the mill, so it's essential we have enough qualified and licenced drivers on hand to complete harvesting operations as quickly and efficiently as possible," Mr Galligan said.

"That's why CANEGROWERS has been working directly with the State Government on behalf of growers to ensure the Minister and his department fully understood the importance of this issue and the impact a failure to resolve it quickly could have on this year's harvest.

"I'm pleased to see the government has listened to our concerns and taken advice and is not only reinstating heavy vehicle driver testing, but also prioritising the HR licencing process for seasonal agricultural workers."

Testing was suspended in March amid COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. ■

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CEO COMMENT

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

HARVEST IN OUR SIGHTS

Harvest season is just around the corner and the rising energy around the industry is palpable. The natural cycle of our industry means that the focus on issues changes with the growth of the crop.

As mills come close to completing off-season maintenance, so too growers have been finalising their harvest and haulout plans.

With COVID-19 restrictions now well understood, CANEGROWERS has been working with growers and districts to ensure we all get through this harvest season safely, while minimising risks but also securing productivity.

We have achieved this by contributing to state and national health and economic policy and then developing cane grower specific guidance material to assist with its implementation.

As a network, CANEGROWERS has pulled together to provide the support required to get us to this position and our district offices are now at the frontline, ready to help growers and their staff through the challenging season ahead.

The State Government's recent decision to resume heavy vehicle licence testing and provide a specific prioritisation process for agricultural needs, was a tremendous relief for many.

For CANEGROWERS it was also an important outcome, which the organisation had been working hard to achieve on behalf of growers since mid-March.

Just as importantly, district office staff and our elected grower representatives have been working on the annual tasks around finalising cane supply agreements, securing harvest equity arrangements, and cane analysis requirements in mills, not to mention the generally enormous collective effort this industry goes to in building the logistical collaboration of harvesting 30 million tonnes of cane and getting 4 million tonnes of sugar into the sheds.

The seasonal cycle in the paddocks across the state will continue as growers turn towards plant cane decisions and soil fertility as a down payment on the years ahead.

Just as important as the investment in farm health is the investment in financial health. In part, this is the reason why CANEGROWERS was pleased to back up our Market Information Service with the recent release of a specific sugarcane Cost of Production Tool.

Available to members on our website, it allows growers to work out their specific cost of production so that they can be better placed to make critical business decisions. From growers and their financial advisors we already know this tool has received strong endorsement.

From growers and their families, to harvest, haulout and loco drivers, mill operators, laboratory technicians, boilermakers, caterers, administration and office staff, truck drivers, boat drivers, ship loaders and terminal operators, sugar traders, sugar makers and sugar marketers – this industry has a whole world of people who come together to make it all work.

I hope the season runs safely, productively and profitably for all. ■



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INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF SUGAR RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

All Research & Development Corporations like SRA are required, under their funding agreements with the Commonwealth Government, to commission regular independent corporate performance reviews. SRA's first such review was completed in 2016.

A team headed by **Scott Williams** of Forest Hill Consulting has been appointed to undertake the current performance review for SRA and has commenced its work. The review will examine how effectively and efficiently SRA is fulfilling its obligations to levy payers and government. The review is being undertaken independently of SRA.

A key part of the project will be to consult with industry. The project team will be making specific contact with the key industry organisations to obtain input into the review. The team also invites any industry stakeholder (growers, millers, research providers, consultants or any other interested party) to make a submission. People or organisations wishing to do so should visit the project website (www.srareview.org) or send an email to submissions@srareview.org. Alternatively, please contact Scott Williams on 0413 059 190.

Submissions close on 5 July. The project will be completed by September 2020.

SRA GROWER SURVEY NOW OPEN FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

SRA is inviting all cane growers to have your say in our 2020 Grower Survey.

We are surveying growers to better understand the 2019 season, industry outlook and farming practices. We also want growers to rate their satisfaction with our performance delivering research, development and adoption services to the Australian sugarcane industry.

This year we have improved the survey for growers. The **21-minute** survey can be completed online, at any time and over multiple sessions to provide greater flexibility. Growers who complete the survey will also receive a **\$25 gift card** that will be posted to them.

The survey is open and can be accessed via www.sugarresearch.com.au. Keep an eye on your emails for more information.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential and your individual responses will not be provided to SRA. Survey data is collected and stored in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APP).

If you would like to discuss the survey with someone from SRA, please contact **Ben Simpson** on 0436 686 381 or bsimpson@sugarresearch.com.au.

GET CLICKING AND WIN WITH 'SUGAR SNAPS'

It's on again! The Sugar Snaps photo competition is seeking the best photographs from across the Australian sugarcane industry. Farmers, millers, industry providers, and all stakeholders in the industry are being invited to take part in the 2020 Sugar Snaps photography competition, which will again showcase the beauty of the Australian sugarcane industry.

The winners of the competition will have the chance to win prizes and see their work published in a 2021 shed calendar. Entries close September 30, 2020. To submit your entry and for more information visit:

sugarresearch.com.au/sra-information/sugar-snaps/



Sunsuper awarded Chant West's Super Fund of the Year

Sunsuper has again cemented its position as one of the super industry's best performers by winning Chant West's Super Fund of the Year award for the third time in four years.

The award, which is one of the super industry's most coveted, is granted annually by superannuation research and consultancy firm Chant West to the fund with outstanding performance in investments, member services, financial advice, insurance, fees, and overall organisational capability.

At this year's award ceremony, Sunsuper – described as a great 'all-round' super fund – was also recognised as the *Best Fund: Member Services 2020*.

This award recognises the fund that best engages with its members, guiding them toward greater knowledge and involvement with superannuation. Sunsuper was called out specifically for its industry-leading adoption of a highly personalised service model that helps members take actions specific to their circumstances in order to help them maximise their retirement savings. This is the sixth year out of the past eight that Sunsuper has won this award.

The *Corporate Solutions Fund of the Year 2020* award, which Sunsuper also won again this year, acknowledges the super fund operating in this important industry segment working in the best interests of its corporate plan members. Having won 24 tenders in 2019 totalling \$4.5 billion, it is the fifth year in a row that Sunsuper has won the Corporate Solutions Fund of the Year award.

Sunsuper's Chief Executive Officer **Bern Reilly** said it was an honour for the Fund to accept these awards which were testament to the Fund's singular commitment to its members, particularly given the current environment's challenges.

"Throughout the year we have remained steadfast in our commitment to our members' financial wellbeing," he said. "This has never been truer than how our people have rallied over recent weeks to give timely support to those who have been experiencing financial difficulties."

Mr Reilly said that Sunsuper saw it as a privilege to serve the 1.4 million Australians who trusted the Fund with their retirement savings. But, he said, while proud of the awards, the Fund would not be resting on its laurels, particularly during these unprecedented times.

"We'll continue to work hard to provide top quality products and services for our members, as well as investing in technology in order to meet members' rapidly changing needs," he said.

"From responding to increased member demand for personalised digital capability, to enhancing our pension and financial advice offerings, to improving our governance framework, and delivering investment performance that places us among the industry's best, we will not waver in our efforts

to enhance member benefits while spearheading the way super funds do business in the current environment."

"We will also continue to maintain our focus on pursuing new and innovative investment opportunities, build on our people capabilities and optimise operational efficiencies in order to keep costs down and fees as low as possible," Mr Reilly said.

These awards come on the back of the Fund's recognition as *SuperRatings Fund of the Year 2020* – also won for the second time in three years – and *Money* magazine's *Best Super Lifecycle Product 2020*, making Sunsuper one of Australia's most awarded superannuation funds.

Sunsuper was also a finalist in the following categories: Pension Fund of the Year, Best Fund: Investments, Best Fund: Integrity, Best Fund: Innovation, and Best Fund: Advice Services.

Sunsuper is one of Australia's largest and fastest growing super funds with more than 1.4 million members and \$67 billion in funds under management.

Read the full media release about the award wins or check-out other recent news available through our Newsroom at sunsuper.com.au/media-releases

Disclaimer: This article has been prepared and issued by Sunsuper Pty Ltd, the trustee and issuer of the Sunsuper Superannuation Fund. Sunsuper Pty Ltd ABN 88 010 720 840, AFSL No. 228975, is the Trustee and issuer of the Sunsuper Superannuation Fund ABN 98 503 137 921, USI 98 503 137 921 001. Visit sunsuper.com.au or call 13 11 84 for a copy of the PDS.



CANEGROWERS

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Find out more about the Chant West Super
Fund Awards at www.chantwest.com.au



FROM THE CHAIR

By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS

A letter to my fellow sugarcane growers:

Dear Grower,

These are incredibly difficult times for the Australian sugar industry. World sugar prices have been driven down by the COVID-19 pandemic and Indian export subsidies, while in Queensland, we have a government increasing the regulation and compliance burden on our industry.

Understandably, many growers are concerned about their future. But circumstances can change very quickly, the sugar price and government included.

In difficult times, growers might wonder at the value that CANEGROWERS provides to them. You will have heard that the Queensland-based farm organisation AgForce has decided to create a sugar division and is seeking to recruit grower members.

I respect that growers have a right to determine which organisation best represents their interests, but I offer a word of caution.

AgForce claims that its actions are about unifying the sugar industry. That is clearly false.

The move by AgForce to boost its membership risks dividing our industry and its effects may be felt for many years to come. As the saying goes, 'A house divided against itself cannot stand'.

It important for you to remember that CANEGROWERS represents cane growers – that you and your interests are at the heart and soul of what we do.

Cane growers are best served when they are represented by other cane growers – the ones you elect in your district every three years.

CANEGROWERS can act for cane growers without fear or favour and without recourse to any other industry. We need no one's permission to speak for you.

I also want to dispel the misinformation being spread recently, that CANEGROWERS is somehow beholden to the Queensland Government because it relies on state government grants for funding survival.

In fact, the complete reverse is true.

CANEGROWERS has adopted a policy that our annual budgets are cast with ZERO reliance on government grants or program funding. We do not rely on government to fund our core operations. We stand proudly on our own two feet.

Your membership is valuable to us. Strength in numbers and unity of purpose is the only way we can advocate strongly for cane growers.

CANEGROWERS was established to act for the betterment of sugarcane growers. We have been an organisation representing cane growers for almost a century and aim to be here for many years to come.

I wish you the best for the 2020 season and remind members that our CANEGROWERS offices and staff have your back and are ready to assist you in any way you need. ■

T. A. Schembri

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Nominations are now open for the election of QSL Grower Representative Members

Nomination forms are available at www.qsl.com.au or from your local mill office, grower organisation or QSL representative.

To nominate as a representative for a mill area, you must be a grower who supplies sugar cane under contract to a mill in your mill area. Signed nomination forms must be lodged with QSL by 5pm (QLD time) on Friday 12 June 2020.

Voting will be held if there is more than one nomination for each vacancy.

For more information:
www.qsl.com.au

Your QSL grower rep election contacts:

- Cathy Kelly (0409 285 074 / cathy.kelly@qsl.com.au)
- Sonia Ball (0418 978 120 / sonia.ball@qsl.com.au)

Powerful new Tool helping growers manage costs

A new interactive tool developed by CANEGROWERS is helping members to quickly and easily calculate a range of useful cost of production figures which can help with making business decisions for farms and families.

The CANEGROWERS Cost of Production Tool, launched in May and available only to members, is already proving a useful addition to a cane farm's business management decision-making toolkit.

Presented as a spreadsheet, the Tool can calculate a break-even sugar price and the farm profitability point with different yield, CCS and sugar prices at play, CANEGROWERS Industry Manager **Burn Ashburner** said.

"The Cost of Production Tool is primarily designed to allow growers to determine what sugar price they need to cover production costs. This is an important part of understanding what sugar prices you would like to lock in for your business," Mr Ashburner said.

