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**COVER IMAGE:** Dean Cayley has streamlined his irrigation energy use. Read more on page 16.



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## Growers well ahead of targets for Smartcane BMP

Queensland's sugarcane growers are ending the year on a high. Nine months after hitting the milestone of 500 accreditations, a 600th cane farm business has been independently assessed as operating at or above industry best practice under the acclaimed Smartcane BMP program.

"This is evidence of remarkable participation and commitment on behalf of growers and I congratulate everyone involved," CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan**.

**"Growers have driven this program to be 18 months ahead of the targets for accreditations."**

"Growers have driven this program to be 18 months ahead of the targets for accreditations agreed to by industry and the Queensland Government as part of its funding support."

The Wet Tropics and Mackay-Whitsundays regions have exceeded their 2022 targets for hectares accredited while the Burdekin region is on track to do the same, meeting its 2022 target this week.

"The 600 Smartcane BMP accreditations cover more than 138,000 hectares of sugarcane farmland in Queensland, equivalent to 35% of the area planted to cane," Mr Galligan said.

**"They are part of the 81% of the industry engaged with the program including growers who are working with advisers and the program facilitators to benchmark their practices, improve record**



**keeping or, if needed, make changes to meet the standards."**

Smartcane BMP is the first program to achieve recognition by the Queensland Government as satisfying its regulatory requirements around environmental practice for the future of the Great Barrier Reef.

"Smartcane BMP has rigour and integrity and is a gold standard program developed and run by industry," Mr Galligan said.

"The world is now looking at our sugar as a sustainable product and we need the Queensland and Australian governments to recognise our industry in the same light.

"It is a shame that amongst this great result government reef report cards continue to misrepresent the efforts of growers and fail to acknowledge the true scale of our industry's commitment to sustainability." ■



## New Year brings new hope for Maryborough growers

Maryborough growers are hopeful a toll crushing agreement between MSF and Isis Central Sugar Mill will soon be in place, helping secure the future of the industry in the southern Queensland district.

"The mills are saying it's all good and an agreement will be in place soon," CANEGROWERS Maryborough Chairman **Jeff Atkinson** said.

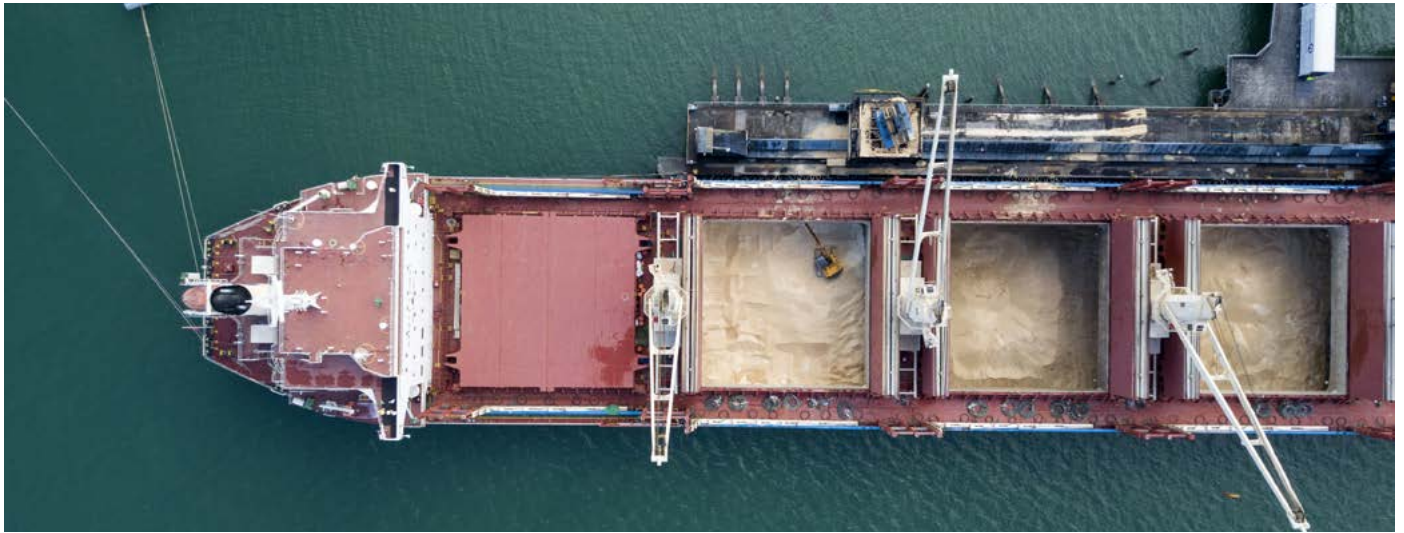
"As it stands, they've signed a Heads of Agreement to proceed with toll crushing from 2021. We're yet to see the detail of the toll crush agreement, but we're hopeful that it will go ahead as promised."

Groundwork has also commenced on a \$5m transloading station at Childers, which is necessary for toll crushing to occur. Cane will be hauled from Maryborough to Childers by road, before being transferred to bins for transport to the factory by rail.

"It's a pretty big job, so I'm glad to see work underway," Mr Atkinson said. "We only have about six months until the harvest starts up again, so we really can't afford to have too many delays."

CANEGROWERS and the Australian Sugar Milling Council are calling on the state and federal governments to provide funding to ensure this vital infrastructure can be completed.

"It is time for the state and federal governments to step up to the plate and give greater certainty to the sugar industry in Isis and Maryborough," CANEGROWERS Chairman **Paul Schembri** said. ■



"Although dressed up as an export subsidy, this is in fact a direct payment to farmers."

## India announces new sugar subsidies

CANEGROWERS has expressed its disappointment at the Indian Government's announcement of another round of sugar subsidies, saying the price supports, although reduced, will put downward pressure on the world sugar price, negatively impacting Australian growers.

"We're extremely disappointed that India is continuing its excessive sugar price supports and subsidies," CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri said.

"Indian subsidies have hurt the world sugar prices over the past five years – costing Australian growers and millers \$300-400 million per year.

"And while the announced 2020-21 subsidy is lower than in previous years, it will still have a negative impact on the world price."

Unhappy that payments for the 2020-21 season have been set at a little over half the previous year's subsidy, Indian growers were also disappointed with their government's announcement.

The reduction could be an indication that India is responding to the Australian WTO action, Mr Schembri said.

"It will be important for the Australian Government to maintain momentum on this case while it is also addressing the concerning current trade situation with China.

"Indian domestic price supports which create this situation still need to be addressed – this is the underlying problem which promotes excess sugar production in India.

"We do not oppose the Indian farmers being paid what they are owed, but India must abide by its WTO obligations and stop its excessive sugar production and export subsidies," Mr Schembri said.

CANEGROWERS Head of Economics, Warren Males, questioned the timing of the subsidy announcement on 16 December, just days after Australia, Brazil and Guatemala made the opening statements in their joint WTO action against India's subsidies.

"The timing of the announcement is to be noted " Mr Males said. "It comes just after the action against India has commenced at the WTO meaning this latest tranche of subsidies doesn't fall under that action."

Mr Males said the Indian Government is attempting to disguise a direct payment to growers, in contravention of its WTO obligations, as an export subsidy.

"Although dressed up as an export subsidy, this latest Indian subsidy is in fact a direct production price support - i.e. a direct payment to farmers, not an export subsidy." ■

*Pictured: Container ship unloading sugar shipment.*

# INDUSTRY FINDS NEW ENERGY AS 2020 SEASON ENDS

After a challenging 2020, Queensland's sugarcane crush came to a successful conclusion in December, with a significant increase on the 2019 crop.

A total of 29.3 million tonnes of cane were crushed across Queensland's 13 cane-growing districts, up around 900,000 tonnes on 2019 figures.

"That increase can largely be put down to more favourable growing conditions in the north compared to 2019, when the early onset of the wet season had a detrimental impact on the crop," CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri said.

"It's worth noting that while the weather was somewhat kinder to growers in the north of the state, the southern cane-growing region is still in the grip of a terrible drought.

"Now that the harvest is complete, we're hoping the predicted La Nina event brings some much-needed relief to growers in those districts."

New South Wales growers cut approximately 1.75 million tonnes of cane for the season, bringing the Australian crop total for 2020 to just over 31 million tonnes.

Mr Schembri thanked all sectors of the industry for pulling together to get the crop off in a particularly difficult year that saw growers, harvesting crews and mill workers forced to operate under COVID-19 restrictions for much of the season.

"I thank the growers for their ongoing dedication, the field crews for their harvest work and mill workers for processing our sugarcane.

**"Call it revitalisation, renewal or whatever you like, we are ready and 2021 will be our year to take it on!"**

"As an industry we have worked together this year to ensure we remained on track and on task as COVID-19 disrupted the rest of the economy."

Despite the closure of two southern region mills during 2020, the industry has a long and prosperous future ahead, Mr Schembri said.

"While sugar production will remain at the heart of what we do, the time is right for sugarcane to be taken seriously as the feedstock for products beyond edible sugar crystals.

"The community is focused on the need for renewable energy and products that are environmentally sustainable – every year we grow around 400,000 hectares of sugarcane that can deliver on these needs.

"We have to find opportunities for our industry in this," Mr Schembri said.

"While we must work with government to achieve our goals, we cannot sit back and wait for government to shape agriculture's destiny. We, as a sugar industry and agriculture more broadly, must do it ourselves.

"We have started down this road with two meetings in late 2020 of leaders from across the whole industry supply chain to work on a joint vision for the future.

"Call it revitalisation, renewal or whatever you like, we are ready and 2021 will be our year to take it on!" ■



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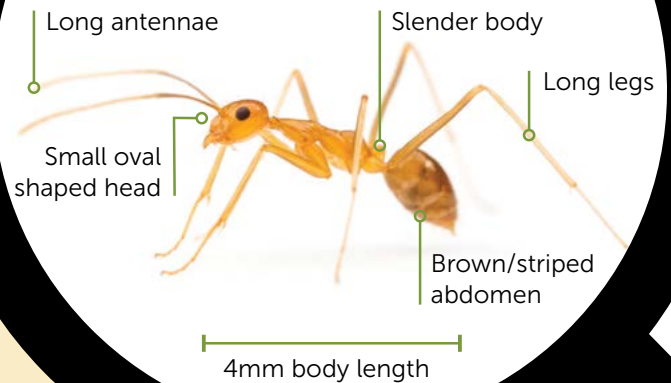
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## Distinguishing a yellow crazy ant from similar species

### Yellow crazy ant *Anoplolepis gracilipes*:

- Very long legs and antennae
- Frantic movement when disturbed
- Slender golden body, brown abdomen
- Sprays acid, doesn't bite



### Meat ant *Iridomyrmex* spp.:

- Shorter antennae and legs
- Large square head
- Bites but does not spray acid



### Green tree ant *Oecophylla smaragdina*:

- Long legs and antennae
- Green abdomen and head
- Sprays acid and also bites



### Funnel ant *Aphaenogaster* spp.:

- Shorter legs and antennae
- Brown solid, stocky body



### Strobe ant *Opisthopsis* spp.:

- Shorter legs and antennae
- Large abdomen, head and eyes
- Moves in a stop-start (strobe) motion



### Carpenter ant *Camponotus* spp.:

- Short legs and antennae
- Large stocky body, often golden or brown



e | [yca@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:yca@wtma.qld.gov.au)

w | [wettropics.gov.au/yellow-crazy-ants](http://wettropics.gov.au/yellow-crazy-ants)



## Industry unveils vision for the future

Leaders from across the Australian sugar industry have met for a second time, gathering in Brisbane in December to agree on a working vision for the future of the industry.