"There are also some useful ready reckoners to use once the production cost per tonne of cane is known.

"The Tool allows you to enter your own farm information, which will enable a break-even sugar price to be calculated based on your costs of production.

"Then the Tool also provides a summary of the income and costs on a per tonne, per hectare and total for the farm.

"This shows the profitability overall and can be used to determine areas of concern and allows for some 'what ifs' to be tested - for example what if the yield is higher or lower or what if my costs change?"

Producing the Cost of Production Tool is just one more way in which CANEGROWERS is assisting growers to be productive and profitable, Membership Engagement and Innovation Manager **Matt Kealley** said.

"This Tool is another exciting addition to a long and ever-growing list of services and products that CANEGROWERS provides to members to make their lives and business decisions as simple and successful as possible," Mr Kealley said.

"We're always trying to improve our offerings to members and we'd love to hear from anyone with ideas."

Members can download the new Cost of Production Tool by using their membership number on the CANEGROWERS website at www.canegrowers.com.au/marketing-information-service

A handy *How To Guide* on using the Tool can be found on pages 17-18 of this magazine. ■

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Cost of Production Tool How-to Guide



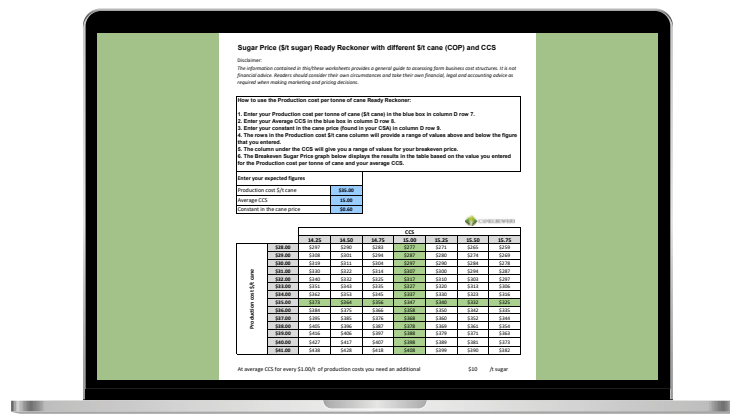
Knowing your cost of production is fundamental to the management of your farming business. It is important to understand your costs and the potential revenue from your cane, to make management decisions on farm and sugar pricing decisions. CANEGROWERS has developed a sugarcane farm specific spreadsheet to help. This Tool is available for all members to download and this Guide outlines how to use it.

To access the Cost of Production Tool visit: www.canegrowers.com.au/marketing-information-service

Step 1

If you know your cost of production, there are three Ready Reckoners that can help:

1. **Sugar Price Ready Reckoner with different \$/t Cane (COP) and CCS** - calculate the sugar price in \$/A/t of sugar required to cover cane cost of production (\$/tonne cane) at different CCS levels
2. **Sugar Price Ready Reckoner with different US\$/lb and exchange rates** - to assist in understanding the effects of the ICE#11 and the exchange rate on the sugar price
3. **Cane Price Ready Reckoner with different \$/A/t sugar price and CCS** - to assist in understanding how the level of production cost (\$/tc) is covered with changing sugar price and CCS



To use these Ready Reckoners go to the **Ready Reckoner** worksheet and follow the instructions.

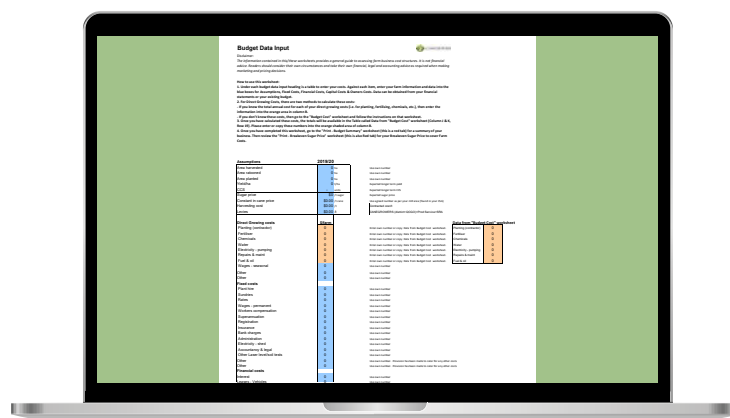
Step 2

Calculate your cost of production.

The **Budget Data Input** worksheet can be used to enter data to help calculate sugarcane income and costs of production.

This data can be sourced from farm financial statements and existing budgets.

To start this process, go to the Budget Data Input worksheet and enter the information for your business. You can also use the **Growing Expenses** worksheet to assist in calculating some of the costs in the **Budget Data Input** worksheet if needed (see Step 3).



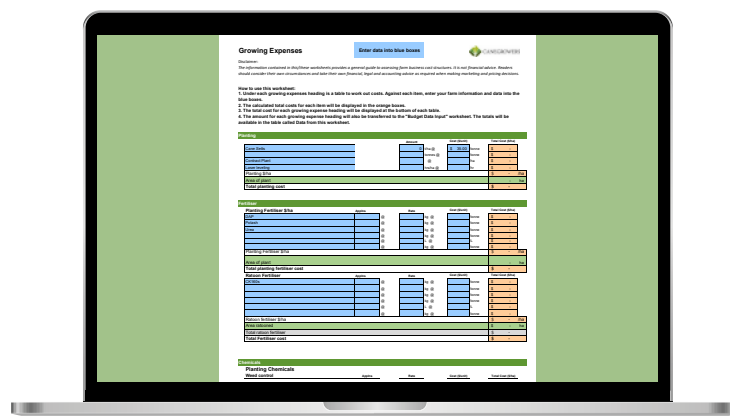
Step 3

Calculate your growing expenses.

The **Growing Expenses** worksheet can be used to calculate inputs based on expected use and price data.

The calculations contained in this worksheet are linked to the **Budget Data Input** worksheet.

To start this process, go to the **Growing Expenses** worksheet and enter the information for your business. Then return to the **Budget Data Input** worksheet where the totals from the calculation of Growing Expenses will be shown.



Step 4

Your budget summary.

The **Budget Summary** worksheet contains a summary of sugarcane income and expenses for the business based on the Budget data Input.

This worksheet is designed for printing and is a summary of the business broken into \$/tonne cane, \$/ha harvested and total \$ for the farm.



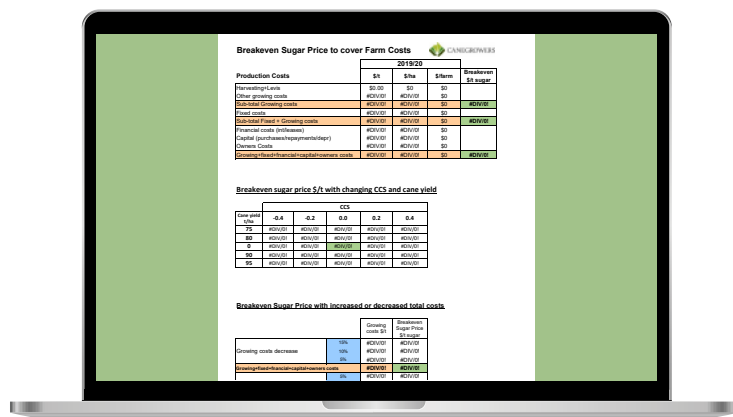
Step 5

Breakeven sugar price.

The **Breakeven Sugar Price** worksheet shows a summary of:

1. Breakeven Sugar Price to cover Farm Costs.
2. Breakeven Sugar Price with changing CCS and cane yield.
3. Breakeven sugar price with increased or decreased total costs.

This worksheet is designed for printing and to use as a consideration for forward pricing.



What's Next?

Through workshops, regular videos and newsletter updates, the CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service provides neutral commentary on sugar market trends and the pricing options that may work best in any given set of circumstances.



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QSL MARKET NEWS



By Matthew Page
QSL Trading Manager

LAST CHANCE FOR 2019 LOYALTY BONUS

Time is running out for QSL growers in the Mackay Sugar, MSF Sugar, Tully Sugar and Wilmar milling districts to secure their Loyalty Bonus for the 2019 Season.

To receive this additional payment, growers marketing with QSL in the 2019 and 2020 Seasons just need to nominate QSL as their marketer for next season (2021) by the end of this month, 30 June 2020.

The QSL Loyalty Bonus has paid over \$8 million to growers over the past three seasons.

For further details about how you can secure your share of these returns, please contact your local QSL Grower Services Team representative.

Market Update: Brazil staring down the barrel

Both raw sugar and currency markets remain volatile with most of the world still under a COVID-19 cloud of uncertainty. While cases in most countries appear to have peaked, lockdowns are still in place, with plans to re-open economies still in their infancy. The risk of a second wave of infections remains very clear and as such the exit from the global lockdown will certainly be longer and conducted with more trepidation than the entry.

Sugar is currently trapped in a 10-11 USc/lb range with speculators (currently net short 37k lots) seemingly happy following the movements in oil and the Brazilian Real without any real conviction. Open interest in JUL20 futures is at its lowest in five years and is symptomatic of an investor sector keen to deleverage and a commercial sector desperate for direction.

Latest UNICA (Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association) reports point to the highest sugar mix in Brazil in years but that is hardly unexpected with ethanol prices struggling for traction at 7.72 sugar equivalent. The high mix was well telegraphed and as such is almost entirely already priced in by the market. Recent chatter has centred on tax incentives to support the Brazilian ethanol industry. While welcome, these realistically only add 100 points (i.e. 1%) at most to ethanol prices if they are all approved. They will provide little support unless lockdowns are lifted soon so demand resumes and supply chains can get moving again.

On that point, COVID-19 in Brazil appears to be worsening as incoherent policy responses between state and federal governments sees infection and death rates soaring. Analysts will be watchful with a potential bullish storm brewing should the situation deteriorate further and interrupt the Brazil harvest/export program. The situation in Brazil is also having a very negative impact on the Brazilian Real (BRL). Investors are giving a big thumbs down to Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of the crisis and a rapid weakening of the currency from 5.20 to 5.85 month-on-month has weighed heavily on sugar prices, and it feels more a question of 'when' rather than 'if' we see it trade the 6 handle.



Source: Bloomberg

Oil appears to have stabilised from last month's unheralded trip to negative price territory, with Brent currently trading just over \$33 USD per barrel. While immediate storage issues appear to have been resolved and production cuts help the supply side, the very slow pick-up in demand as countries emerge from lockdowns will keep a lid on prices for some time to come.

QSL UPDATE



The Australian Dollar has held up remarkably well in the current environment lifting from its mid-March low of 0.5545 to a late April high of 0.6570. Investor confidence has been buoyed by the rapid and sizeable response of fiscal and monetary authorities globally and US equities have rebounded very strongly. Despite the US Dollar retaining its safe haven status and the dollar index remaining elevated above 100, the AUD has also ridden the wave of confidence to outperform its G10 peers. This has, at the very least, helped stem the tide of falling AUD/mt sugar values.



Source: Bloomberg

Our own domestic experience of the virus has been relatively benign when viewed from a global perspective. With restrictions already beginning to be gradually lifted the perception is that our shorter lockdown period will hopefully protect more businesses and more jobs from disappearing and thus the expected GDP contraction should have a smaller impact on our economy compared with others.

Despite the current halo above its head, the Aussie does have some headwinds coming to contend with. The rebound in equities has probably been overdone given the large contractions anticipated over the coming quarters and as such, a pullback feels inevitable. Much the same as riding the wave up, the AUD will ride it down as well.

The delicate relationship between China and the US also appears to be taking a sour turn. The US has begun to point serious fingers at China and its role in the current global pandemic and in response the Chinese have indicated that they would like to revisit the terms agreed in the phase one trade agreement reached earlier this year. This is not good for trade or investor confidence and a direct bearish threat to the AUD should tensions escalate further.

We see the AUD trending lower over the coming months as the economic data catches up with the situation on the ground and investor confidence wanes. That said, our relatively better domestic experience of the virus should prevent us from seeing another trip to the 50-cent handle for the Aussie Dollar.

Stay safe, from all the team at QSL.

DISCLAIMER:

This report contains information of a general or summary nature. While all care is taken in the preparation of this report, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. Information about past performance is not an indication of future performance and nothing contained in this report should be relied upon as a representation as to future matters. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial product or investment advice. You should seek independent advice before making any pricing decisions. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this report.

COMING UP

12 June 2020: Deadline for 2020 QSL Grower Representative nominations. All nominations must be lodged with QSL by 5pm (QLD time) on this date.

15 June 2020: Pricing Completion Date for the July 2020 Contract for growers using the QSL Individual Futures Contract and/or Self-Managed Harvest.

17 June 2020: QSL's 2019-Season Advance Rate is scheduled to increase to 95%.

22 June 2020: Any 2020-Season QSL Target Price Contract orders which are unfilled beyond this date will be rolled to the October 2020 Contract and costs may apply.

30 June 2020: Last day to become eligible for the 2019-Season Loyalty Bonus.

1 July 2020: Additional tonnages become available for grower-managed pricing for the 2020, 2021 & 2022 Seasons.

July 2020: Final 2019-Season Advances payment made.

15 September: Pricing Completion Date for the October 2020 Contract for growers using the QSL Individual Futures Contract and/or Self-Managed Harvest.

21 September 2020: Any 2020-Season QSL Target Price Contract orders which are unfilled beyond this date will be rolled to the March 2021 Contract and costs may apply.

31 October 2020: Last day for growers to nominate QSL as their marketer for the 2021 Season.

Less fertiliser brings rewards for Innisfail's Spina family



Wet Tropics
Sugar Industry
Partnership

Sugarcane grower **Sam Spina** says using less fertiliser has led to financial and environmental wins almost as sweet as his sugarcane crop.

The third-generation cane grower, who farms with his brother **Michael**, has made changes ranging from planting fallow crops and varying fertiliser application rates across paddocks to laser-levelling cane land and installing spoon drains.

As a result, the pair have reduced the farm's nitrogen or fertiliser use from 160 to 124kg per hectare – and their fertiliser costs by 20%.

The brothers started planting bean fallow crops two years ago with the help of a new tractor partly financed through the Reef Trust IV tender program delivered by the Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership.

"As a small farm we couldn't have afforded it otherwise," Sam said. "We re-plant cane on four to five hectares and plant beans on the same number of hectares each season to increase the nitrogen in our soil in a more natural way."

He said an all-of-farm nutrient management plan, which was developed by a Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership extension officer last year as part of a free service to growers, had also helped.

"We had a really good look at the soil tests and matched the fertiliser blend to those tests," Sam said. "We changed fertiliser and reduced it, and experienced no productivity losses. We're still up around 90 tonnes per hectare, depending on the weather and the season."

"We saw in the soil tests that some paddocks needed more super phosphate in the ratoons so we also changed that. Our fertiliser box is on GPS now so we can automatically adjust the rate as we go."

The family's Innisfail farm is about 1.5km from the Johnstone River and 8km from the ocean.



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They have laser-levelled their land and re-shaped deep drains into grassed spoon drains.

"Laser levelling helps to produce a more even crop and it's also helping with water quality," Sam said. "With the grassed headlands and drains as well, when the water runs off the paddock it moves slowly and goes into the spoon drains first so any sediment can settle."

He said changes that began as cost-saving initiatives had become much more.

"Over the years cane growers have become a lot more aware environmentally – we're grassing our headlands, trash-blanketing, applying fertiliser underground, getting water samples... If there is fertiliser coming off our paddocks, we want to know about it so we can fix it."

Sam is one of 39 Wet Tropics growers to receive tenders to reduce fertiliser use on their farms. Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership and CANEGROWERS Innisfail Chairman **Joe Marano** said one of the main benefits of the tender system was that growers could choose the practice changes they believed would be most effective on their farm.

"They've been trialling a range of different ways to reduce nitrogen - from using controlled-release fertilisers or applying mill mud to growing legumes as a source of nitrogen and buying specialised equipment," Mr Marano said.

"These growers have been able to reduce their use of nitrogen fertiliser without affecting their yields - a good result for profitability and for water quality." ■





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OPERATION SWEET & SOW

By Kim Kleidon

Cane growers across Queensland are deploying all the weapons in their arsenal as they battle to protect crops from the ferocious appetites of millions of feral pigs.

From the emerald mountains of the Wet Tropics to the Brigalow blocks of Mackay, tried and tested, integrated methods of feral pig control are being adopted by communities of farming families and producing some inspiring results.

Twenty-one farms covering an area of 4,700ha in the Mackay region of Munbura, Alligator Creek, recently joined forces to tackle the feral pig problem affecting their region.

This particular project focused on an integrated approach which included the combination of trapping, baiting, dogging and shooting.

Coordinated by Productivity Officer, **Britney Gibbs** from Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS), who facilitated the two-year study, the findings have been encouraging.

"The problem was brought to me by growers who were suffering the most, many at the bottom of the mountain where the national park borders the cane land. Most of the issues of pig management had to do with timing," Britney said.

Supported and partly funded by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), the growers also contributed 50% of the costs.



Trapping and shooting proved the most effective methods, with dogging identified as one of the problems at the beginning of the project.

"Dogging usually occurs within a farm boundary and more often than not chases the mobs from farm to farm, only managing a couple pigs at a time," Britney said.

"Baiting can be hard to gather data on in mountainous areas, as pigs consume the baited food, then search for water."

According to Britney, trapping was by far the most successful, with one particular trap (designed by one of the growers in the group) capturing ten pigs in one attempt.

Thirty kilometres south, growers like **Glen Brady** have taken a different approach to collaboration, contributing funds to annual programs targeting broad areas.

Early mornings at Cliftonville bring back fond memories for Glen. Sitting at the back of his house, he recalls all the school holidays spent with his 'Pop', Arthur – especially when it was time to harvest.

"I used to love the burns and being on the tractor with Pop. Sometimes I didn't think we were going to come out of it, but he always knew what he was doing."





Pictured: Glen Brady is always on the hunt for feral pigs on his Mackay farm.

"Dogging usually occurs within a farm boundary and more often than not chases the mobs from farm to farm, only managing a couple pigs at a time."

You don't see much of that anymore, it's a bit of a lost art," Glen said.

Wild pigs also dominate Glen's childhood experiences, as he recounts dramatic stories of the animals being bailed up by the working dogs on his father's cattle property at Clermont.

"When we first went out there, I remember the dogs fighting pigs outside the army tent and Dad going out there to shoot them – they were rife then.

"If Dad was out working, there was only Mum and us kids, we'd be all in the Toyota and the dogs would be under it with a pig, rockin' the car side to side. While we're all screaming, Mum's trying to shoot it out of the window, without hitting a dog."

Drought in the late 80s to early 90s brought many changes for the Brady family and Glen, along with wife Sheree, forged a partnership with his father in 1995 that would return them to their cane farming roots, settling in Yukan, south of Mackay, not far from Cliftonville.

With a 130-hectare cane farm, producing an average of 9,000 tonne, every stick of cane is valuable and today Glen finds himself under siege, by feral pests pigging out on his crop.



Pictured: (Opposite) Glen and Sheree have had success trapping pigs using a US-inspired three panel gate trap that Glen built. (Above) Pig damage on the Brady farm.

Continues next page ►



Introduced to Northern Australia in the 1800s by settlers, feral pigs now inhabit vast regions of the landscape, destroying habitats, competing with native wildlife for food, and degrading soil and water quality.

"The amount of damage pigs can do in one night is unbelievable. Even one pig – they'll just walk and eat," Glen said.

"I've got cameras and traps, but to try and figure out when they're coming in, you spend a lot of time in the mornings, afternoons, even midnight just to catch up with them. I have my gun with me at all times."

Pig numbers can explode quickly with sows capable of producing two litters of 4-10 piglets a year, under good conditions.

Fortunately, his neighbour helps out through a love of 'pig-dogging', joining Glen with a team of dogs to sniff them out.

Dogging is just one control method advised under the *Queensland Feral Pig Management Strategy 2004*.

Baiting, trapping and shooting are also popular methods adopted where fencing, aversion and biocontrol methods aren't an option.

Feral pigs pose biosecurity, environmental and economic threats across the Australian agricultural sector.

According to Biosecurity Queensland the nationwide annual cost of pig impacts has been estimated as being in excess of \$100 million.

Pig numbers are estimated around 24 million but populations fluctuate greatly depending on conditions.

Over \$1 million has been provided through the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative to local governments and NRM bodies over the past two years for integrated pest management projects involving the control of pigs.

Locally, the Coordinated Feral Pig Program (CFPP), was initiated in 2008 in the Rocky Dam Catchment.

Saskia von Fahland, the Coordinator of Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association (SLCMA), the organisation that facilitates an annual aerial feral pig shoot, explains how the program is undertaken.

"This program involves a coordinated approach to feral pig control, where landholders and stakeholders work together to undertake trapping, baiting and aerial shooting," Saskia says.

"Since the program started, landholders have reported a noticeable decrease in feral pig damage to cropping areas.

"The aerial shooting component has been successful in keeping feral pig numbers down and has since expanded into neighbouring catchment areas."

Landholders contribute financially each year to the aerial shoot. These contributions, along with complementary external funding, directly influences the extent and success of the shoot each year.

Throughout the years, external funding to support the program has been received by the Queensland and Federal governments via Reef Catchments and Plane Creek Productivity Services, with in-kind support received from stakeholders including Reef Catchments, Plane Creek Productivity Services, Mackay Regional Council and Government departments.

Glen feels a more consistent approach and reduction in red tape would improve his situation, following what he describes as his worst year in 2012, with pigs travelling up to 40kms out of the protection of state forest areas that border his property.



Pictured: Using a drone to inspect pig damage and look for mobs has become part of Glen's daily routine.

"Different control methods will have more success depending on the environmental conditions, land use and location within the landscape. Therefore, it is important to work together and use a range of control methods."

Contributing to the CFPP, he believes, is vital to managing the pig population, even though the aerial shooting doesn't take place on his property due to topography.

"Mobs of 10-20 were destroying the area of a football field, maybe 30 tonnes," Glen said. "But the past four to five years they might get 4-8 tonnes - the aerial shoot has made a huge difference!"

Taking matters into his own hands by erecting traps and educating himself on baiting methods (without poison for the safety of his dogs), Glen has tried a variety of lures – from molasses and old bread to protein pellets and grain.

He says none of it works if all they want to eat is sugarcane, but he's discovered mangoes are best when they're in season, while the smell of sump oil on a hessian bag also seems to attract them.

Two years ago, he invested in a drone to identify crop damage and spot pigs (frustratingly he is yet to see one) and using it is now part of his daily routine.

"Sometimes you get pigs that want to eat and other times they'll just dig it up, making the ground rough and difficult to work in a tractor. They bring in weeds, disease and have detrimental impacts on ratoons," Glen said.

Working with landholders, Saskia is keenly aware of the shared responsibility.

"Feral pigs move across property boundaries throughout the landscape at various times of the day and year. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to manage pig numbers and by working together, we have better success in controlling them," she said.

On a lighter note, pigging also provides a variety of stories, that remind us of the dangers they pose to human health. Glen laughs about many of the situations he has found himself in with the neighbour, climbing trees and fences to get out of the way, he says they're cranky buggers.