"Sugar Plus is that vision," said CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan**. "It envisions a bright future for our industry. A future that is vibrant and transformative - where growers and mills work cooperatively to sustainably produce sugar and bioproducts at the heart of our regional communities."

**"We have the potential to become a driving force in Australia's growing sustainable energy sector."**

"Sugarcane has a fantastic ability to trap the sun's energy. By unlocking that energy through more than just sugar crystals, we have the potential to become a driving force in Australia's growing sustainable energy sector."

The Industry Leaders Forum involved Director representatives from CANEGROWERS, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, Australian Cane Farmers' Association, and SRA.

In a communique released after the December forum, leaders expressed their optimism for the industry's future.

*'Through foresight and innovation, the Australian sugar industry has demonstrated its resilience through many challenges and its ability to grasp opportunities,' the communique says.*

*'Building on the vision, the aim is to enhance our sugarcane and sugar production efficiencies, and supply chain infrastructure, to secure a prosperous long-term future, and sustainably meet the needs of our Australian and global customers, and our regional communities.*

*'We must work together, and with government, to stabilise the industry and achieve improved productivity and profitability.'*

Leaders also recognised a longer-term opportunity to position the industry at the centre of the renewable economy through research and policies that can underpin and create commercial opportunities.

*'Our organisations are now identifying priorities to bring the vision to life, including:*

- *A unified strategy that recognises the industry's existing contribution and future potential, and to*
- *Assess the policy and financial barriers to greater investment in bioproducts, to bridge the gap between what is technically possible, and what is commercially viable.*

*'We have committed to meet regularly in 2021 to progress industry priorities, and to maintain regular communication with industry and government stakeholder.'* ■

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<sup>1</sup> AUSTRALIAN SUGARCANE NUTRITION MANUAL June 2019 Chapter 21 : Silicon (Si) 91

<sup>2</sup> Results may vary based on various climatic and soil conditions Trial work completed by Dr Graham Kingston's from 2014 to 2016 Bundaberg QLD

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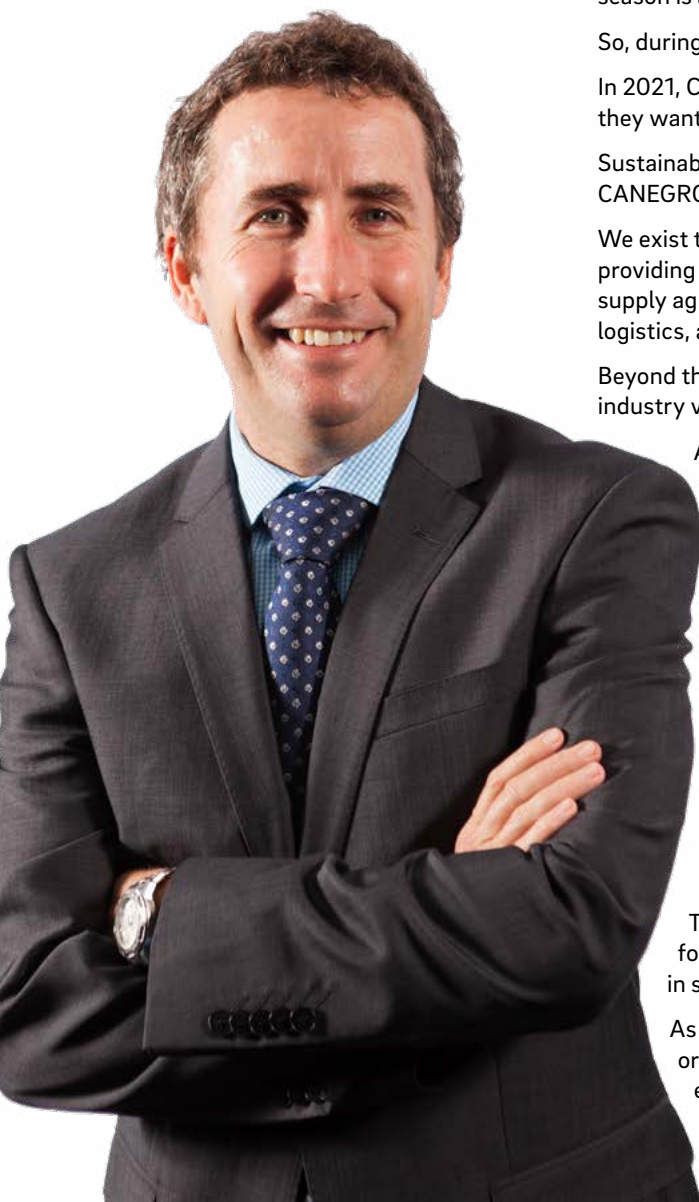
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# CEO COMMENT

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By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS



## AN INDUSTRY BUILT BY GROWERS NEEDS THE GROWERS' VOICE

A new year provides many opportunities. If for no other reason than the turn of the calendar, we all generally spend a little time in the New Year examining where we are in our work and personal lives.

Farmers are very attuned to a regular review of how their business is going.

The seasonality of farming means that the opportunity to review and plan for next season is a prerequisite. It simply cannot be avoided.

So, during this time of reflection, I want to plant a new seed in the mind of many.

In 2021, CANEGROWERS will ask growers and their families to consider what role they want to play in their industry, longer term.

Sustainably running a complex farming business is challenging enough, but CANEGROWERS is here to help.

We exist to support growers in the practicalities of managing their business by providing services that meet those needs - not least of which is negotiating cane supply agreements, but also supportive tools around sugar marketing, transport and logistics, and the cane analysis program.

Beyond these services, which go to the heart of day-to-day operations, we have an industry vision.

A vision that looks at the perspective of the whole industry and considers how we can advance together by understanding and influencing others.

Whether our target audience is the community or politicians or international trade forums, our role is to work with growers and bring a collective effort to the complex problems that affect us all.

Many of us have an interesting opinion or great idea that, if executed, could literally change the lives of other growers or even the course of our industry.

If you have a desire to influence the future of your industry, I encourage you to take this time at the beginning of 2021 to think about how you want to see your dreams become reality.

Our future will be informed by the past, but it will be determined by the leading voices of our industry who wish to forge a path to success for all.

This year will be the year that we ask those voices to speak up. In whatever form it may take, we will ask people to consider how they wish to participate in setting a new and evolving path for their industry.

As we move through the year, if you think you have something to contribute or wish to position yourself for a leadership role in the run up to our 2022 elections, then now is the time to start those conversations.

CANEGROWERS will continue to support our existing, new, and emerging leaders, because for you there is not only a place, but an opportunity to make an impact. ■



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## Young farmers ready to Step UP!

Next Gen's Case IH Step UP! conference for young growers is set to return in 2021 with the two-day event scheduled for Bundaberg on 9-10 February.

Earlier this year, organisers were forced to abandon plans for the 2020 conference just days out from the event due to the implementation of state-wide COVID-19 restrictions.

It was the second time in three years the biennial conference had to be canned, with the 2017 event postponed when Cyclone Debbie struck.

"It has been a different year to say the least, with COVID-19 throwing new challenges into our ever day lives," Next Gen Officer Gerard Puglisi said.

"While our conference could not go on, it became evident that the agricultural industry is an essential service and our farmers became more appreciated than ever."

As the name suggests, the conference is geared towards younger growers, but organisers also encourage older growers and industry professionals to come along and share their knowledge.

"This conference is ideal for younger participants from the sugar and other agricultural industries, established farmers who are keen to pass on their skills and knowledge, research and extension professionals, policy makers and agricultural suppliers," Mr Puglisi said.

The Next Gen program has been developed in response to a major challenge the sugarcane industry is facing regarding its main asset, the next generation.

"The industry has identified a need to encourage and support younger participants into a career in agriculture, specifically in the sugarcane industry," Mr Puglisi said.

"This challenge is across all aspects of the sugar industry, farming, harvesting, extension, research and milling. It is also important to ensure the more established participants are encouraged to transfer the wealth of their knowledge to the incoming generation."

The theme of the conference will be centred around future-proofing a farm.

The content will be progressive, addressing topics such as precision farming, agricultural engineering and technology, innovation, research and development, best farming practice, sugar marketing, succession planning, and financial products and planning.

Registrations and sponsorship opportunities are now open. For further information visit:

[www.nextgenstepup.com](http://www.nextgenstepup.com) ■

*Pictured: Next Gen officer and Mossman cane grower Gerard Puglisi.*



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Next Gen's Case IH Step UP! Conference is back, again, in 2021 and will be held in Bundaberg Queensland. The content will be progressive, addressing topics such as precision farming, agricultural engineering and technology, innovation, research and development, best farming practise, sugar marketing, succession planning and financial products.

**CASE III**  
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# FROM THE CHAIR

*By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS*

## NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW HOPE

2021 is now upon us and like every new year, it brings fresh hope of a better season ahead for the Queensland sugar industry.

Recent years have tested the resilience of cane growers, but we have always shown an amazing capacity to start a new year on a foundation of hope and expectation.

2021 will be a critical year for our industry.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) action by Australia, Brazil and Guatemala, challenging India's sugar subsidies, should yield some result from formal hearings held in December. In fact, we expect a verdict from the WTO panel in early 2021.

While this journey has been long, with the initial application made in 2018, the result will hopefully be worth the wait.

All that Australian sugar growers are seeking is a world price that reflects the costs of efficient producers – not a world price that is the product of subsidised surplus sugar being dumped on the market.

Our high exposure to the world price in recent years has prompted the industry leadership to review our current circumstances and develop a plan for the future sustainability of our industry.

Around 94% of our industry revenue is reliant on the sale of raw sugar. Other major competitors, such as Brazil and Thailand, have a more diversified income base, where other income streams compliment their sugar revenues.

In recent months, industry associations CANEGROWERS, Australian Cane Farmers Association, Australia Sugar Milling Council, and Sugar Research Australia have held meetings to discuss our future.

It has been pleasing to see that despite some differences that exist between these bodies, there has been a genuine willingness to work together for the greater good of the industry.

There have been moments in our history where the industry has shown a capacity to work together – this is one of those moments.

Whilst there is a lot more work and consultation yet to be done, nothing is being ruled in or ruled out as a strategy at this time.

To be clear, it is envisaged that the mainstay of our industry, the production of raw sugar, will remain at the heart of our business model.

The journey to revitalise the Queensland sugar industry will be a long one, but sometimes the first step can be the most crucial step.

Disappointingly, two Queensland sugar mills, Bingera (Bundaberg) and Maryborough, have crushed their last season.

Bingera Mill had crushed continuously for 150 years and Maryborough for 125 years.

Mill closures are always emotional events, as mills tend to be at the centre of communities in which they are located and their closure inevitably results in the loss of jobs, some of which have been in families for generations.

Equally for the farmers, mill closures can give rise to uncertainty about the future.

In the case of Bingera, the cane will be deployed to Bundaberg's remaining mill - Millaquin.

The closure of Maryborough Mill is more complex, as the existing cane from Maryborough will need to be transported by road to the Isis mill.

However, if this is to happen, it requires an investment in infrastructure to make for an orderly transfer of cane.

Isis Mill, ASMC and CANEGROWERS are calling on the state and federal governments to provide some funding to build the necessary infrastructure.

This financial assistance makes good sense for the regional economics of Maryborough and Isis.

A report commissioned by CANEGROWERS last year found that the sugar industry in Maryborough alone accounts for around \$100 million of regional economic activity.

One hundred million dollars of regional economic activity is not to be shrugged off. Any investment by the state and federal governments will be returned many times over in substantial job retention and regional economic health.

It is often said that politics is the art of the possible – this request for assistance is far from impossible.