"It'll be eerily still in the dead of night, next thing dogs are barking, pigs are crashing through the cane towards you. They've got one, you don't know if you're looking at the mean end or the rear end - they get some big tusks."

Sheree leaves the hunting to Glen, saying as much as the pigs cause problems she doesn't like to see the animals hurt.

"Pigs have to be controlled, they cost us a lot of money – but as an animal lover, it has to be done humanely. I don't like to see them suffer, even being pulled down by dogs. I prefer the trap and then shooting at close range to ensure a humane death."

In 2017 feral pig damage was estimated to cause a loss of seven million dollars to the cane industry. The wider environmental impacts also effect communities, making it important to understand the controls available.

"Varying environmental conditions such as cyclones, drought and fires, directly affect pig population growth and behaviour/movement across the landscape. Generally, a suite of integrated control methods is necessary. Different control methods will have more success depending on the environmental conditions, land use and location within the landscape. Therefore, it is important to work together and use a range of control methods," Saskia said.

The success of the 'community' approach taken by MAPS, will also continue to gauge the effectiveness of integrated control methods adopted in the Munbura area of Mackay, as Britney explains.

Continues next page ►

"These growers are neighbours and with a pest problem as intense and free ranging as feral pigs, why stop the management at a single farm boundary? Why not tackle the problem together? By pooling resources and targeting hotspots successfully, the entire group benefits from the efficient use of funding and resources," she said.

Communication is key to monitoring feral pig movement and timing of trap placement, with more growers expressing they're keen to collaborate, forming their own groups to share knowledge and infrastructure.

"I'm quite proud of the project, being my first and whilst it didn't go as smoothly as everyone would have liked at the beginning, the growers in the project have been really supportive, passionate and innovative," Britney said. ■

FERAL PIG CONTROL IN OTHER DISTRICTS

Innisfail

Cane growers are involved in the Cassowary Coast Regional Council's (CCRC) Feral Pig Management Strategy with delivery through the Innisfail Babinda Cane Productivity Services (IBCPS).

The strategy arose after feral pigs were identified as potential transmitters of the Panama TR4 virus affecting the banana industry, particularly in the Tully Valley south of Innisfail.

Queensland Government funding helps provide \$10,000 per year to CANEGROWERS Innisfail, which is passed on to IBCPS, during the life of the CCRC Strategy program (ending in 2021).

A co-ordinated approach with landholders using a combination of trapping, baiting and aerial shooting is used.

The IBCPS Feral Pig co-ordinator provides assistance to growers to develop trapping techniques using survey cameras. In the past three years more than 2,500 feral pigs have been eradicated through this co-ordinated approach.

Burdekin

Feral pigs in the Burdekin account for the loss of approximately 14,000 tonnes of cane, which costs growers approximately half a million dollars in lost revenue.

Pigs are challenging to control and are managed through an integrated approach with assistance available from Burdekin Productivity Services which subsidises aerial shooting of pigs which is particularly effective when the cane is low.

BPS also assists with pre-baiting targeted areas for several days in preparation for the Burdekin Shire Council to lay 1080 baits in coastal areas in particular and more widely throughout the district when growers report a problem.

BOARD MEMBERS NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Sugar Research Australia Limited (SRA), Australia's leading Sugar Industry Research Organisation, is seeking to appoint two Non-Executive Directors to join its board.

SRA is an industry-owned company which invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and extension projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry.

SRA is governed by a skills-based board of seven directors, a majority of whom must be independent. The role of the board includes to approve strategic and operating plans, review the company's performance against plans, and seek advice and recommendations from the SRA Research Funding Panel for contestable investment of the substantial SRA Research Funding Pool.

The board is required to have a balance of skills across a number of key selection criteria. For the current vacancies, the Director Selection Committee is particularly seeking directors with expertise and knowledge in:

- sugarcane growing
- sugarcane processing for any product
- commercialisation and adoption
- finance and business management.

SRA is currently undertaking a business transformation review of its operating model and organisational design to ensure SRA's ongoing sustainability. Demonstrated commercial skills and experience in leading transformation, organisational change and achieving strategic outcomes in the sugar or an agriculture based industry will be highly regarded.

All SRA directors are expected to have a demonstrated capacity to contribute at board level including a sound understanding of governance.

SRA actively seeks diversity and gender equality in the recruitment of Board directors.

Directors are remunerated by way of a fixed annual fee. Reasonable board-related expenses are met by the company. Directors will be appointed for a maximum term of up to three years.

To register, visit www.directorsaustralia.com/directors-register, click on "Position Search", select role before clicking on "View Selected" and then "Apply Online".

For further details please contact Glee Mitchell by email glee.mitchell@directorsaustralia.com or phone on 0417 065 408.

Applications close 5pm on Friday 19 June 2020.



Chemicals regulatory system under review

An expert panel reviewing Australia’s agricultural and veterinary chemical regulatory system has released an Issues Paper highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the current system which relies heavily on the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

CANEGROWERS has met with the panel to discuss ideas on how to modernise and streamline the regulatory framework to the benefit of cane farmers and agriculture more generally, Environment and Sustainability Manager, Mick Quirk said.

“The APVMA is generally held in high regard, but as with any regulatory system, there’s room for improvement,” he said.

“The panel wants to build on the strengths of the current system in a way that enables Australian farmers to have access to a similar range of safe chemicals as their overseas competitors, and in similar timeframes, while preserving human, animal, plant and environmental health.”

The Issues Paper proposes a number of changes and improvements including:

- Refocusing the scope towards chemicals for primary and non-urban land managers.
- Less resources invested in reviewing efficacy (this has caused the most discussion to date).
- Introducing a registration by reference approach, whereby the regulator can be satisfied about the appropriateness of

a chemical product or use based on its acceptance by one or more comparable international regulatory systems.

- Increasing national consistency of control of use (harmonising regulations and approaches across states and territories has proven difficult).
- Introducing smart labelling, electronic approaches that will simplify the printed label and allow a more responsive approach to information sharing.

“CANEGROWERS is preparing a submission in response to the Issues Paper. While many of the ideas sound sensible, one of our concerns will be the proposal to reduce emphasis on reviewing the efficacy of a product,” Mr Quirk said. ■



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CANEGROWERS CROP INSURANCE

CANEGROWERS members automatically have access to crop insurance cover as part of their membership.

The policy can provide cover for loss of crop due to accidental fire, transit and hail incidents.



Accidental Fire



Hail Damage



Transit Damage

Between 1 June 2018 to 1 June 2019 a total of 65 claims were reported, accepted and paid across the CANEGROWERS organisation. Nine were for hail damage and 56 were for accidental fire caused by events such as lightning, arson and engine sparks.

CROP INSURANCE TIPS & FAQs

Does CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance cover in the event of fire?

Yes the CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance will respond in the event of an accidental crop fire. It may also provide limited cover for hail and transit damage.

What should I do if my cane fields burn in an accidental fire?

Contact your local CANEGROWERS office to notify them of the fire as soon as possible. They will let you know of the process and provide you with claim forms. They will also appoint an assessor (cane inspector) to review the damage and complete a report. He or she may also give recommendations on recovery steps.

What compensation can I expect?

You may receive a settlement for loss of crop if you experience a total loss. Or for yield loss and mitigation expenses if you experience a loss in production. Each claim will be different and the policy's terms and conditions will apply.

GET PEACE OF MIND - INSURANCE COVER FOR YOUR FARM & MORE

CANEGROWERS members receive insurance services free of broking fees with local representatives to assist throughout the entire process.

Get the right cover

CANEGROWERS Insurance brokers have access to a range of insurers to provide you with the most competitive cover.

No fees for members

As a membership service, CANEGROWERS members benefit from no broking fee.

We come to you

CANEGROWERS Insurance brokers can visit you on farm to discuss your insurance needs.

Help lodging claims

If something goes wrong and you need to report a claim, we are here to assist you during the claims process.

Not a CANEGROWERS member?

Our service is not limited to cane growers or members. We offer a wide range of insurance options including commercial, business, liability, farm, car, home, landlords and contents insurance.

CANEGROWERS Insurance is a Corporate Authorised Representative (CAR No 297969) for Community Broker Network Pty Ltd | ABN 60 096 916 184 | AFSL 233750.

Farm Insurance saves growers after destructive storm

A freak storm hit the Apps family farm at Maroochy River late last year causing significant damage to their machinery sheds and tractors.

“Our farm insurance was due for renewal in October last year so we reached out to our local CANEGROWERS Insurance representative, Helle Cook. She visited our farm on the Sunshine Coast the following week and really took the time to understand our insurance needs. Helle promptly provided us with a comparative quote which saved us around \$4,000,” Peta Apps said.

“Just two weeks after our policy was instated, a freak storm hit our place, and we sustained significant damage to our sheds and tractors. We contacted Helle and she arranged the claims directly with the insurer. This saved us the headache of sitting on the phone with the insurance company, especially with the farm being in full swing. The claims were settled prior to Christmas, with a minimum of fuss.”

“We would highly recommend taking the time to reassess your current insurance with your local CANEGROWERS Insurance representative.”



CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance eases fire's financial fallout

Every year cane farms up and down the coast are impacted by fire – often started accidentally, but sometimes a result of arson.

Whatever the cause, it can lead to tens of thousands of dollars in lost income for growers, as Peter Kaddatz found out in 2018 when a burnt-out car destroyed over 9 hectares of cane on his Rocky Point farm.

Thankfully for Peter and other members affected by fire damage to their crops, CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance is there to help limit the financial fallout.

“A stolen car was set alight near a neighbour’s cane farm and the fire spread into my property. It was a disheartening experience,” Peter said.

Luckily, no-one was hurt and thanks to the exceptional efforts of the Rocky Point Rural Fire Brigade and the amazing support of local farmers who showed up with more firefighting equipment, the blaze was subdued and prevented from spreading further. However, despite their best efforts, nearly 700 tonnes of cane were lost.

With many Australian farmers impacted by drought and on the lookout for suitable feed, Peter was able to sell 500

tonnes of the burnt cane for cattle feed, meaning his claim was limited to 200 tonnes.

That’s when the CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance proved its worth. Peter received a progress payment for his crop loss. This payment was adjusted when the claim was finalised a few months later.

Being the victim of a fire deliberately lit was unsettling, Peter said. However, knowing that his local CANEGROWERS representatives and the CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance scheme had his back and were there to offer services and support was a great comfort.

“It was very comforting to know that the CANEGROWERS’ Crop Insurance would help cover the losses. It gives peace of mind knowing that our membership includes crop insurance and that I came out of the situation as well as I could have,” Peter says.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point Manager Kate Armitage says, “The local growers, fire brigades and CANEGROWERS Rocky Point and Brisbane continue to work well together to mitigate grower losses after fire incidents. CANEGROWERS Crop Insurance is invaluable in mitigating these losses.”

Since Peter’s fire, the frequency and extent of fires started by burning stolen cars and arson attacks has dropped significantly, thanks to extra surveillance and a huge effort by the whole Rocky Point grower community.



PROPER CHEMICAL USE KEY TO CANEGRUB CONTROL

By Deb Telford
Smartcane BMP Facilitator, Innisfail

Canegrub is and always has been the most significant economic pest of Australian sugarcane. We currently have a single active ingredient - imidacloprid - available in two formulations, that provides economic control for all species of this pest. It is imperative that we do everything we can as an industry to keep this insecticide as part of our arsenal against canegrub.

Good grub management requires a number of key/important steps:

1. IS IT GRUB DAMAGE?

Identify the cause of poor growth, stool roll out or gappy ratoons. Don't assume it is grub damage, go and have a look. Chemicals should only be used if canegrubs are actually present.