It is time for the state and federal governments to step up to the plate and give greater certainty to the sugar industry in Isis and Maryborough. ■



# Spotted anything unusual?

## NOTHING WILL PROTECT YOUR CROP BETTER THAN A GOOD HARD LOOK

Growers have an important role in keeping watch for exotic pests, diseases and weeds that could devastate the Australian sugarcane industry.

Early detection and reporting is the key to protecting farms, industries and the communities that rely on them. Every moment lost harms our chance of successful eradication.

If you spot anything unusual in your crop please call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. The call is free (except from mobiles).

Visit [phau.com.au/industries/sugarcane](http://phau.com.au/industries/sugarcane) for further information and a list of the top priority cane pests.



**Look, be alert, call an expert**



# BIG WIN FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT IRRIGATORS

A concerted effort to better understand and quantify irrigation energy use and identify irrigation inefficiencies on Bundaberg region farms caught the attention of judges at the Energy Efficiency Council's National Energy Efficiency Awards 2020.

---

BY CINDY BENJAMIN

The awards recognise and celebrate excellence in energy efficiency, energy management and demand response across Australia.

In the agricultural sector, Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) sponsors the Best Agricultural Energy Efficiency Project Award, which was taken out this year by the multi-industry Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group (BRIG).

BRIG partnered with local cane growers, the Cayley family and Bundaberg Sugar Services in an efficiency-first approach to farm irrigation energy management, with a real-world demonstration on the Cayley's 150 hectare farm at Alloway, south of Bundaberg.

*"We would be struggling to keep water up to the whole farm."*

In 2016, the Cayleys commissioned Bundaberg Sugar Services to conduct an energy and water-use audit to assess the water holding capacity of the sandy loam soil, collect data to demonstrate likely efficiency gains, and flow test the pumps supplying water to a 40 ha section of the farm.

"The audit showed that the high-pressure water winch system we had in place could not deliver the 50 to 60 mm of water that the cane crop required every six or seven days to maintain peak growth rates in summer," said Dean Cayley. "Winches also have a high energy demand and water application efficiency is low in wind conditions above 7 km/hr."



*"It now takes less than half the time to irrigate this block, and power usage has been cut by around 75%."*

The audit recommendations included replacing the three high pressure winches with a single low pressure lateral move irrigator to irrigate approximately 37 ha, leaving the remaining 6 ha furrow irrigated.

Armed with information from the audit, Dean and his father **Neville** engaged **Ian Loeskow** and the team at Sunfam to design an energy and water efficient system for the block.

"Ian recommended the type of irrigator, sprinkler size and the optimal timing to achieve the production potential of the block," said Dean. "The lateral move irrigator has replaced 21 winch runs, saving us time and money."

Since it has barely rained in the region since 2017, Dean is aware that the installation was very timely and has saved their business from additional stress.

"The cane and legume break crops would have really suffered without this new system," he said.

"And we would be struggling to keep water up to the whole farm. Our allocation has been dropping and without aquifer-filling rain soon it will fall again this summer."

The Cayleys chose an automated lateral move irrigator with a 230m long boom. The irrigator cart is located at one end of the boom and travels along an 800m run before slowly turning itself around to water the other side of the block.

The diesel motor on the cart uses about one litre of fuel per hour to run the 15 kW generator that operates the electric drive mechanism of the irrigator.

Watering the 40 ha block previously took 14 days using a combination of flood and water winches, compared to the six days it now takes for the lateral move irrigator to complete a full watering cycle.

"It now takes less than half the time to irrigate this block, and power usage has been cut by around 75%," said Dean. "The winches drew 132 kW of power per night for 14 nights compared to just 60 kW per night for only six nights to water the same area with the lateral."

Dean no longer needs to check winches at night and there has been a significant leap in productivity from the block, from an average 90 t/ha under the old system to 120 t/ha average under the low-pressure boom.

"We've maintained this higher level of productivity over the past four years as a result of more even delivery of water across the block and the ability we now have to get sufficient water onto the crop at peak water use times," said Dean.

Dean and his workers previously spent about three hours a day moving winches on the block, and now he only needs to spend about 10 minutes a day to achieve the same outcome.

Having about one-third of the farm irrigated with this automated system frees up considerable time for Dean to spend with his family and in his contracting businesses.

*Continues next page ►*



*Pictured: (main) Dean Cayley partnered with Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group (BRIG) and Bundaberg Sugar Services in a multi-faceted project that has won the Energy Efficiency Council's National Energy Efficiency Awards 2020. (Below left) the lateral move irrigator cart is at one end of the 230 m boom and moves along an 800 m track, watering 20 ha on one side before turning itself around to water the other side of the block.*

*“Having an audit is a great way for growers to see the savings they can expect before they invest.”*

*Pictured: tests of the water distribution have shown that when the machine is set up to deliver 50 mm, it will reliably apply 49 mm to 53 mm across the length of the boom, even in windy conditions.*



The maintenance of the low-pressure system is cheaper than maintaining the winches and the diesel generator only requires basic maintenance during the year.

The boom and pipes on the irrigator are all poly-lined to protect the machine from the bore water, which would otherwise corrode the pipes within about eight years. Having the lining in the pipes should protect the irrigator for the full 20-year lifespan of the machine.

This installation also provided an opportunity to upgrade the underground pipe infrastructure delivering bore water to the block. Over 500m of 150mm underground pipes were replaced with new lines of 200mm PVC pipe to carry the volume required to operate the low pressure irrigator.

The Cayleys were successful in obtaining a 0.25% interest rate reduction through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and Westpac Bank to assist with the purchase and installation costs of the project.

Dean recommends that any growers interested in energy efficient systems contact CEFC to access their financial incentive products.

The irrigator has proven its worth in both sugarcane and legume break crops. The Cayleys grow mainly peanuts and soybean in rotation with cane, both of which are sensitive to moisture stress.

To minimise or eliminate moisture stress on the crops, a soil moisture probe from Bundaberg Sugar Services has been installed in the block to monitor the

crop's water use and ensure optimal growth conditions are met.

This has meant that Dean has been able to capitalise on the high value pulse crops in recent years, achieving maximum production per megalitre of water applied, and producing high value grain.

Bundaberg Sugar Services installed a moisture probe on the Cayley's block as part of their network of probes in different soil types at various locations around the district that growers can access and use the data to help make decisions regarding irrigation timing.

The irrigator is then set to deliver the required amount of water to refill the soil profile without run-off. Tests of the water distribution from the lateral have shown that when the machine is set to deliver say 50mm, it will reliably apply 49mm to 53mm across the length of the boom, even in windy conditions.

Ian Loeskow, Sunfam said they have been involved in the design and installation of about four or five low pressure lateral or pivot irrigation systems each year since 2017 in the Bundaberg area.

"Most of the systems have been installed on areas of around 30 or 40 hectares, similar to the Cayley's installation," he said. "The price of cane in recent years has been a factor in uptake as growers have been cautious about large investments."

"Having an audit of the existing system done by Sugar Services is a great way for growers to see the savings they can expect from a new installation before they invest," he said.

"These systems are suitable for use in many horticultural and legume crops as well as cane, and so the rewards can also come through increased yield and grain or fruit quality."

Dale Holliss, BRIG company secretary said the company has been working on three fronts to improve the affordability of energy for irrigation in the region – price, energy productivity, and off-grid options.

BRIG is about to launch a fourth work stream of aggregating electrical requirements and taking that demand to market.

"Work stream 2 is all about energy productivity and that is where the Cayley Farms project fits," said Dale, who is also manager of CANEGROWERS Bundaberg.

"BRIG has undertaken over 20 audits across the Bundaberg region and we encourage all growers to have an audit done to identify any opportunities there may be to improve their energy productivity."

The audit process considers agronomic parameters, soil hydrology, irrigation practices and equipment to provide the grower with recommendations for systems that will suit their farming operation and provide improved energy productivity outcomes.

The current low interest rates and financial incentives, such as further rate reductions through the CEFC, make this a good time to look into energy and water efficient equipment that could reduce farm operating costs and improve production. ■





# QSL MARKET UPDATE

Current as of 18 December 2020.

## Sugar



- Technical-based selling has outweighed the positive macro and fundamental factors in December as the March 2021 ICE 11 contract weakened to lows of 14.09 USc/lb.
- ICE 11 trading slowed right down as we headed into the festive season, with open interest and trading volumes shrinking. The latest commitment of traders report shows funds have liquidated some of their position, now holding a net-long position of 213,000 lots.
- From a fundamental perspective, the Indian Export subsidy has finally been announced, targeting 6 million tonnes of exports with a subsidy of 5800 rupees per tonne. As this is slightly below the 6000 rupee market estimate, we have seen ICE 11 values tick marginally higher. The late timing of the announcement means it is unlikely India will be able to export the full 6 million tonnes before the June monsoons arrive.
- As we go to print, the main fundamental driver for the physical market is Indonesia. Indonesian refineries are waiting for licences to be issued by the government for them to be able to import sugar. Once these are issued, we may see some upward pressure on ICE 11 values as the importers scramble to execute their hedges.
- ICE 11 trading range going forward:** Broader trading range estimated to be 13.00 to 15.50 USc/lb.
- Closely watching:** Indian export pace, La Nina weather updates, speculative activity, trading volumes, and overall technical indicators.

## Currency



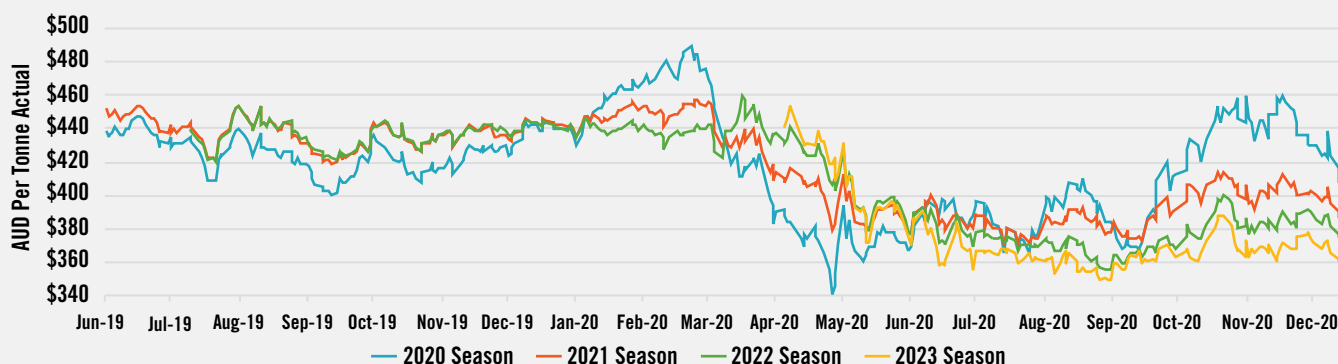
- The Australian Dollar (AUD) continues its relentless grind higher with US equities and commodities continuing to rise higher with positive movements around the COVID-19 vaccine and the first-round releases in the UK and the US. The Australia dollar traded above 75 US cents for the first time since mid-2018, reaching highs of 75.83 US cents.
- Chinese tension still lingers as a political headwind for the AUD. However, with iron prices pushing close to \$150/tonne and that trade flow largely untouched, markets remain pretty unperturbed by the Chinese Government's stone throwing at this stage.
- Most analysts are relatively confident a post-Brexit trade deal will be struck between the UK & the European Union. This should benefit both currencies against the US Dollar, with the AUD potentially getting some spill over.
- Domestically, data flow has been positive, with most major releases better than expectations. Market reaction to these will be minimal while the Reserve Bank (RBA) remains committed to its stance of low rates for the next three years. However, this may change if the RBA becomes uncomfortable with the rapidly strengthening AUD.
- AUD/USD trading range going forward:** 0.7300 to 0.7800.
- Risks Ahead:** Australia-China relationships, RBA commentary, COVID-19 news.

## KEY INDICATORS

	18/12/2020	Monthly change
ICE11 Prompt (MAR21)	14.68 USc/lb	-0.53 USc/lb
Brazilian Real/\$US exchange rate	5.08 BRL	-0.31 BRL
Brent Crude Oil	\$US50.76/barrel	+\$US5.8
Ethanol/Raw Sugar Parity	12.53 USc/lb	+0.4 USc/lb
Net Spec Position	213,000 (net long)	-44,000

	18/12/2020	Monthly change
\$AUS/\$US exchange rate	\$US0.7531	+\$US0.0258
\$US Index	90.47	-1.9170
Chinese Yen/\$US exchange rate	6.54 CNY	-0.0206 CNY
S+P 500 Index	3,694.62	+137.08
RBA Overnight Cash Rate	0.10%	0.00%

## RAW SUGAR PRICES



This is a whole-of-season ICE 11 price chart current as of 18.12.20, based on the Target Price Contract's current 5:1 pricing ratio for the 2020 Season and 1:2:2:1 pricing ratio for the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Seasons.

*Disclaimer: This report contains information of a general or summary nature and is based on information available to QSL from many sources. 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. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial, investment advice. You should seek your own financial advice and read the QSL Pricing Pool Terms, which are contained on QSL's website. Nothing contained in this report should be relied upon as a representation as to future matters or that a particular outcome will be achieved. Information about past performance is not an indication of future performance. The information in the report is current as at the time of publication and is subject to change, as the information is based on many assumptions and is subject to uncertainties inherent in any market. 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.*



# QSL GROWER PRICING UPDATE

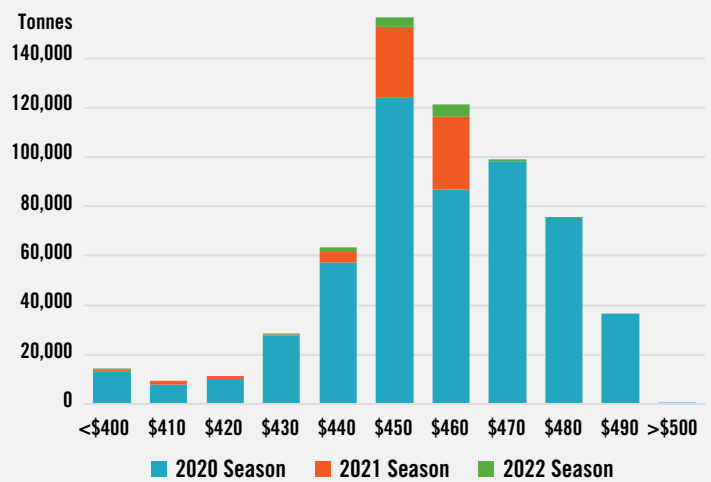


## Grower Pricing



- **New grower-managed pricing option:** The new Grower Floor Price Contract is now live in the QSL App and on the QSL Direct portal, allowing you to target your own 'floor' price to lock in a known minimum return while also receiving 50% of any subsequent prices above your floor. See your local QSL rep or visit [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au) for details.
- Growers have until 20 April 2021 to complete their 2020-Season Target pricing, with the next roll deadline 22 February 2021. Please note: Growers in MSF Sugar milling districts must complete their 2020-Season pricing by 22 February 2021 unless they have been granted an extension by their miller.
- **Video Market Updates:** QSL's fortnightly video updates provide a 5-minute overview of the latest sugar market and currency news. You can find these on the QSL App or by visiting the QSL Facebook page. The QSL Marketing Team is always happy to answer any questions you may have about the market. See your local QSL team to tee-up a chat with our pricing team or ask a question in the comments section of our Video Market Updates on Facebook.

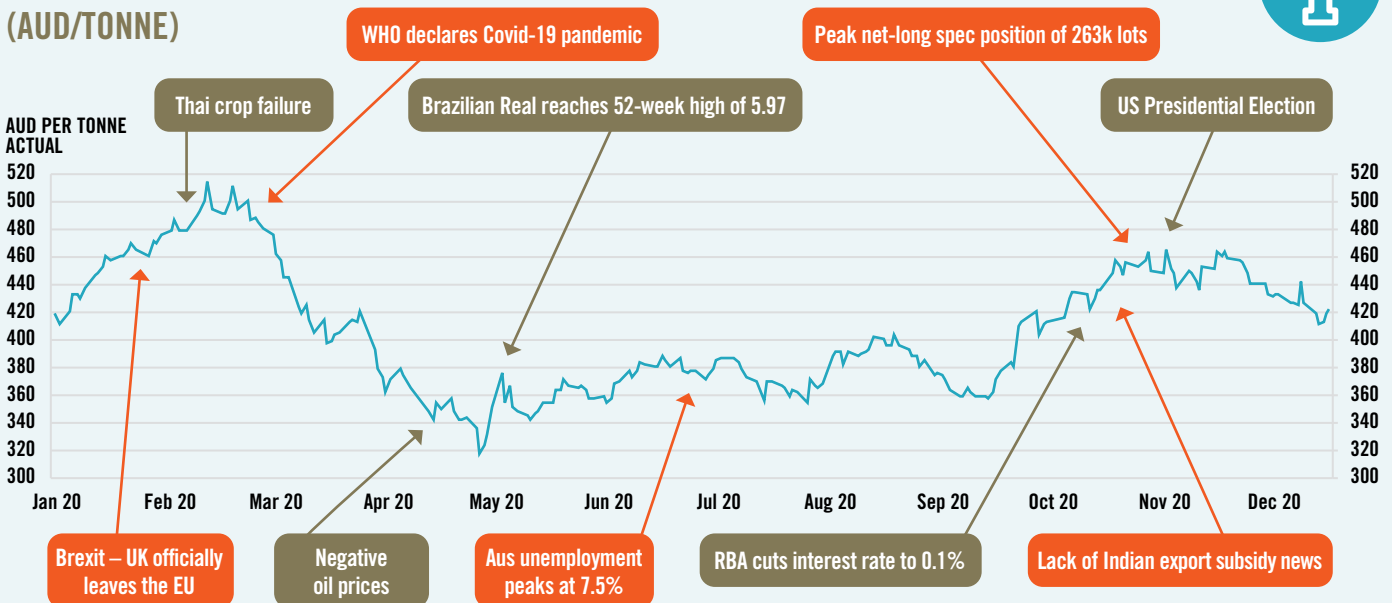
## QSL GROWER-MANAGED PRICING FILLS – 2020, 2021 & 2022 SEASONS



This chart captures all pricing achieved as of 18.12.20 using QSL's Target Price Contract, Individual Futures Contract and Self-Managed Harvest products. Prices quoted at AUD/tonnes actual gross.

## 2020 Recap: The market in review

### ICE 11 PROMPT PRICE (AUD/TONNE)



2020 was a volatile year for raw sugar prices, with many unexpected macroeconomic and fundamental events moving the prompt ICE 11 contract through a \$200/tonne range, from highs of \$514/t to lows of \$318/t. The chart above captures some of the major market influences on the ICE 11 prompt contract from the past 12 months.

# Popular DM ready for retirement

After more than 40 years in the sugar industry, 39 years of them working for CANEGROWERS, industry stalwart **Wayne Thomas** hung up his spurs on 24 December.

Over the decades Wayne has taken on various roles, from working on a yard gang at Victoria Mill, to selling insurance and fertiliser in the Herbert region.

But it is for the final chapter of his career, as District Manager of CANEGROWERS Innisfail, that he is best known.

It's a position he held for more than 19 years, during which time he brought a lot of positive changes to the district, CANEGROWERS Chairman **Paul Schembri** said.

"It's been a pleasure working with Wayne. He has been a great team player, and I don't say that lightly," Mr Schembri said.

"It is easy to be a team player when things are good, but we've been through some incredibly tough times in this industry and Wayne never buckled in those bad times.

"I've never had a single complaint from growers about Wayne's commitment to the cause and I think that is simply outstanding and a measure of the respect that growers have for him."

"He has done his best and fought hard for growers and we very much appreciate that."

Wayne took over the role of District Manager at an extremely difficult time, when South Johnstone Mill was placed into receivership.

He quickly made the role his own and supported local growers through this difficult period. He was also present during the two major cyclones to hit the industry, and worked tirelessly to help growers rebuild.

"I went to Innisfail when it was 'on fire' but I didn't worry about that, all I worried about was whoever wants to be a CANEGROWERS member," Wayne told CANEGROWERS Policy Council members at their meeting in November.

"Those growers who decided not to support the organisation, fine they could do their thing, but my main concern was to look after those growers who did want to be members.

"I think we have achieved that. We have a very good team in Innisfail."

Wayne has always had good strategic visions for the district and was integral in successfully shifting the organisation to a more commercial focus and moving CANEGROWERS Innisfail to its current home at the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre.

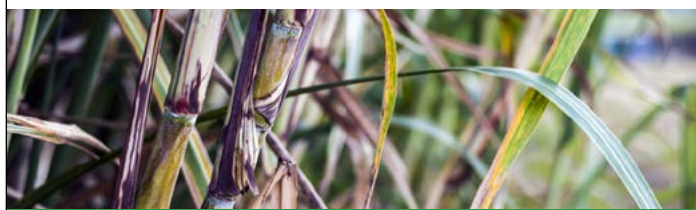
He also started the very successful biennial Innisfail Agricultural Field Day, which has run for the past ten years.

His passion for the industry has seen him devote countless hours to volunteering at the Australian Sugar Industry Museum. During this time, he has captured valuable history from local growers in the form of stories and photographs to ensure that history is preserved.

"Wayne certainly has the industry at heart, whether it is in negotiations with the mill, day-to-day grower issues, or the many hours volunteering at the museum," CANEGROWERS Innisfail Chairman **Joe Marano** said.

"It was always about the industry, never about Wayne. We wish Wayne and **Mary** all the very best in their well-earned retirement in Townsville." ■

*Pictured: (L-R) Owen Menkens CANEGROWERS Vice-Chairman, Wayne Thomas CANEGROWERS Innisfail retiring District Manager, Wayne's wife Mary Thomas and Joe Marano CANEGROWERS Innisfail Chairman.*



## LIME ANALYSIS

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Others 22%

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Others ?

NEUTRALISING VALUE:  
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# Is it time to review your super partner?

If you're an employer, you'd know, that like all Australians your employees want to be financially secure in retirement.

Choosing the right super fund can make all the difference. You want a fund that puts members first with lower administration and investment fees and costs, solid long-term investment returns and flexible insurance options. You want award-winning customer service, great online tools and quality financial advice that's easy to access.

When comparing super funds, it's useful to think about what's important to you and your employees, and what will make a difference to your employee's retirement in the long run.

Here's what to consider when you're comparing super funds:

## Compare performance results

It's important to compare how your super fund performs against the median over the long-term, particularly over periods of market volatility.

## Compare fees

While lower fees and costs are generally good, consider what employees are actually getting for their money. And, don't forget to look at the sum total of fees; including administration fees, investment fees and indirect costs.

## Compare employer support

Are you getting the great customer service, online tools, education resources and support that you and your employees need?

## Compare employee plans

Can your current provider offer the ability to tailor your employee plans specific to your employee base?

## Compare insurance

The insurance market has shifted in recent years and the best competitive premiums need to be considered along with the level of default cover amounts offered with employee plans.

## Compare financial stability

Is your current fund financially stable with a low and transparent cost structure and a strong membership base?

## How does Sunsuper compare?

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Or if you're an employer register via our secure online system in only 5 to 10 minutes:

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Prefer to speak to a member of our team? Call our Contact Centre on 13 11 84 between 8.00am to 6.30pm (AEST) Monday to Friday.