2. IDENTIFY THE SPECIES OF GRUB PRESENT

SRA has a Canegrub Identification Chart for each district, which can be downloaded here:
sugarresearch.com.au/pest/canegrubs/

3. KNOW THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE GRUB SPECIES

Does it have a 1 or 2-year life cycle? This may change the management strategy.

4. CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

- Identify blocks that are susceptible/damaged.
- What is the level of pressure in each of these blocks - number of larvae per stool?
- What is the predicted level of damage for next season - based on your knowledge, local experience, history of damage, soil type?
- What is the ratoon age of the crop?

5. IDENTIFY YOUR CONTROL OPTIONS

Crop management (trap cropping, time of harvest), chemicals.

6. IF TREATING WITH INSECTICIDE, SET UP AND CALIBRATE YOUR EQUIPMENT CORRECTLY.

The Queensland Sugarcane Insecticide Stewardship Program, a joint initiative involving SRA, the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), and chemical companies Nufarm and Bayer, aims to encourage correct placement of imidacloprid in the field and ensure maximum performance against canegrubs.

This is a great initiative and demonstrates not only the importance of this insecticide to the industry, but also the industry's desire to demonstrate our responsible use of such products.

Research data has shown that through strategic use of these products, along with correct placement, the risk to nearby waterways and the Great Barrier Reef are reduced.

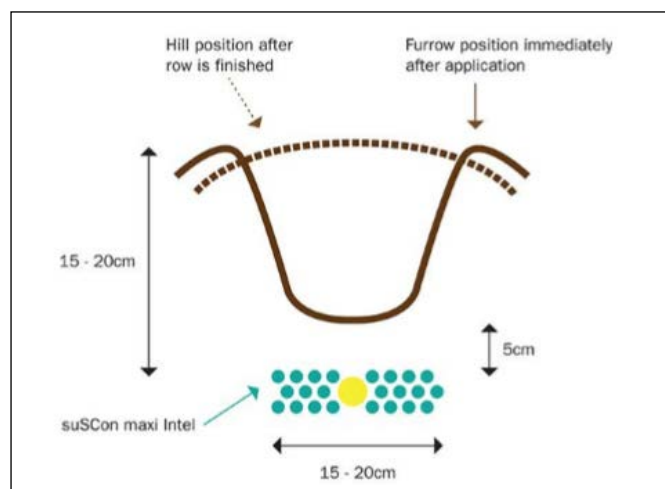
If treating blocks with insecticide, use the product wisely. Below are a number of key points to consider when using insecticide control.

SUSCON® MAXI INTEL® APPLICATION – AT PLANTING, FIRST WORKING OR FINAL HILL-UP

- Ensure label directions are followed.
- Set up and calibrate your equipment before you start, under field conditions to account for wheel slip.
- For single row planting, apply the granules at 150-225g/100m row in a band 150-200mm wide at planting, first working or at final hill-up, with timing and resulting placement of the granules dependent on species of canegrub being targeted.
- Granules should be covered with 150-200mm soil after final cultivation or hilling-up.
- For dual row planted with rows up to 500mm apart, the 225g/100m row rate is split so 112.5g/100m row of product is applied under each row.

Examples of application of suSCon maxi Intel placement from Nufarm product label:

Application at planting





Below ground: actual presence of grubs

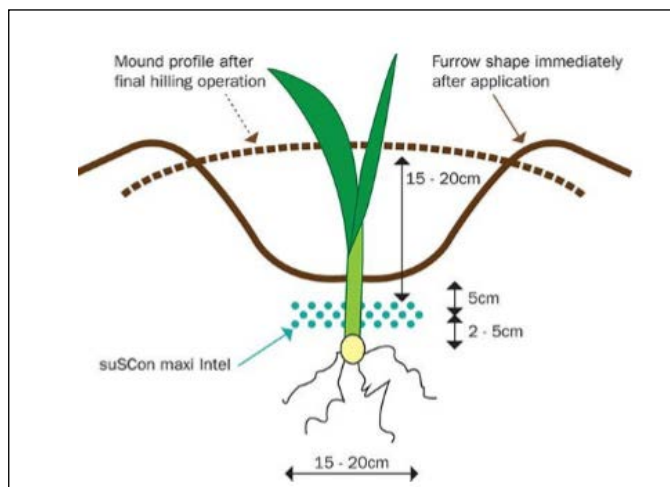


Above ground: damage to crops due to cane grubs.

LIQUID APPLICATION – IN PLANT OR RATOON CANE

- Ensure individual product labels are followed for detailed information on application set-up and band-width recommendations.
- Application rate is mL of product per 100m of row, up to the maximum amount per ha as specified on the label(s).
- **For Plant cane**
Timing of application and resulting placement depth is dependent on the cane grub species being targeted. **MUST** be covered with a minimum of 50mm soil immediately after application. Ensure the band is 100-150mm below the soil surface at final cultivation or hill-up.
- **For Ratoon cane**
Apply 100-125mm below the soil surface. Coulter slot **MUST** be immediately closed following application. Set up and calibrate your equipment before you start.

Application in the furrow



HANDY HINTS TO ENSURE GOOD SET UP OF YOUR LIQUID APPLICATOR

RATE:

Determine the appropriate rate based on species of cane grub present and the anticipated level of pest pressure.

It is critical that the rate of water applied by your applicator is equal to or greater than 1.5L/100m of row.

Calibrate the applicator before you start. SRA has a handy factsheet to help with the calibration of liquid insecticide applicators for cane grub management at: <https://bit.ly/2XLprJN>

PLACEMENT:

For plant cane, placement timing and application depth is determined by the cane grub species being targeted.

For ratoon cane, soil type, soil moisture and compaction can all impact Coulter depth.

Frequently check Coulter depth to ensure placement is 100-150mm below the soil surface.

Cover the treated band with at least 100mm of **UNTREATED** soil immediately.

Check the coulter slot closure by pulling the trash away and making sure the slot is closed. A suitable slot closing device such as a press wheel, Stool Zipper® or chain is required to ensure this happens correctly.

Only run the applicator pumps once the coulter is at the correct depth in the soil and turn off before lifting the implement at the end of the row.

Effective cane grub management requires monitoring, planning and management. Contact your local advisor to assist you get it right on your farm. ■

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

MOSSMAN

The CANEGROWERS Mossman office is now open to growers, but social distancing applies with no more than two visitors are allowed in the office at any one time.

Mossman Mill is getting to the end of an extensive maintenance program, having completed 92% of scheduled maintenance as of 18 May. The mill's capital expenditure included a new mud hopper (pictured), a partial boiler refurbishment and low grade fugal re-heater upgrades.

The 2020 crushing is due to start on Tuesday 16 June and finish at the end of October. Pre-season meetings are being held for growers in May, with social distancing being applied. We welcome a new Production Manager, Trevor Ohlson, who takes over from long-serving Mossman Mill staff member Lewis Sciacca, who will retire in July 2020.

The weather continues to be favourable for the crop for now.



CAIRNS

At the time of writing, rain was falling across the region and discussions were continuing regarding start dates for this year's crush. Hopefully by the time you read this edition, the sun will be out, with mills and harvesters are ready to go, and an achievable crushing plan is in place. The crop in the Mulgrave Region is slightly below average, while the Babinda Region is fielding an excellent crop.

Smartcane BMP continues to gain momentum, with another farm accredited in mid-May and several others close to achieving accreditation. It is so pleasing that the region is experiencing the increased engagement. The increase in hectares accredited will be a useful tool for your organisation to utilise for the benefit of all producers.



INNISFAIL

The CANEGROWERS Innisfail office been operating in 'shut-down' mode as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Extension staff have operated from their homes and continued to initiate contact with growers. With the easing of restrictions, extension staff are resuming on-farm visits under strict protocols. Growers have welcomed the return of this interaction.

Persistent showers fell across the district in the early half of May. The official pre-season crop estimate is 78 tonnes per hectare, much better than last year's average of just under 70 tonnes per hectare, but well short of the five-year average.

The estimate puts the tonnes under Cane Supply Agreements to South Johnstone at 1,720,524 tonnes, with 287,000 tonnes to be crushed at Mulgrave Mill, leaving 1,433,524 tonnes to be crushed at South Johnstone Mill. Crushing is planned to get underway no later than 16 June, weather permitting.

Nine growers who supplied cane to Tully Sugar in 2019 have signed rolling three-year Cane Supply Agreements with MSF Sugar and will commence supplying South Johnstone Mill this season. Three of those growers were former suppliers to South Johnstone Mill and the other six are growing cane in the El Arish/Feluga areas.

MSF Sugar will use a combination of road haulage and delivery to the established rail network for the cane. Chairman of CANEGROWERS Innisfail Joe Marano and Manager Wayne Thomas have met with the growers to welcome them as suppliers to South Johnstone mill.

TULLY

Hopes of an early June start for crushing have been dampened by recent rainfall over the district. Falls of over 400mm were recorded in four days in the Tully township, while Bulgan Creek (10km out of town) received more than 600mm in the same period. The result was minor flooding in the Tully River and Banyan Creek, and some lodging of cane. Rain in May is not uncommon, with monthly falls of over 400mm recorded between 2010 and 2014, and 800mm in 1964. It will now require a dry sunny period to allow planting to recommence and the harvest to start.

The Annual General Meetings of Tully Cane Productivity Services Ltd and Tully Cooperative Ltd were conducted under a hybrid model to conform with the COVID-19 distancing requirements, with small groups and individual members linked through a video conference. The meetings proceeded as scheduled and went well.

On the farm front, the 2020 crop is on track to be above the average yield and should exceed 2.4 million tonnes. Harvesters, mill and growers have additional planning and protocols in place to conform with COVID-19 requirements and minimise the risk of disruptions.

HERBERT RIVER

Parts of the district commenced planting in May and many more growers were contemplating it until the weather changed. Rain fell across much of the district in mid-May with more forecast for the end of the month. Even though the weather has interrupted planting, it's not all bad news, with the rain providing a much-needed boost to the 2020 crop.

The schedule thus far is to commence crushing on 16 June, weather permitting, with a predicted finish date in mid-November. The estimated crop for 2020 is 4.16 million tonnes, excluding seed.

The Herbert River office reopened on 25 May. If you need to attend the office, please make an appointment so we can limit the number of people inside at one time.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River will be launching its member website on 1 June. The website will contain specific information on transport, payroll, fair fuel prices and a lot more information growers require to operate their businesses.

BURDEKIN

In preparation for the 2020 season, Wilmar commenced the first of its scheduled steam trials in the Burdekin at Inkerman Mill, as this mill is to be the first cab off the rank when crushing commences on 2 June.

That said, the district has recently experienced rain and with more wet weather on the horizon, it's possible the start to the crush could be delayed.

Growers in the district have more or less finished their planting with only a few stragglers to come in as a result of

having to wait to harvest beans before planting. The situation was also impacted by a reduction in the number of planting contractors when compared to last year.

The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads have reopened testing for HR licencing. The district was grateful that the Queensland Government brought forward this testing after representation led by CANEGROWERS.

AgForce recently commenced a marketing campaign for new members in the Burdekin and whilst at this stage we

Continues next page ►

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CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

BURDEKIN (Continued)

are not aware of any growers looking to change camps, CANEGROWERS Burdekin is pleased to welcome some new members who have decided to join the statewide CANEGROWERS family as a result of our clear focus on the sugarcane industry, which they felt would be a better fit for them.

In closing, here's hoping that the wet weather will not delay the season start for too long, as everyone is raring to get the crush underway and put some of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus behind us.

Seeing the crushing get underway and begin the steady conversion of 8 million tonnes of cane into raw sugar would bring some feeling of normality back into the district.

PROSERPINE

The Proserpine office has remained open during the COVID-19 restrictions and is eager to assist members with any issues in the lead-up to the 2020 crush.