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1. Source: SuperRatings Fund Crediting Rate Survey October 2020. Past performance is not a reliable indication of future performance. Member numbers as at November 2020.

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# Probing the benefits of soil moisture monitoring

As communications technology improves and becomes more affordable, CANEGROWERS is helping members put it to work on cane farms.

On the Atherton Tableland, CANEGROWERS members are using Bluetooth data-loggers to record and access irrigation information, saving growers time and boosting productivity through precision irrigation management.

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BY JOHN FLYNN

In the distance, the giant Mount Emerald wind farm turbines were spinning at a rapid pace as CANEGROWERS Tableland Senior Extension Agronomist Drewe Burgess supervised the harvest of a Sugar Research Australia field trial on the Salvetti family's farm at Arriga.

In the foreground, a centre pivot irrigator continued its gradual crawl across the cane fields, delivering water to the crop on a day of gusty breezes and beaming sunshine.

***"It's just a simple matter of pulling up in your vehicle. You can just hold the phone out the window."***

In a region where weather tends to be dished out in lavish helpings, the combination of long hours of daylight, strong wind and intense heat in the warmer months means high rates of evapotranspiration are a constant companion for cane growers.

Add to that soils that are often free draining and a consistent dry season stretching from the end of winter, through Spring and into the early Summer during the key growth phase for



*"From the end of August through to Christmas, that's the critical period for irrigation and that's the period when crop evapotranspiration rates peak."*

*Pictured: Enviropro sealed-unit soil capacitance probes are hardwired to a Bluetooth-enabled Tierra data-logger which communicates directly with a smartphone. (N.B. The Tierra data-logger pictured is a discontinued model. A new model is available for purchase)*



**Queensland  
Government**

the sugarcane crop, and precise irrigation management becomes essential to maintaining productivity.

As experience has shown, not only on the Atherton Tableland but also in the Burdekin, if you choose the right varieties and get water to the crop when needed, sugarcane grown under controlled irrigation will consistently outperform dryland farming techniques.

"This variety, KQ228, seems to thrive on soils such as we've got here, which is a basalt-derived soil that has high water holding capacity but very good internal drainage as well," Drewe explained as the *Australian Canegrower* was taken on a farm tour to inspect the latest irrigation monitoring technology.

"From the end of August through to Christmas, that's the critical period for irrigation and that's the period when crop evapotranspiration rates peak.

"Normally they start to peak in early November, particularly with the early established crops starting to reach full canopy and you're starting to get into that part of the year where you've got the longest days and plenty of sunshine and heat.

"All the crop really needs is water to make it grow."

Fortunately, the latest irrigation monitoring tool being used by Tableland cane growers is not only helping take the guesswork out of timing irrigation events but is doing so in a way that is both cost-effective and easily accessible.

Utilising funding provided by the Queensland Government's Rural Water

Use Efficiency Scheme (a predecessor to the current Farm Water Futures scheme), CANEGROWERS Tableland worked with technology provider Taindata to establish a network of soil capacitance probes paired with Bluetooth-enabled data-loggers that are giving farmers access to irrigation data with the ease-of-use of a smartphone.

Rolled out with participating growers at ten farms across the region, the system relies on an Enviropro sealed-unit soil capacitance probe, hardwired to a Bluetooth-enabled Tierra data-logger which communicates directly with an Android phone or iPhone.

Irrigation data can be quickly downloaded to an app on the smartphone, then uploaded to a website once the smartphone is within range of an internet connection.

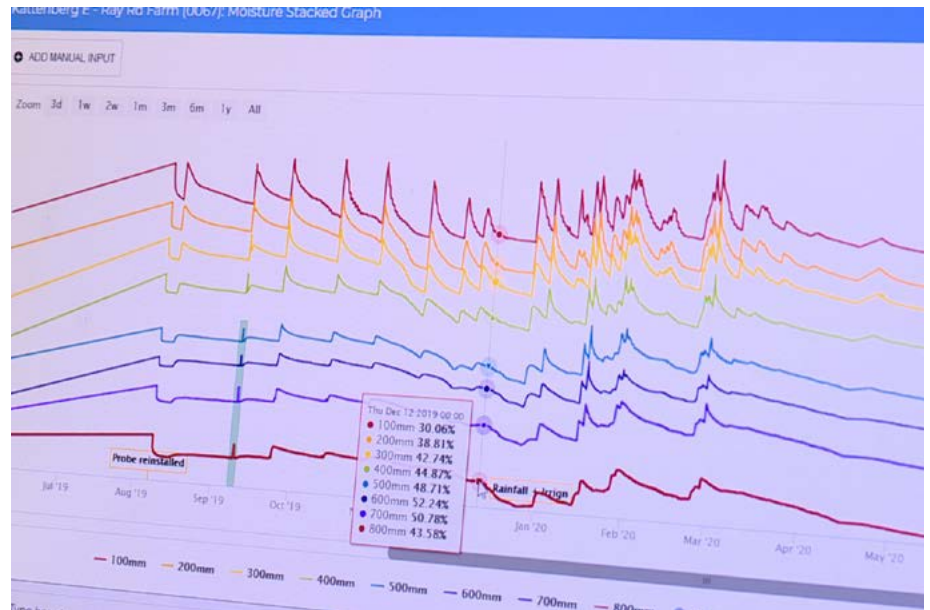
"It's just a simple matter of pulling up in your vehicle, you don't even have to get out," Drewe explained during an on-site demonstration of the technology.

"You can just hold the phone out the window, point it at the logger and as long as you're within fifteen to twenty metres, the phone will connect wirelessly to the logger.

*Continues next page ►*



*"We've got about ten growers involved in this project. But eventually we'll make the data available to all growers."*



"Once it's found and identified the logger, the data will get automatically downloaded to your phone. Once it's on your phone, if you've got adequate internet connectivity, it will automatically upload your data to the internet where you can access the website."

The technology represents a step forward, according to Drewe, on the previous generation of soil probes which relied on a more expensive telemetry system to communicate data, utilised PC-based as opposed to cloud-based software, and required soil probes be removed prior to harvesting.

The Enviropro capacitance probes are buried underground and connected underground to the data logger which sits at the edge of the block.

"We've standardised on an 80cm probe which has eight sensors along the full length of the probe and I install them underground so that the shallowest sensor's at 30 centimetres and the deepest sensor is 100 centimetres," Drewe said.

"Because we can bury them underground, we can also bury the cable out from the edge of the paddock to the logger which means once it's all buried, there's no further need to service that system."

Back at the CANEGROWERS Tableland office in Mareeba, Drewe can view irrigation data from each of the ten farms connected to the system and provide members with reliable advice on crop hydration.

The data sets available to growers include sum graphs that show what water the crop has been using over set periods, along with stack graphs that break down the drawdown of water at each sensor level between 30cm and one metre.

"This is an interesting bit of data because this period through here the grower thought he was putting on adequate amounts of water," Drewe noted while examining charts from one of the local growers.

"But once you see what happens in the wet season and you see how much higher the moisture level is when the profile is full of moisture, you then realise that, no, really he wasn't actually putting on enough water and this period here the crop was using more than he was putting it on.

"It was somewhere during this time that I rang him up and said, 'look, I think you're not putting enough water on, you need to increase it' and he started to put more on through this period."

Stack graphs provide a particularly useful data set for farmers and agronomists to help determine if a crop is sufficiently hydrated, or under stress.

"The greatest benefit the stack graph gives you is it shows you where the water is penetrating into the profile.

"Here, there's a rainfall event and here you can see an increase down at the bottom sensor," Drewe said.

"It tells you where the moisture has penetrated into the profile, which is useful if you're irrigating on a free draining site, you can keep track of where the water is passing beyond that deeper sensor.

"It also indicates when the crop's using water, you can see how deeply the crop is extracting water out of the profile."

All growers connected to the system have web-based access to data from other participating farmers. It is a useful tool, especially in situations where farms may have similar soil types or rainfall patterns during wetter periods.

"We've got about ten growers involved in this project who put their hands up to purchase the probes and the data loggers, but eventually we'll make the data available to all growers in the district," Drewe said.

"Even those who don't have moisture probes can at least look at the data coming from these ten growers, there might be one or more of those sites on a similar part of the district, so those other growers can take advantage of data from that farm." ■

*Pictured: (above) Stack graphs help farmers and agronomists determine if a crop is sufficiently hydrated, or under stress; (right) soil moisture monitoring is not the only trial work being undertaken on the Tablelands. SRA is also conducting harvesting efficiency trials in the district.*







# IN PICTURES....



As anyone who has ever attended a school formal will know, arriving in style is of primary importance. So when it came to choosing transport there was only ever one option for farm-mad Babinda State School student Lachlan "Tractor Boy" Spertino.



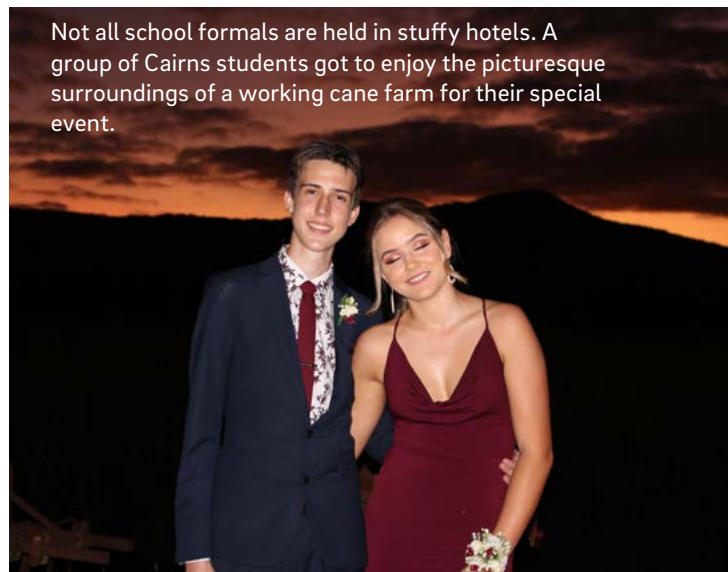
No sooner had the season ended than growers started getting into the festive spirit. Well, some more than others, as evidenced by Rocky Point grower Steven Pahlke's spectacularly adorned harvester.







"Tractor Boy" wasn't the only one rocking up to his formal in style. Matthew Biasi from Ingham's Gilroy Santa Maria College also went full cane grower mode for his graduation celebrations.



Not all school formals are held in stuffy hotels. A group of Cairns students got to enjoy the picturesque surroundings of a working cane farm for their special event.



Photos courtesy of Pine Creek Photography and St Augustine's College.



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Cost-effective Sustainable Soil Amendments

## Improving sugarcane yields through the addition of low cost Calcium Silicate

**Silicon (Si)** may be one of Earth's most prevalent macronutrients in fact it is the second most abundant element in the earth's crust after oxygen, however only recently has it become recognised as a beneficial element for plant growth and development. Its significance for rice cultivation was recognised early by Japanese researchers early in the 20th Century, but due to translation difficulties this information was not made publicly available to the wider scientific community until recently. In recent years the importance of silicon to plant growth has been more widely researched and recognised with many reports of yield responses in a wide range of crops.

**“Silicon deficiencies in the plant reduce the plant's ability to resist disease and pest attack due to a loss of strength and cell structure.”**

Benefits of silicate for sugarcane have been known since the mid-1970s from research across several countries. The symptoms of silicon deficiency in sugarcane are distinctive on the upper side of lower leaves in the canopy develop a white fleck and a bronze freckle which can cover the whole leaf surface (*see photo*). Symptoms tend to develop during the peak growth phase in summer when the soil can no longer meet crop requirements. Commercial-scale field trials in sugarcane with Mineral Mulch applied at 6 t/ha were conducted from 2014 to 2016 in the Bundaberg region in collaboration with Dr Graham Kingston. The results showed not only an improvement in sugarcane health and an increase in stalk height, but also an average sugarcane yield increase of 21% over a plant and first ratoon crops. These observations were seen in conjunction with an increased level of silicon in the leaf tissue.



As sugarcane is a silicon accumulator an average crop can remove between 100 to 175 kg/ha of silicon from the soil per average crop and a very high yielding crop can contain over 250 kg/ha of silicon in the harvested biomass<sup>1</sup>.

Silicate forms although high in silica complex silicates in rocks and sand generally do not supply plant available silicon as its availability to plants is

limited unless the following requirements can be met:

- It must have a relatively high content of silicon.
- Be able provide sufficient water-soluble available silicon to meet the plants needs.
- It must be cost-effective.
- Have a physical nature that facilitates storage/application.
- Not contain any substances that will contaminate the soil.

Many potential sources meet the first requirement however very few meet them all. The best sources contain both calcium and silicate. Silicon availability to plants relies on the release of monosilicic acid from the weathering of clay minerals and certain fertilisers. Mineral Mulch contains calcium silicate which supplies available calcium and silicon therefore making it an ideal source of agricultural silicon and calcium. Mineral Mulch also has a pH neutralization value of 32% for the correction of soil acidity. Inorganic materials such as quartz, clays, micas, and feldspars, although rich in silica, are poor silicon fertiliser sources because of the low solubility of the element in this form.

**Mineral Mulch Calcium Silicate** is a unique product as it contains 27% silicon (Si), 14% plant available calcium (Ca) and a host of essential trace elements, including Iron, Copper, Zinc, Boron and Manganese. Mineral Mulch products have been manufactured with the end-user in mind being both easy to store and apply, best of all they are sourced from 100% sustainable and recycled materials, containing no substances that will contaminate the soil.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on Mineral Mulch or the benefits of calcium silicate on your tree crops please call us on 1300 895 988, email [info@mineralmulch.com](mailto:info@mineralmulch.com) or follow us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/mineralmulch](https://www.facebook.com/mineralmulch) ■

<sup>1</sup> AUSTRALIAN SUGARCANE NUTRITION MANUAL June 2019 Chapter 21: Silicon (Si) 91.



# Agsafe's stewardship programs leading the way in farm waste recovery

*Supplied by drumMUSTER*

Agsafe's drumMUSTER program has now diverted over 40,000 tonnes of plastic agvet waste nationally from going to landfill, or being buried or burned on farms. This equates to over 36 million containers.

"A good thing to understand is that the agvet plastic that we collect and recycle stays in Australia and is recycled back into everyday products." Agsafe's GM Dominique Doyle said.

Recycled plastic from the program is made into goods including wheelie bins, fence posts, irrigation pipes, underground cable covers, bollards and barstools.

Bundaberg farmers have been supporting the program for almost twenty years and are about to collect the 800,000th drum for the region.

Bundaberg Regional Council's David Zoran said "Bundaberg Regional Council is extremely proud to support the drumMUSTER program and would like to thank all the agricultural customers who have made use of the program and adapted their waste disposal practices over the years for a more environmentally sustainable region. The program has enhanced our engagement with the agricultural customers when visiting one of our seven drumMUSTER disposal sites, leading to even better recovery of other agricultural products".

Agsafe also runs the ChemClear program. Where drumMUSTER removes the plastic waste from the agriculture sector, ChemClear removes the unwanted agvet chemicals. A collection is held in each state, on average every two years. Queensland chemical holders took the opportunity to safely dispose of their unwanted agvet chemicals in early 2019, with another collection likely in the second half of 2021.

Matt Leighton of CANEGROWERS Bundaberg said of the program, "ChemClear has removed unwanted chemicals from growers' farms, which is a win for the grower and for the environment".

To date, over 750,000 litres of agvet chemicals have been removed from farms through the ChemClear program.

If you have any unused or unwanted agvet chemicals, then visit [chemclear.org.au](http://chemclear.org.au) and register them for collection. ■

**RINSE THEM OUT  
ROUND THEM UP  
RUN THEM IN**

**Find a *drumMUSTER* location near you**

Visit the **drumMUSTER website** to find the nearest collection site to you. You can also contact Queensland Regional Consultant Colin Hoey on 0428 964 576. Remember, every container counts.

**Look for the *drumMUSTER* logo**

**drummuster.org.au**

**ChemClear**

**drumMUSTER**  
rinse them out, round them up and run them in.

**info@drummuster.org.au  
1800 008 707**

# 600 STORIES OF SUCCESS

By Kate Gowdie,  
Smartcane BMP Manager

Productivity, profitability and sustainability are matched only by the passion, pride and commitment of the Queensland cane growing community.

The Smartcane BMP Program ended 2020 as it started, achieving yet another major milestone – 600 accredited enterprises.

At the beginning of 2020 there were just shy of 500 accredited cane farming enterprises in Queensland, but it took until early-March to reach the long-anticipated 500-accreditation mark.

The expectation was the pace of accreditations would drop off even further as growers began to prepare for the harvest, while COVID-19 restrictions added another layer of complexity to the process.

However, this was not the case. In fact, far from dropping off, accreditations gained momentum, with a further 50 growers successfully undertaking a Smartcane BMP third party audit to become accredited between March and June.

This was a significant achievement for growers and facilitators, who had to

adjust to COVID-19 restrictions such as meetings outside with social distancing applied, travelling in separate vehicles to view cane blocks, communicating via video conferencing, and sharing of records electronically.

By early August, with the crush in full swing, growers had turned their focus to the 2020 cane harvest and the Smartcane BMP auditors finally got a reprieve.

But, despite a longer than usual crushing period for many districts, growers ended the year with a clear focus back on achieving Smartcane BMP accreditation, with Queensland's 600th enterprise accredited in December.

This achievement means that Smartcane BMP accredited growers are now farming 35% of all Queensland cane land to industry best practice or above.

Productivity, profitability and sustainability are matched only by the passion, pride and commitment of the Queensland cane growing community.

As the success of the program continues to grow, so too does the collective voice of accredited growers who are demonstrating, en masse, that their farming practices have sound agronomic, economic and environmental outcomes and truly deserve their social licence to operate.

## NOT YET PART OF THE 600 CLUB?

Contact your local Smartcane BMP facilitator to find out more:  
[www.smartcane.com.au](http://www.smartcane.com.au) ■

*The Smartcane BMP program is supported by the Queensland State Government until 2022.*







*Pictured: More than 100 cane farming enterprises were accredited in Smartcane BMP during 2020. (Pg 32) Ruth, Charles and Kevin Stevens - Plane Creek, (top) Christopher, Gerard and Michael Sherry - Mackay, (left) John Kovacich - Innisfail, (above) Sam DiMauro - Tully.*



# CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

## MOSSMAN

The CANEGROWERS Mossman AGM and End of Season meeting was well attended on 26 November 2020. As there had been no Productivity Awards for the 2019 season, CANEGROWERS Mossman chose to recognise growers who had the highest tonnes of sugar per hectare in 2019 for the Coastal Zones 1-7. We congratulate each of the growers and thank staff of Far Northern Milling for providing the data.

**The winning growers were:**

Zone 1 Daintree – Daintree Farms – **Dick Kerswell**

Zone 2 Whyanbeel – G & M Caltabiano – **Tano Caltabiano**

Zone 3 Miallo – C Fasano & Co – **Glen Fasano**

Zone 4 Mossman – Padovan Harvesting Pty Ltd – **Richard and John Padovan**

Zone 5 Cassowary – Padovan Harvesting Pty Ltd – **Richard and John Padovan**

Zone 6 Mowbray – C Fasano & Co – **Glen Fasano**

Zone 7 Julatten – PJ & MA Verri – **Peter Verri**

And the best 5-year Average Producer was C Fasano & Co – **Glen Fasano**.

Far Northern Milling and Daintree Bio Precinct Ltd provided growers with an update in early December, signing off on their \$8.1m capital and maintenance budget and providing an update on value-add.

They also reported that Foggy, the loco damaged in a collision on the main street of Mossman, had been fully repaired and given a facelift and a new coat of paint. You can check out the latest happenings at the mill by following their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/fnmilling/](https://www.facebook.com/fnmilling/)

Mossman Mill, in preparation for the Christmas celebrations, once again installed the star on the mill stack before the final holiday period shut down in December.

In the spirit of Christmas, CANEGROWERS Mossman chose to support the Douglas Shire Christmas Street Party held in Mossman on Friday 18 December, as there had been no local show in 2020.

The CANEGROWERS Mossman office closed from noon Friday 18 December 2020 and will reopen Monday 11 January 2021. We wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and holiday period.

*Pictured: (left) Growers and guests listen to representative from Far Northern Milling. (Middle) Tano Caltabiano and (right) John Padovan with Matt Kealley, CANEGROWERS Membership Engagement & Innovation Manager.*



## CAIRNS

At the time of writing good weather had prevailed across the Cairns Region, with showers during the evenings and hot days. The crop has responded well and a good foundation for the 2021 crop has been established.

Works on the Southern Access Road are underway. The impacts on those farming adjacent to the highway and the loss of cane production land has become quite visual.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region will lodge a submission to Cairns Regional Council concerning amendments to the

Cairns Plan 2016. Submissions close on the 31 January and any individual can lodge a submission.

The organisation has now presented to 250 school students and shared many positive stories about the industry, including the importance of sugar to the Cairns economy, improved farm practices and the focus on reducing the industry's environmental footprint.



## INNISFAIL

Harvesting operations in the South Johnstone mill area finished on Saturday, 5 December, with crushing completed at 11.00am on Sunday morning.

The final number of tonnes crushed at South Johnstone Mill was 1,483,185, with a further 288,171 tonnes of SJ CSA cane crushed at Mulgrave Mill, taking the total of SJ CSA area cane crushed in 2020 to 1,771,356 tonnes.

The Seasonal CCS for the mill finished at 12.34, but with the inclusion of the CSA cane crushed at Mulgrave, the Payment CCS reduced to 12.2252.

No significant rainfall events had occurred up until 10 December. Scattered showers have provided sufficient rainfall for the crop to advance and generally the cane is looking good, with good leaf growth and stooling out.

The failure of the predicted onset of the forecast La Nina has

caused further frustration for growers, who are required to consider farming operations with forecast rainfall.

Growers undertook harvesting of lower blocks in October at a time which was not suitable for the crop in anticipation of the La Nina, but there has been no onset of early rainfall.

Fertilising has been rushed as a result of the early predictions to avoid having recently fertilised blocks exposed to heavy rainfall. Growers must have better weather forecasts/predictions if they are to manage farming practices under the required BMP.

Wayne Thomas, CANEGROWERS Innisfail Manager, retired on 24 December. Wayne has been associated with the sugar industry for the past 42 years, 39 with the CANEGROWERS organisation and 3 years with the CANEGROWERS supported NQ Fertiliser. Wayne and his wife are retiring to Townsville.

## TULLY

Tully Mill finished the 2020 season on 3 December, crushing 2,463,561 tonnes from 28,210 hectares, with an average CCS of 12.96.

While the season officially started on 11 June, wet weather disrupted the early part of the harvest and the threat of a La Nina event had everyone concerned. As it turned out, the season ended well with both CCS and tonnes per ha above the long-term average.

Recent showers have been good for the plant and ratoons, with additional plantings made for the 2021 season. It's early days, however things are promising. Thanks to all involved in the harvest and crushing. We are all looking forward to a break.