Preparations for the harvest are well advanced and the mill is scheduled to commence steam trials on 17 June and remains on-track to start crushing operations on 30 June.

Regrettably, the 2020 crop is slightly below expectations at 1.62m tonnes as a consequence of the drier monsoon season. While most of the district has benefitted from some persistent light coastal showers over the past month, which may provide a boost in tonnage, rainfall for the year-to-date is almost 50% below the ten-year average.

There has been a noticeable increase in early planting activity this year. Disappointingly, SSP are finding some RSD infected seed cane. Growers who have not yet planted are urged to call SSP to have their seed source tested.

MACKAY/PLANE CREEK

Start dates and crop estimates for this season's sugarcane harvest have been announced for our region.

Mackay Sugar plans to begin crushing at Racecourse Mill on 3 June, followed by Farleigh on 5 June and Marian on 8 June. Wilmar's Plane Creek Mill will get away on 23 June.

Crop estimates are on a par with the 2019 crop. Mackay Sugar's estimate is just under 5 million tonnes. Plane Creek has an estimate of 1.23 million tonnes of cane.

These tonnages are quite reasonable considering the weather conditions affecting the crop's progress up until Christmas. Drought took its toll and very little growth was seen in the young crop last year, where it did not have the benefit of irrigation water. Fortunately, rainfall since Christmas has given growers good conditions that have seen the crop do better overall than expected.

COVID-19 PUTS TRAINING ON HOLD

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, CANEGROWERS Mackay has had to put cane haulout training on hold this year.

For those growers who are employing new seasonal workers, we have compiled a *Safe Tractor Operations Booklet* to assist growers in inducting their new workers.

This booklet has been derived from information previously delivered within the haulout course, as well as additional information from Farm Safe Queensland and Work Safe Queensland. It may assist growers with meeting the safety obligations for their workers.

In addition, of course, growers will have to be mindful of COVID-19 health requirements on their farms.

OBJECTION TO LAND VALUATION

CANEGROWERS Mackay has written to the Valuer General objecting to increased valuations from local Councils for farmland in the Mackay/Plane Creek regions. Our objections have detailed a number of points including:

- No evidence of genuine sales to suggest or support a significant increase in cane farm values from 2016-2019. The terms of trade within the sugar industry have in fact declined since 2016 and market prices and sugar price outlook were depressed on the date of valuation in October 2019. Prices in October 2019 were 50 per cent below those of October 2016, the date of the previous valuation.
- The apparent inappropriate reliance by the Valuer General on rural residential/lifestyle blocks to determine unimproved values for cane farming blocks. This is not in accordance with the Land Valuation Act.
- The speculation that the purchase of Mackay Sugar by Nordzucker will necessarily have a positive effect on the value of unimproved values for cane farming blocks.
- The summary dismissal by the Valuer General of 'going concern' sales which we argue form the best basis of showing value.
- Insufficient allowance in the analysis of the sales evidence of the cost to effect improvements.

Despite the objections, the date of effect of the valuation is 30 June 2020. The value of land for rating purposes will therefore stand if no adjustments before that date have been made.

Nevertheless, there is provision under the Land Valuation Act that if the value changes on objection or appeal then refunds must be made.

BUNDABERG

Bundaberg mills will start the 2020 crush on Monday 6 July. Bingera Mill will operate in five-day mode and Millaquin in six-day mode. This will see the drought affected crop of around 1 million tonnes finished by the last week in October. Hopefully we will have an incident and COVID-19 free crush.

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg provides management and facilitates the marketing, receipt and despatch of soybean for the GRAIN IN CANE Cooperative.

For the past five weeks we have been busy with the soybean crop and this year co-op members' crops have been in excess of 1000 hectares across the district. There is around 100 hectares to go and so far we have despatched around 1200 tonnes. Contract prices have been exceptional, with food grade soybean averaging around \$920 per tonne and the lower grade full fat product around \$800.



QCA ELECTRICITY PRICE PATH

Following the release of the QCA proposed 2020/21 regulated electricity price determination for regional Queensland, we were very disappointed that neither the T33 (small) nor the T34 (large) controlled load tariffs were included as standalone tariff options for irrigators.

The agriculture industry has worked extensively with Ergon and Energy Queensland developing and trialling these tariffs and the AER has indicated support in various meetings and reports.

We have met with the Energy Minister Anthony Lynham and requested he use his discretion to enable the implementation of T33 as a standalone tariff for small customers (<100MWh) and T34 for large customers (>100MWh).

We have also requested that he instruct QCA to remove the Solar Bonus Scheme allowance from the gazetted tariffs and reinstate the direction that has been in place for the past three years.

Continues next page ►

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CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

ISIS

Preparations for the 2020 harvesting and crushing season are well advanced. It is anticipated that the start for Isis Central Sugar Mill will be early to mid-June with an estimate of approximately 800,000 tonnes.


While the COVID-19 pandemic has caused some uncertainty and challenges for the sugar industry generally, several local implementation measures should see the local 2020 crushing season proceed without interruption. This district is following the latest guidelines for growing and harvesting as provided by CANEGROWERS and available on the website.

Climatic conditions have seen a drier than average April and May across the district, which has meant irrigators are still working flat out. Growers are being encouraged to maintain their soil moisture status in the absence of rain and it can be seen that the crop has benefited where growers have taken advantage of 'out of allocation' irrigation water from Paradise Dam.

The dry conditions have been good for the harvest of local rotational soybeans. With prices remaining strong, growers should see a good return on harvest.

Isis Productivity Ltd continues to provide growers with a full range of agronomic crop services. These services include plant and soil disease testing, soil sampling and associated nutrient management recommendations, fallow and variety management, clean seed distribution and irrigation and energy management support. Remember, early planning and timing of these activities will help deliver better productivity outcomes.



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MARYBOROUGH



ROCKY POINT

Rocky Point Mill is expected to start the crush from 13 July 2020, pending the cogeneration plant being operational. The Cogen plant has only been operational for 15 days this year due to breakdowns and difficulty accessing fuel to burn, but we are hopeful that once it recommences operations later this month, all will run acceptably. The current estimate for the area is 320,000 tonnes.

The district's soybeans have all been harvested with dry conditions continuing.

The cane crop could do with more rain and a good drenching would be welcomed at this point.

Land Valuations in Rocky Point have increased on average by 55%. We are in the process of objecting to these steep increases.

Rocky Point is also about to start participating in a Fire Ant Self-Management program, whereby the Fire Ant Eradication Program has agreed to supply interested growers with a limited quantity of free bait to spread themselves, under specific reporting and follow-up terms agreed with the program's science department to aid the collection of data on the effectiveness of the product.

We've had some good news over the past few weeks. Not only have we seen an easing of some COVID-19 restrictions, but we've also received some light coastal rain with more on the horizon.

A new Sugar Research Australia cane variety is coming online for 2021, known as SRA29. It suits our conditions and will increase choice for growers, particularly dryland growers.

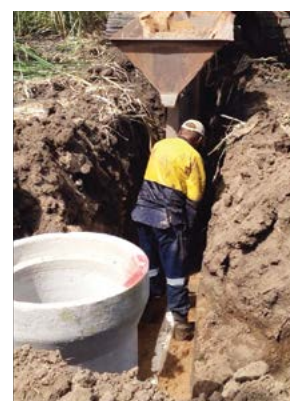
MSF Sugar is currently collating estimates for the upcoming season and planning meetings with the board have commenced.

So far, this year has been anything but ordinary, so with a couple of months to go before we start harvesting, it's best to be prepared.

If you operate equipment shared with other people there will be a greater need to clean and sanitise access points and operating points (steering wheel, gear stick, keys, buttons, etc). Also, social distancing isn't going away any time soon, so you may be required to use multiple vehicles for travel to and from work and around farms. Take the time to review your systems and adjust for the new hygiene requirements.

Please contact the office if you have questions or need some guidance.

Pictured: Bryce Cronau with new variety SRA29.



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CANEGROWERS POLICY UPDATE



Mick Quirk

Environment and Sustainability Manager
CANEGROWERS

Top grower questions on water quality and the reef

The programs and policies that target water quality from farms raise concerns and questions amongst growers about the logic and evidence on which they are based. In particular, water quality effects on coral reefs appear to be grossly exaggerated, given catchment water primarily affects inshore areas and the vast majority of reefs sit outside this zone. Further, studies show that climate change, not water quality, is the driver of any reduction in coral growth rate.

Growers want to look after the health of their farms and their local environments but seem to be the target of most of the government regulation and other intervention. This attention to farm water quality appears to be well out of proportion with its importance to the health of coral reefs.

We recently asked CANEGROWERS district organisations to compile the concerns and questions that members most often raise and we found that these issues could be sorted into seven main groups:

1. The health of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and the main drivers of this.
2. The extent of any influence of catchment water quality within the GBR lagoon, especially related to dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN). These questions relate to the spatial extent, the duration, the causal mechanisms and the evidence for these.
3. The extent of water quality monitoring, both within each catchment and within the GBR lagoon itself, and the availability of this data.
4. The relationship between farming practices and water quality - how this varies with location and time of

year, what are the trade-offs between profit and water quality, and why reef report cards are not based on industry best practice.

5. The risk from pesticides and how this risk is assessed.
6. Confidence in the science, including the current procedures for independent review and critical evaluation, and options for improving grower confidence in the science.
7. Reef policies and communications, including the extent to which policy and communications are actually based on strong evidence versus political expediency.

These questions are important and the concerns expressed are reflected in CANEGROWERS' submission to the Senate Inquiry on Reef regulations.

There is a lot of relevant information on these questions in various reports and papers. However, this information is only really useful to growers once it has been critiqued and combined in a way that is balanced and informative, and that neither ignores nor exaggerates the uncertainties.

Over the next few months, we will develop responses to each of these questions. These will be independently reviewed and considered by our Environment and Sustainability Committee to ensure they are clear, practical and balanced. These resources will be shared with members and they will also inform and influence the policy positions, actions and communications of CANEGROWERS. ■

Growers want to look after the health of their farms and their local environments, but seem to be the target of most of the government regulations and other interventions. This attention to farm water quality appears well out of proportion with its importance to the health of coral reefs.



Burn Ashburner

Senior Manager - Industry
CANEGROWERS

Continuous improvement of SIX EASY STEPS good news for growers

CANEGROWERS leadership and participation in the area of nutrient management research has culminated in the launch of a new SIX EASY STEPS TOOLBOX to help growers better determine more precise nutrient applications.

For many years, there has been a view held by some that simply changing the yield potential number in the SIX EASY STEPS calculation to match the block yield potential would give the optimum nitrogen application for each block. This belief was fueled by some research in sugarcane, which suggested that in certain circumstances reducing N application on low yielding blocks was justified.

This fitted the water quality agenda, with less N applied and therefore less N in runoff. A no-brainer for water quality and thus 'block yield potential' became the environmental mantra.

On the other hand, SIX EASY STEPS guidelines have been developed based on significant trial work and science and are tried and tested over many years in different regions. A no-brainer for the industry.

In order to address this conflict, in 2017 CANEGROWERS launched a project called *Better alignment of nitrogen inputs to crop requirements*, with the objective of:

1. Identifying factors that can affect N supply and/or crop responsiveness; and
2. Exploring the evidence for changing nutrient N recommendations due to these factors.

This project, which provided the opportunity for all the different research to be tabled and evaluated, determined that there was insufficient evidence to change the first four steps of the SIX EASY STEPS guidelines.

However, there were circumstances where there was sufficient credible evidence that refining the nutrient application (N

in particular) could be considered. This resulted in a Sugar Research Australia project to develop tools for on-farm refinement of nutrient management within the SIX EASY STEPS and ultimately led to the development of the recently released SIX EASY STEPS TOOLBOX.