## HERBERT RIVER

Victoria and Macknade mills crushed a total of 4,250,399 tonnes with an analysed seasonal average CCS of 13.19. CCS was down across the board compared to last season but was above the long-term average.

Victoria Mill commenced crushing on Tuesday 23 June and finished on Sunday 29 November 2020 following a 23-week crushing period, with 2,902,442 tonnes crushed for the season.

Macknade Mill commenced crushing on Saturday 2 June and ceased crushing on Sunday 29 November, crushing 1,347,897 tonnes for the season.

The highest CCS recorded for the season was 18.1, in Week 15. CANEGROWERS Relative A pool averaged 13.27 CCS and Relative B Pool averaged 12.97 CCS.

In 2021, we will launch an online CANEGROWERS Herbert River radio station to support the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program under the Reef Trust Partnership (GBRF). It will keep growers informed and entertained with a mix of music, news, interviews and other relevant content. The online radio station will appeal to a 25-54 demographic and operate 24/7.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River held a Christmas dinner for members on 12 December, it was a well-attended night and enjoyed by all.

On behalf of the CANEGROWERS Herbert River board and staff we would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Pictured: CANEGROWERS Herbert River Christmas dinner was well attended by members.*



*Continues next page* ►

# CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

## BURDEKIN

The 2020 season is now behind us with the district crushing 7,905,000 of cane against an original estimate of 8,040,00. CCS came in at 14.60, which was higher than the 14.51 budgeted.

It was pleasing to see the Burdekin achieve a November finish, which was assisted with some cane transfers between mills to help out when some mills experienced performance issues.

Thankfully the much vaunted La Nina, which was announced in early September, did not arrive in time to disrupt the harvest. This weather pattern had a lot of growers concerned about getting their crop off in time.

Now that the harvest is complete we do want La Nina to arrive, as irrigation from the sky, courtesy of mother nature, is a much cheaper option than the one supplied by the Government, which comes with expensive electricity and water costs. Some welcome rain will enable growers to take a bit of time off from their irrigation schedule to spend with family and have a well-earned break.

On the topic of wet weather, the Department of Environment and Science has commenced installing water quality monitoring equipment for 20 sites in the Burdekin and it will be good to be able to get real-time data on water quality heading into and then coming out of the wet season.

### 2021 Season

Plant cane and ratoons are looking good and will flourish when the rain arrives. In December, we had meetings with

Wilmar regarding mill reliability, performance, capital and maintenance expenditure plans. Before the start of the 2020 season, Wilmar conducted pre-commissioning trials before the usual steam trials at Invicta and Kalamia and, coincidentally, these were the two better performing mills for the season. Wilmar will include Inkerman and Pioneer Mills in their 2021 season pre-commissioning trials, and we are hopeful that this, when combined with capital and operating expenditure plans, will deliver an improved reliability rate for these two mills.

Before Christmas, we met with Wilmar to conduct a CSA review. We will also undertake a long overdue review of the Cane Analysis Program (CAP) in late January 2021.

If there is one positive out of the regretful closures of Maryborough and Bingera Mills, it is that it has finally lit a fire underneath the sugar industry to come together through Sugar Plus and focus on working together as one, for both sugar crystal and on other avenues such as bioproducts. Sugarcane is wonderfully efficient at converting and storing the sun's energy and that biomass has so much potential to do more than just sugar crystal.

The Burdekin is a region that has the capacity and willingness to participate in any new projects. We will be putting our hand up to assist in whatever way we can to ensure the sugar industry, which is a great industry to be involved in, has a good future.

## PROSERPINE

Since completion of the 2020 crush, the district has remained very dry and in much need of rain. Some growers benefitted from scattered storm activity, however there has been no significant falls recorded during the four weeks to mid-December.

Despite concerted efforts by irrigators, there are noticeable signs the crop is struggling, particularly in the dryland areas. Now that the La Nina weather pattern has begun, growers are expecting some relief in the ensuing weeks.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine and Sugar Services conducted their joint AGM's last month with a good cross-section of growers in attendance.

As the 2019 Productivity Awards had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting provided a good opportunity to acknowledge growers achievements for the previous year's crop.

Winners were:

Zone A: KE & PH Muller, 15.78 TSH

Zone B: EJ & JM McDonald, 14.93 TSH

Zone C: Dray Pty Ltd, 11.88 TSH

Zone D: ADJ Linnewebber, 13.45 TSH

Zone E: I and G Considine, 15.24 TSH

Producer of the Year was awarded to Ian & Gary Considine (15.16 TSH).

*Pictured: Paul Schembri, CANEGROWERS Chairman, presenting the Producer of the Year trophy to (L) Gary Considine and (R) Ian Considine.*





## MACKAY/PLANE CREEK

While it was touch and go with the weather, the Mackay Sugar harvest was completed on Thursday 10 December, notching up a total of 5,152,207.27 tonnes of cane.

Despite less-than-ideal conditions in the last week caused by heavy falls of rain, and the consequent threat of standover cane, all the crop was taken off.

The finish date was later than ideal but the increased crop size on initial estimates was a positive, together with a smooth operation despite the threat of delays due to COVID-19.

Nordzucker's second harvest was not without controversies, however, and a number of issues remain to be ironed out.

Mackay Sugar Crushing Figures	
Week ended: 14 December 2020 (Week 27)	
Farleigh	1,516,124.02 tonnes
Marian	2,344,242.21 tonnes
Racecourse	1,291,841.04 tonnes
Total	5,152,207.27 tonnes
CCS Week	13.02
CCS YTD	14.12

Meanwhile, Plane Creek Mill crushed 48,381 tonnes of cane in its final week of the season.

That brought the season total to just over 1.23 million tonnes - slightly down on the original forecast due to dry conditions during key periods of the growing season.

Crushing operations were completed at 10.53 pm on Friday, 20 November.

The final season CCS was 14.23.

The highest CCS honour for the last week was shared between a rake of Q183 7R from the Plane Creek productivity area and a rake of Q240 1 R from the Yukan productivity area, both with a CCS of 16.9.

Plane Creek Mill Crushing Figures	
Week ended: 21 November 2020 (Week 22)	
Cane crushed	48,381 tonnes
Season total	1,234,33 tonnes
Average bin weight week	3.75
Average bin weight season	3.82
CCS Week	14.74
CCS YTD	14.23

## BUNDABERG

December finally saw some rain arrive in Bundaberg, with falls of between 14 and 50mm across the region. Hopefully, we will get some more. Many growers are keeping a close watch on their remaining water allocations and trying to get the most from every megalitre applied. By early-December many growers had already applied more than half of their announced allocations.

The rates group (pictured below) met with Council on Monday 30 November to further explain our frustrations



at their complete lack of empathy for the financial stress they have put on many cane growers and indeed the whole agriculture sector.

We need the Council to review the budget and reduce our rates to last year's figures plus CPI. For the Council to pass a budget that had such huge increases on the agriculture industry in the Bundaberg region shows they have absolutely no understanding or respect for the 1,800 or so rateable agricultural entities.

The Council was requested to move the following motion at their next full Council meeting:

***That Bundaberg Regional Council (BRC) rescind the motion that passed the 2020 Budget and recast the Budget so that ALL ratepayers do not receive a rates increase any greater than CPI (Consumer Price Index).***

*Pictured: (L-R) Peter McLennan CANEGROWERS Isis, Joe Lyons BFGV, Tom Marland AgForce, Dean Cayley CANEGROWERS Bundaberg.*

Continues next page ►

## BUNDABERG (continued)

This year's harvest lunch was well attended by growers. Of particular interest was Brian Elmer's presentation, followed by information regarding our Electricity Bill Check service and a wrap up of the 2020 Season.

The dry weather has delayed the planting of soybeans, with a reluctance to pre-irrigate the blocks. This is not a concern at the moment because the main variety of A-6785 has a planting window until the end of December and can be planted into January, though there is a bit of a yield penalty.

Other varieties that could be considered are Hayman and Kuranda, which both have a planting window from mid-December until the end of January. These newer varieties have opened up a longer planting window with little to no yield penalty. Both of these new varieties do have an End Point Royalty as part of the Plant Breeder Rights and is less than \$10 per tonne of grain produced.

The Grain in Cane Co-operative still has contracts at \$750 per tonne guaranteed minimum price and have been notified that any Hayman supplied at edible quality will have a \$50 per tonne bonus due to the end buyers willing to pay more for the grain.

## ISIS

The final bin for the 2020 crushing season was tipped at 1:18pm on Wednesday 25 November. A total of 808,814 tonnes of sugarcane passed through the rollers with an average season CCS of 14.81. This CCS recording was the highest seasonal CCS across the Australian sugar industry.

The final figures for 2020 are 808,814.61 tonnes crushed and CCS 14.81.

The focus now turns to the 2021 crop with growers yearning for some long-awaited rainfall over the coming months.

Irrigation and energy assessments and support for tariff assessments is ongoing to ensure growers are on the best tariff for their individual circumstances and to meet their productivity goals.

As part of a regional agricultural consortium, we continue to strongly advocate on the rates issue and have achieved and completed the following actions on behalf of our members:

- Launched our petition online and in local shopping centres receiving several thousand signatures.
- Gained public and business support which has led to direct contact by the community with councillor representatives.
- Gained support through social media via a video and photograph campaign.
- Responded to Council directly through their Bundaberg Now social media platform combating their "good news" claims about the rate increase.
- Created TV ads which have been launched onto YouTube ads and were on TV.
- Produced bumper stickers, flyers and many media releases.
- Pressured Council resulting in their message shifting from "blaming the State Govt", to "Council can't change" to "Council won't change" the rate increases.
- Encouraged pensioners and the business community to join our rates hike fight.
- Strong ongoing social media traffic on this issue.
- Attempts have been made, and failed, to split the consortium - Council is still not listening to the voices of farmers in this region.

*Pictured: CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Harvest Lunch was well attended by growers.*



### Cane Harvester Parts

## 1800 463 457

## AH 0417 662 137

**neils.com.au**



## ISIS (continued)

Agricultural consortium members met with Council in late November to again call for them to rescind the 2020 budget motion and recast the budget.

We know there has been a specific change to the Local Government Act for COVID-related matters to enable local authorities to effectively make a change to rates after a council budget has been cast. They can do it, but they are choosing not to, so we will continue the fight.

*Pictured: Wallaville Growers Peter & Gavan McLennan fighting for a fair go on rates.*



## ROCKY POINT

Following a long dry spell, Rocky Point received some much-needed rain in mid-December, with an average of 140mm falling across the district and more forecast for the days and weeks ahead. This will hopefully give the cane crop a great start for summer.

The Rocky Point SIX EASY STEPS booklet was launched by SRA on 16 December 2020, following some encouraging results from the two trials which began in 2019.