This project was completed in conjunction with some very knowledgeable and senior researchers and practitioners from SRA, the Queensland Department of Environment and Science, CANEGROWERS, University of Southern Queensland, University of Queensland, and Farmacist.

The toolbox covers guidance for refining nutrient inputs in specific situations including late season ratoons, final ratoon crops, high performing sites, following legume crops, waterlogged soils and using mill by-products.

This aligns with steps 5 and 6 of the SIX EASY STEPS and is generally very site specific and often requires significant experience to assist in making an informed decision.

Another result from the CANEGROWERS project was the formalisation of the SRA SIX EASY STEPS Advisory Committee. The role of the committee is to, "ensure that meaningful and scientifically sound additions are made to the SIX EASY STEPS program and toolbox". This means that stakeholders can have confidence in the SIX EASY STEPS tools they choose, use and/or promote for specific on-farm circumstances.

These are indeed pleasing results, which after many years of misunderstanding will hopefully provide a clear path to one set of nutrient guidelines and less opportunity for the waters to be muddled.

More details can be found on the SRA website sugarresearch.com.au/growers-and-millers/nutrient-management/ ■

CANEGROWERS leadership and participation in the area of nutrient management research has culminated in the launch of a new SIX EASY STEPS TOOLBOX to help growers better determine their precise nitrogen application needs.

Warren Males

Head - Economics
CANEGROWERS



WTO action against Indian export subsidies - what's happening?

It seems like forever since Australia, with the full support of CANEGROWERS and the Australian Sugar Milling Council, first called for India to be held to account for its excessive domestic support for sugarcane production and its use of prohibited sugar export subsidies.

Our request was and is straightforward - we want India to bring its excessive subsidies into line with the commitments it made in the WTO. Most legal processes appear to be, and from a commercial perspective, are slow. WTO processes are no exception. Australia first raised the issue with India in 2018 and, together with Brazil, escalated the concerns in February 2019.

When India took no firm action in response to these initial concerns Australia, joined by Brazil and Guatemala, asked the WTO Dispute Settlement Body to establish a panel to resolve the dispute.

As is normal in WTO disputes, India blocked the initial requests for a panel. The panel was established on the second request.

At the time, Australia, Brazil and Guatemala sought a single panel to review their claims, each dealing with essentially the same subject matter and filed at the same time.

Claiming the matters were distinct and separate, India did not agree to the establishment of a single panel and the WTO was left with no option but to establish three panels.

Thankfully, the same panellists were appointed to each, and Australia, Brazil and Guatemala reserved their rights as third parties in each other's actions.

The depth of international concern over India's agricultural support structure is such that the United States, European Union, Honduras, Russia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, El Salvador, Panama, Canada and China all reserved their third party rights in the three proceedings.

Once appointed, the panel quickly got to work. It received the parties' first written submissions and began examining in detail the factual and legal claims in preparation for its first meeting. This meeting was postponed when the COVID-19 pandemic brought international travel to a standstill and, with Switzerland severely affected and health a primary consideration, the WTO postponed all in-person meetings.

The good news is that the panel has not suspended its work on the case and is continuing to work to understand the issues and interact with the parties. It is well placed for the processes to proceed expeditiously as soon as that is allowed.

The Australian Government, working closely with Brazil and Guatemala, is taking the case very seriously. Growers can be confident that Australia is making well documented and supported arguments, both in Geneva and directly to the Indian Government in New Delhi.

Standing up for growers, CANEGROWERS is devoting significant resources to supporting the case in Australia and is working closely with industry colleagues in Brazil and Guatemala to ensure coordinated action.

Removing India's illegal sugar subsidies will bring value to all CANEGROWERS members and the wider Australian sugar industry.

The case is clear. We call on India to resolve the issue diplomatically, rather than wait for the inevitable WTO umpire's decision. ■

Australia's written submission can be found at: www.dfat.gov.au/trade/organisations/wto/wto-disputes/Pages/summary-of-australias-involvement-in-disputes-currently-before-the-world-trade-organization

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Males', written over a light blue background.

Standing up for growers, CANEGROWERS is devoting significant resources to supporting the WTO case. Removing India's illegal sugar subsidies will bring value to all CANEGROWERS members and the wider Australian sugar industry.



Aspects of Legal Liability for Cane Fires

With the 2020 crushing season soon to begin, the lighting of cane-related fires will once again be a 'hot topic'.

Pre-harvest fires are largely confined to the Burdekin district these days, but for various reasons there are circumstances in almost every area that require occasional burns.

Even more common is the burning of tops and trash after harvest in most districts.

Regardless of whether the fire is before or after harvest, there are serious duties and responsibilities associated with lighting fires.

There is also potential exposure to legal liability for adverse consequences resulting from lighting fires, whether they be for civil claims for personal injury, property damage or other economic loss, or penalties for breach of government regulations.

LIGHTING FIRES

As a general rule, under the State Government's *Fires and Emergency Services Act* (the Act) the lighting of most open fires is only allowed if you have a permit issued by a local fire warden.

Local authorities also have the power to make local laws regulating the lighting of fires.

Some cane supply agreements also have cane burning conditions.

CANE BURNING NOTIFICATION

The sugarcane industry enjoys special provisions which give growers the authority to burn without a specific permit issued by the fire warden, provided certain minimum conditions in the Cane Burning Notification are followed.

The notification issued under the Act makes it clear that a cane grower must obtain a permit from a fire warden to burn sugarcane or tops and trash if the grower is unable to comply with the conditions of the notification.

Growers can apply for a Permit to Light a Fire from the fire warden regardless of whether their farm is eligible for burning under the notification.

Growers must apply for a permit if they cannot meet the conditions of the notification.

PROTECTION AGAINST CIVIL LIABILITY

The Act provides a very significant level of legal protection for growers who burn in accordance with a permit or notification.

If a grower lights a fire in accordance with a permit or notification, providing the grower has not been reckless or malicious, they are protected from civil legal claims for loss or damage.



By Chris Cooper,
CANEGROWERS
Legal Advisor



GENERAL CIVIL LIABILITY LIMITATIONS

Whilst the protection from civil liability contained in the Act appears comprehensive, there are many circumstances where such protection might be challenged.

Protection will only be available where the grower has fully complied with the permit or notification. Protection won't be available if the grower has been reckless or malicious.

I am sure there would be plenty of my colleagues willing to make arguments on behalf of their adversely affected clients to try and get around this form of statutory immunity from liability.

If a grower cannot rely on the protection afforded by the Act, then the liability will be determined by applying the usual rules around negligence and reasonableness and duty of care.

A grower will have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to prevent loss or injury or damage being suffered by neighbours arising from a fire on the grower's property. A general approach is that whoever lights the fire owns the outcome.

If a neighbour suffers loss and the grower cannot rely on the statutory protection then liability will be determined by considering whether the grower took all reasonable steps to control and prevent the spread of the fire.

The facts and circumstances of each case will determine the outcome, but there is a likelihood that if a fire escapes then the grower who lit the fire will find it difficult to defend a claim for loss.

OTHER LIABILITY ISSUES

Apart from a civil liability for loss or damage, growers may be prosecuted for a breach of the Act if they light a fire without

a permit or contrary to the conditions of the notification. Environmental and local council laws also continue to apply.

ACTUAL EXAMPLES OF GROWERS' EXPOSURE TO LIABILITY

1. A grower in the southern region was sued by a neighbouring bowls club for damage to the artificial bowling green from floating embers from a cane fire. The court case was eventually settled between the insurers.
2. In 2019, a grower/harvesting contractor was prosecuted under the *Work Health and Safety Act* for breaching the primary duty of care owed to an employee who was injured in a cane fire. The grower pleaded guilty and was fined \$35,000.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Fire is an essential business management tool but the use of it comes with duties, obligations and risk. Growers should ensure they have applicable permits and/or comply with notification when burning.

In any case, all reasonable steps should be taken to control and prevent the escape of the fire and ensure the burning is carried out in a proper and safe manner.

Finally, growers should always ensure they hold comprehensive liability insurance.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any member wishing to discuss any aspect of legal matters should contact their local CANEGROWERS office or call me on Free Call 1800 177 159, for free initial legal advice. ■

Welcome to the 2020 harvest

The 2020 crush is upon us and CANEGROWERS has got your back!

CANEGROWERS has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the 2020 harvest kicks off as planned and runs as smoothly as possible.

While none of us could have anticipated a global pandemic or the impact COVID-19 would have on society, CANEGROWERS has approached this as we do any other problem facing the industry:

- Understand the issues
- Find the solutions
- Seek grower and industry feedback
- Use our networks to advocate for government support where necessary
- Work with the industry to implement solutions and communicate it back to growers

A great example of this is the resumption of heavy vehicle drivers' licence testing.

At a time when growers need to employ haulout drivers for the harvest, the State Government suspended driver testing due to the risk of spreading COVID-19.

This decision had the potential to seriously impact this year's harvest, with many districts in need of haulout drivers - the Burdekin alone estimated about 60 for the season.

Thankfully, through the advocacy of CANEGROWERS, working with the Queensland Government and putting forward suggestions which would mitigate the risk of any virus transmission, we were able to resolve this issue and testing resumed on 25 May.

There's no doubt the lead-up to this crushing season has been more challenging than usual. However, CANEGROWERS has remained focused on your needs by:

- Securing agriculture as an essential service during COVID-19 control measures through representing your interests in discussions on supply chain, workplace health and safety, workforce availability and business continuity in discussions with the Queensland Government and Australian Government and through our membership of the National Farmers' Federation and Queensland Farmers' Federation;

- Convening a sugar industry working group to coordinate COVID-19 responses;
- Negotiating Cane Supply Agreements, including an agreement for Tully members who used the arbitration provisions under the Federal Sugar Code of Conduct to break an 18-month deadlock;
- Offering independent information and education on marketing for forward pricing through CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Services and Cost of Production tool;
- Advocating for better national transport notices to allow for the movement of heavy and large agricultural vehicles;
- Influencing decisions on the costs of electricity and water including gaining a water price reduction for the Burdekin and a freeze elsewhere;
- Supporting the use of approved herbicides and validated industry systems for fertiliser management on farm;
- Ensuring harvest equity, cane burning permits, biosecurity and environmental issues are addressed and managed.

This is what we do! This is the value of CANEGROWERS - the benefit of having an effective, united voice that is influential.

Membership is not just about a district or a region, it's about the whole CANEGROWERS organisation working together to unite an industry.

An organisation that combines the skills, networks and influence of 13 district offices, the Brisbane office and our grower representatives to resolve problems, knock down barriers and keep the season on track.

We are working for you across the value chain to get your cane harvested, crushed, turned into sugar and exported so you can get on and run your business.

We're a grassroots, member-driven organisation that is looking to the future.

We've got your back! We have had it for generations and wish you a successful harvest for 2020. ■



By Matt Kealley,
CANEGROWERS Senior
Manager - Membership
Engagement & Innovation

FIRST 5 LINES FREE* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

Book online anytime of the day or night at www.canegrowers.com.au or email us at ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au

Next deadline is **23 June 2020**.

* 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, such as farm machinery, etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at \$11 per line incl GST. Only prepaid ads will be accepted.

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Specialising in Used Cane Harvesting Equipment Sales



1997 CASE Track Harvester Komatsu 325 HP engine 6,000 hrs. 15" x 8 blade, raised cab with tilt kit, standard topper.

1995 CAMECO Track Harvester 325 HP CAT engine 1,500 hrs rebuilt engine. Very good condition for age.

BSM 6 Tonne Side Tipper, Single axle unit 23x1x26 tyres.

NEW! 2x CANETEC BILLET PLANTERS 2500 Rubber belt cane feed, Immediate Delivery.

CASE B2500 Billet Planter 2003 model, set up for 500mm dual row, Iorsban tank fitted. Very Good Order.

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IN STOCK NOW 10, 8 & 6 BLADE DIFFERENTIAL CHOPPER DRUMS Suit '05 Cameco to JD 570. Tungsten Hard Faced on Wear Areas. New seal plates, Clamping Bars & Dowels with kit.

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Mossman-Tully

Case 2188 header 20 foot open front, good condition. Ph John: 0409544950.

2004 Cameco Harvester VGC \$150,000 incl. GST. Ph: 0427655168.

2500 kg Komatsu pallet jack. Almost new. Used about 20 times to move fertiliser bags. \$1000. 500 litre steel fuel tank \$500. Mena Ck area. Ph: 0417902711.

2t Stainless steel 3 row Fert box with stool splitter \$15000. 5 furrow Hodge reversible plough \$1200. MF 65 tractor with front end loader \$6500. All ONO. Ph Joe: 0417647002.

JD7400 122hp A/C 4WD High clear tyres \$16,000. MSW Side dresser 3T s/s Fert Bin \$6,000. MF178 Front end loader \$7,000. Fiat 514R High clearance tractor \$5,500. All + GST. Ph: 0408456218.

1x Massey Ferguson 6475 6t side tipping haulout tractor. Also 1x 6t side tipper available. Low hrs. VGC. Can sell separate. Ph: 0740562063.

PH: 1800 899 885

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Australian Design

Herbert River-Burdekin

Drag fertiliser box, 2t capacity, 4 coulters, 2 rear ripper tynes, good condition. \$5,000 incl. GST. Ph Jim: 0438380870.

Billet Harvester. Toft 6000 wheel machine. Half Tracks currently fitted. Excellent condition. Cummins 300 engine. Quick hitch fitted. Ready to cut swinging knife. \$25,000 incl. GST. Ph: 47774966.

Mackay-Proserpine

AUSTOFT 7700, 1990 model, very tidy machine, rebuilt motor, sunstrand track pump motor, new chopper shafts & bearings, new slewpin & bearings, new air con compressor. Track gear is all good. Would make a good back up wet weather machine as well as a nice plant cutter or cut your own. Koumala. \$32000 + GST. Ph: 0428611714.

1x 100", 1x 90", 1x 80" Howard AH Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned. 2x 80" Howard AR Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned. 90" S/H AR Howard. Parts for Howard AR & AH Rotary Hoes from \$50 to \$500. Ph: 49595883 or 0407643441.

Case Cane Harvester 2016 with custom made multiplier \$330K, Iveco Trakker Truck 6x6 with 10T Cane Side Tipper \$130K, 2x

JOHNNY FARMING COMPANY

New Hydraulic Heavy Duty OFFSETS

3 metre width, 28 discs, All bath bearings
\$12,000 plus GST (\$13,200 incl GST) Other size offsets available are 1.8m, 2.2m, 2.5m, 3m & 3.4metres.
3 point linkage offsets available also

New Heavy Duty SLASHERS

2.1 metres width \$3,300 incl GST
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Johnny Farming Company
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or 0407 638 674 (Andrew)
133 Schmidtke Road Mackay Qld 4740

Classifieds

Cane Side Tippers 10T (on 2 axle & 3 axle trailers) \$20K ea, Cane Side Tipper 10T \$20K, Isuzu Service Truck (Incl compressor, tool boxes) \$13600. All + GST. Ph: 0408755453 or 0438755459.

Hard hose irrigator, 400/450m length or space on the reel to extend the poly to 400/450m. Ph: 0490029387.

105 Harvester, good condition, ready to cut plants, brand new rear tyres, \$7,500 incl. GST. Proserpine area. Ph: 0429461240.

John Deere 4640 with trailhaul \$25K; 1995 Austoft Cane harvester \$40K; Bonel Billet Planter \$9K; JCB Fastrac coupled to gooseneck tandem trailer with 4x2.5 tippers \$20K; 6 Cyl Perkins engine coupled to 4x4 ajax booster pump mounted on trailer \$4.5K; Westhill Trash Extractor \$200; Westhill 1t Fert bin \$300; Hodge 4 furrow disc reversible plough \$1K; Cummins 6 Cyl head-new in box \$500; BHC Duster \$100; Montabert 750 Rockbreaker \$4.5K; Montabert 125 Rockbreaker \$2.4K. All + GST. Ph: 0418185663.

Trash incorporator; double row marker with hydraulic ram; double row fertiliser box; stick planter with tank & suson box; 3-row trash rakes; 3-row multi-weeder; cutaways; rippers; disc offsets; grubbers for rattoons and fallow; slasher; cane break pushers; 3-row stool splitter with gal fertilizer box & more. Ph: 0417612883.

PRIME MOVER: 1995 Mack CHR 788RS 6x4, PTO hydraulics, spring suspension, sleeper cab, 18 sp Mack gear box, ball race turn table, UHF radio, GVM 25510kg/GCM 45000kg \$15,000. LOADER: 1993 Komatsu WA470-1, ROPS, 4.2m³ bucket, 21T operating weight, UHF radio \$35,000. All +GST. Ph: 0419700761.

95' single axle, 10 tonne Carta double door elevating bin. VGC. New Tyres. \$45,000 +GST. Ph: 0417427480.

12t self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder. Very good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

6t side tipper on Leyland tandem. Good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

Celli Tiger spike hoe, 2.5m wide with hydraulic crumble roller and oil cooler. Very good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.

6t side tipper Ian Ritchie, Excellent condition \$15,000 + GST. Ph: 0478719294.

2015 Case Track Harvester 8800, Trimble GPS, shedder topper, hyd. adj. fronts 1.5m to 1.85m. Balance valve fitted front suspension;

iFit engineering chopper drums; Glenella Engineering taper locks on chopper gears; Blackey Bisalloy elevator floors; greasing system; Tungsten on front shoes; floating side walls & base cutter discs. Track transporter; 2x6t side tippers; V10 Mercedes motor; Robot running gear. All GC. Ph: 0427617807.

2016 Case 8800 Track Machine, 2200 Hours, EHS 8 Blade Choppers, Trimble GPS, Blackey Bisalloy elevator floors, Standard Topper, 2 speed wheel motors, Pro Rata Engine Warranty. Very tidy machine. Ph: 0428182464 or 0427541030.

2x New Holland T7.185 Auto Command's,

145hp boosts to 185hp, 9,000 hrs approx. each, Ex Carting Tractors, full service history, 4 rear remotes, \$46,000 Inc. each or \$88,000 Inc. for both. Ph: 0428236165.

Bundaberg-Rocky Point

Whole stick planter, Whole stick cutter & Cotton King \$1750 (for all); Trailco irrigator & hose reel \$6,500. Trash incorporator \$10,000. Landcruiser 2002 ute \$18,000. All + GST. Ph: 0419577110.

Laser buckets 10'. heavy duty, 6 hydraulic functions (lift, bowl, apron and tilt x 2 and ripper). Ph Chris: 0741561516.

2x BSM 6t Double Side Tipper Bins \$55,000

Rainfall Report

Brought to you by Sunsuper

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)			Average rainfall (mm)
	Month prior (Apr 2020)	Month to date (1 May-25 May)	Year to date	Jan-May
Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman)	73	169.6	1,400	2,150
Mareeba Airport	39.4	39.2	460	644
Cairns Aero	53.8	151.4	1,092	1,541
Mt Sophia	103	359	1,674	2,470
Babinda Post Office	297.9	0	1,329	3,050
Innisfail	290.2	452.8	2,063	2,511
Tully Sugar Mill	297.5	599.6	2,147	2,933
Cardwell Marine Pde	91.2	222.7	1,320	1,604
Lucinda Township	77.8	283.5	1,532	1,592
Ingham Composite	75.3	215.8	1,524	1,563
Abergowrie Alert	12	48	564	1,054
Townsville Aero	11.2	77.2	740	864
Ayr DPI Research Stn	100	60.4	956	697
Proserpine Airport	35.2	92	684	1,047
Mirani Mary Street	20.3	82	865	1,031
Mackay MO	42.2	123.4	1,020	1,123
Plane Creek Sugar Mill	103.4	0	1,002	1,245
Bundaberg Aero	53.6	14.8	394	561
Childers South	11.8	3.6	317	473
Maryborough	17	36	538	656
Tewantin RSL Park	44.4	82.4	987	882
Eumundi - Crescent Rd	20.2	51.1	1,001	1,003
Nambour Daff - Hillside	35.2	50.6	1,026	1,053
Logan City Water Treatment Plant	11.9	18.2	729	601
Murwillumbah Bray Park	16.5	38.4	1,138	929
Ballina Airport	95.8	210	1,228	915
New Italy (Woodburn)	64	94.6	1,048	739



sunsuper

dream with
your eyes open

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. Weather report sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology Recent Rainfall Tables.

each. LG 6t Single Side Tipper Bin \$8,000. All + GST. Located Childers. Ph: 0401260670.

96 Toft 7000 Rubber GC. 08 Toft 7000 Rubber GC. T6030 New Holland Tractor with 6ton BSM. 115 Maxim Case with 6ton BSM. T603 New Holland Tractor. All in good condition, ready to use. Ph: 0429917799.

Old grey bonel 3 furrow disc plow. Criton Mark 2 Harvester with 135 Massey Ferguson Tractor attached. 2x 6000 Austoft Harvester Elevator Sleys and 1 Ram. Quantity of elevator flights to suit Austoft Cane Harvesters 4000 & 6000. Hydraulic Wheel Motor to fit Austoft Cane Harvesters 4000 & 6000, as new condition. Quantity of commercial pumps and motors to suit Austoft Cane Harvester 4000, 6000 & Mark 1. Diff and Episicals to suit Austoft Harvester Mark 1 and Mark 2. Dyna Power motors and pumps. Quantity of 5 inch irrigation pipes. Topper to suit Austoft Harvesters 6000 & 7000. Ph: 0427598333.

Wanted

Rear tractor tyre, sized 20x8x38 radial. John Deere 7710 or 7700 tractor preferably

2-wheel drive. Mackay area. Ph: 49541174.

Landplane working condition. Ingham area. Ph Rick: 0429182192.

Work Wanted

Experience with seeding and self-propelled sprayers, mostly John Deere. Crops experience incl. soybeans, corn, wheat. Over 2000ha of seeding and harvesting (combine driving s690) and over 4000ha with self-propelled sprayer R4730. John Deere software incl. myjohndeere and operations centre - prescriptions, read maps, etc. Basic machinery maintenance. Willing to relocate from Melbourne. E: brunobergia@gmail.com. Ph: 0499224708.

Looking for a cane haulout operator position in the Maryborough area. Experience includes cane haulout operator, planting cane, spraying, slashing, maintenance, etc. Em: kjangus08@gmail.com

Cane harvester & haul out operator for the 2020 crush. Can do farm work, maintenance, case 7700-8800 and other farm machinery. Located in Mauritius. Em: cyrilgilbert1956@yahoo.com or Ph: +230-57523057.

Property

Pleystowe cane farm. On 2 Lots. Approx 190 acres all up. Teemburra water, 2 pumps & licences, plus 32,000 gallons an hour underground bore. Machinery/irrigation shed. 2x 4" soft hose irrigators, farm lasered, underground main throughout. 2 sidings adjoin farms. Access to farm from Pleystowe School Rd & Formosa's Rd. Does not include 2019 crop. Selling due to health reasons. Ph: 0408733793.

Cane farm Tarakan Road ABERGOWRIE 270 acres freehold Genuine enquiries pls. Ph: 0747774633 or 0408608664.

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. Easy farm to maintain. Ph: Mandy 0408880724.



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