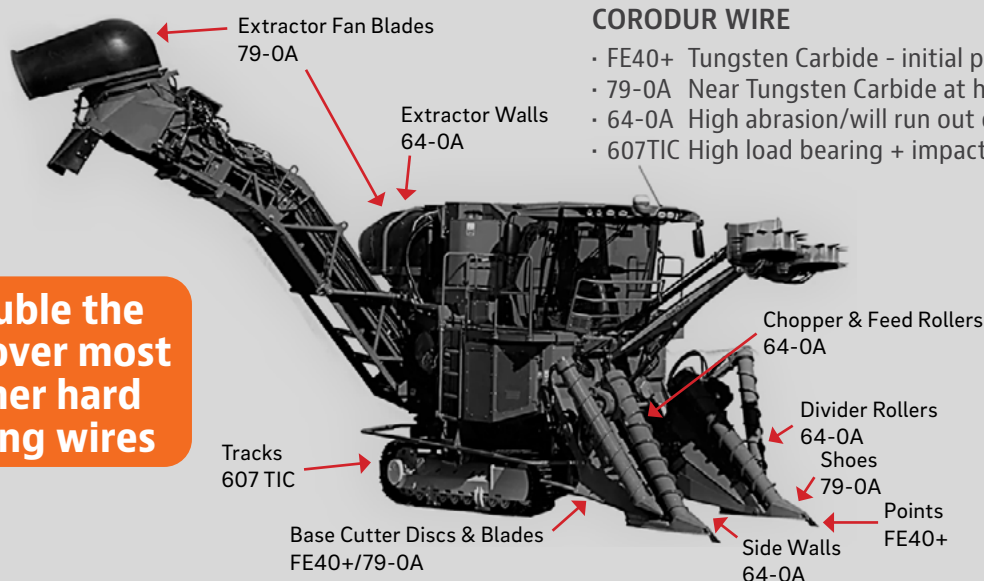
There will soon be the largest planting of soybeans as a rotational crop that the district has ever seen - if conditions are favourable. There are currently 450 hectares of fallow ready for planting and the recent rain will allow planting to begin.

The Fire Ant Self-Management Program is continuing and appears to have been quite successful. We look forward to seeing some project results from Biosecurity Queensland in the coming months.

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# The ACCC - What is it?



We hear an increasing number of references in the media and through industry information to the ACCC. This article outlines what the ACCC is and how it helps the sugarcane industry.

## WHAT IS THE ACCC?

ACCC stands for Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. It is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority.

## ROLE OF THE ACCC

The role of the ACCC is to enforce the *Competition and Consumer Act*. Previously known as the *Trade Practices Act*, this legislation and the ACCC enforcement of it regulates business and commercial activity.

It seeks to ensure that businesses operate within acceptable boundaries of fair and reasonable commercial behaviour towards their customers, competitors, and suppliers. Its role includes ensuring businesses comply with consumer law obligations.

The matters the ACCC deals with include preventing anti-competitive conduct, protecting consumers and addressing misleading and deceptive conduct by businesses.

The ACCC receives more than 200,000 complaints of improper business behaviour each year.



By Chris Cooper,  
CANEGROWERS  
Legal Advisor



## AGRICULTURAL INTEREST

Whilst the ACCC has always governed business activities in the agricultural sector, in recent times it has been much more active in that space.

The Act has been strengthened in certain areas to give the ACCC more powers in matters that regularly arise in agriculture.

## AGRICULTURE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

In 2016, the ACCC established an Agriculture Consultative Committee, which advises the ACCC on agricultural matters.

CANEGROWERS, as the peak body for the sugarcane industry, has a seat on this important committee and is the sole sugar industry representative.

## RECENT ACCC AG ACTIVITY

The ACCC oversees the *Sugar Industry Code of Conduct* and, in a recent review of the Code, expressed support for the Code and even suggested ways it could be strengthened further.

A *Dairy Code* has also been introduced, which the ACCC also oversees. It ensures compliance with the Code and has recently taken action against a dairy processor for failing to abide by the Code.

Following complaints from farmers, the ACCC has also recently taken action against agricultural marketing, sales and service company Agrison.

The ACCC claims Agrison made false and misleading statements about warranties and after sales services.

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN CONSUMER LAW

The Australian Consumer Law currently provides certain protections for consumers who buy goods and services.

These protections apply to goods and services valued up to \$40,000 or otherwise used for personal, domestic or household use.

The Consumer Laws have recently been amended to increase the \$40,000 limit to \$100,000. This amendment, which take effect from 1 July 2021, means a much greater range of goods and services will be covered by these consumer protections.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING POWERS ALSO EXTENDED

The ACCC has recently made a class exemption for small businesses, to allow collective bargaining in a range of circumstances.

Collective bargaining is a very useful tool for growers to get together and negotiate collectively with mills.

My article in the September edition of this magazine explored the benefits of collective bargaining and CANEGROWERS important role for growers. (Read it online here: [bit.ly/2VgKRh2](https://bit.ly/2VgKRh2))

Whilst CANEGROWERS already has ACCC approved collective bargaining powers, this class exemption for small businesses will be available to growers and CANEGROWERS to use in other commercial arrangements apart from dealings with the mill.

## UNFAIR CONTRACT TERMS

The Consumer Law has also been recently amended to make it easier to challenge business contracts that contain unfair terms.

A recent example of these laws in action in the agricultural sector is the Federal Court decision that certain terms of contract between a potato wholesaler and potato grower were unfair and invalid.

The ACCC's increasing activity in the agricultural sector is largely a good thing. If growers do have disputes and complaints relating to consumer issues, please contact your local CANEGROWERS office for advice and assistance.

*(This article contains general advice only. The particular facts and circumstances of each case always need to be taken into account).*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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



# **WE'RE WORKING FOR MEMBERS**

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**CANEGROWERS POLICY UPDATE**





## Mick Quirk

Environment and Sustainability Manager  
CANEGROWERS

### Keeping SIX EASY STEPS at the centre of nutrient plans

The need for whole-of-farm nutrient management plans (NMPs) has become a catch-cry of recent government-funded projects. Industry has supported these projects on the basis that:

1. The plan is built on the SIX EASY STEPS (6ES) program, as this program provides a complete, evidence-based nutrient management plan for each block for the whole crop cycle.
2. The NMP provides the grower with an annual plan for implementing 6ES recommendations across the whole farm in an efficient and practical manner, e.g. through minimising the number of different products that are required.

There is a risk with some projects that the annual implementation plans could undermine the integrity of the block-specific nutrient plans derived using 6ES guidelines.

For example, the annual implementation plan and the nitrogen budget can become the focus, relegating the block-specific recommendations for each crop cycle into a secondary consideration.

Consequently, over time the nutrient rates on some blocks may not match the crop requirements as estimated by 6ES, and blocks will be either under or over supplied with some nutrients.

There is also a risk that advisors or growers will use the annual implementation plan to reapportion the amounts of nitrogen or phosphorus across blocks each year, in response to gut feel or to block attributes such as yield history.

The 6ES program encourages refinement of nutrient rates for specific blocks based on evidence, local experience and sound agronomic guidelines. The 6ES toolbox can be used for this purpose.

However, the focus of reef projects on reducing environmental losses of fertiliser may lead to promotion of simplistic approaches, such as block yield potential, and the reduction of N rates below industry recommendations.

These are not evidence-based approaches and risk significant productivity losses to the grower and, in turn, to the local industry.

The risks outlined above will become even more pronounced with the focus of new State Government regulations on developing annual budgets for N and P applications.

On one hand, this will allow more flexibility for growers to satisfy the regulations - compliance will be more concerned with reconciling amounts of N and P for the whole farm than on a block-by-block basis.

But it may also result in the primary focus of growers, or their advisors, to be on meeting the farm caps rather than meeting the complete nutrient requirements of each block.

The bottom line is that whole-farm nutrient management plans are a useful tool but should not lead to unjustified deviations from the block-specific recommendations of the 6ES program.

The latter is the engine room, and the annual implementation plan simply provides an efficient and practical means to meet the block-specific requirements. ■



There is a risk with some projects that the annual implementation plans could undermine the integrity of the block-specific nutrient plans derived using 6ES guidelines.





## Burn Ashburner

Senior Manager - Industry  
CANEGROWERS

### Some expectations met in 2020

This time last year I listed some expectations for 2020, mostly related to research development and extension/adoption, and I'm happy to report positive progress in a number of areas.

#### Clear wins and positive progress

- The SIX EASY STEPS toolbox has been completed and the advisory committee is up and running. This gives a clear path for good science to be incorporated into SIX EASY STEPS to create more site-specific guidelines.
- An SRA funded life cycle analysis update is in progress. This will assist in understanding the industry's environmental footprint, which could be used for access to markets.
- The formation of Agricultural Innovation Australia has created a vehicle to leverage SRA funding across commodity research projects. Only time will tell, but this may provide the impetus for the use of gene editing technology to create enhanced varieties.
- The new SRA strategic and operational review creates the opportunity to reinvigorate the RD&E system while maintaining the strengths in plant breeding and biosecurity.
- Conditions for ag vehicles accessing critical roads north of Bundaberg have changed. Operators of oversized ag vehicles between 3.5-4.0m wide may travel on critical roads using either a level 1 pilot and an ag pilot, or roadside signage and 1 ag pilot. The option to have two pilots and no roadside signage may seem like a small issue, but it not only makes compliance easier, it also provides practical access with reduced risk in most cases.
- A Cost of Production Tool (available to members on the CANEGROWERS website) has been developed to help growers determine a sugar price that provides an

acceptable return. Training to use this tool is being rolled out in the new year (see back cover of this issue for more info).

#### Issues that did not go according to plan

- The Adoption Strategy being rolled out by SRA, which was going into its second year of implementation, was abandoned. This was due in part to SRA's need to trim the budget and in part to a rethink of SRA's role in extension/adoption. This is now part of the Translation Services in SRA's new Strategic and Operational Plan but, at this early stage, it is not clear how this will work in practice.
- The goal to reduce the industry's dependency on raw sugar and provide growers with a significant alternate income from farmland and sugarcane, without risking mill closure, is complex. Good economic sense is for land to be used to optimise profits. However, where this has occurred in the southern region, land use changes away from sugarcane have resulted in the closure of two mills. CANEGROWERS will continue to support diversification through complementary crops that do not threaten mill viability and diversify income for growers.
- The Cane Burning Notification was not improved during the year as expected. This is partly due to the distraction of the severe bushfires and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services waiting for results of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

The above give some idea of the issues that CANEGROWERS pursues to benefit members. ■

The option to have two pilots and no roadside signage may seem like a small issue, but it not only makes compliance easier, it also provides practical access with reduced risk in most cases.



## Warren Males

Head - Economics  
CANEGROWERS



### We can begin 2021 optimistically

The much-anticipated cricket test series between Australia and India is well underway, and attracting plenty of attention here and across the sub-continent.

The dispute settlement action that Australia, Brazil and Guatemala are taking in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in relation to India's sugar subsidies has also attracted much attention. The case has been front page news for *ChiniMandi*, a leading source of news and information for the Indian sugar industry.

The case against India's sugar subsidies, based on two fundamental concepts, seems clear.

**First**, that the level of domestic support that India provides to its sugarcane producers exceeds the level permitted under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

These price supports are offered by the Indian Central government through the so called, Fair and Remunerative Price for sugarcane. Several Indian state governments offer even higher levels of price support to their cane growers.

India's sugar producers also receive a raft of other supports including production subsidies, soft loans, buffer stock subsidies, so called transport, freight and marketing subsidies and several state-level supports.

These schemes are intended to help India's sugar producers pay the mandated and arbitrarily high sugarcane prices.

**Second**, that India's sugar export subsidies are inconsistent with its obligations under both the Agreement on Agriculture and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

Minimum export quotas, linked to a range of subsidies that are inconsistent with India's WTO commitments, lay at the centre of Australia, Brazil and Guatemala's claims in this aspect of the case.

International pressure on India to change its sugar policy is mounting. In November, the Global Sugar Alliance called on India to drop its controversial sugar subsidies, adhere to international trade rules, and meet the obligations and commitments it has made as part of its membership of the WTO.

Now, almost two years after Australia first requested consultations with India in February 2019, the first hearing in relation to the case has occurred.

It appears the voices for change are being heard in New Delhi. The Indian Government delayed announcing its sugar export subsidies for the 2020-21 season until 16 December. This delay was one factor underpinning the recent strength of sugar prices. When announced, the subsidies were around half of the previous year's level.

India's sugar policy is not the only agricultural policy under the spotlight. India has introduced laws that will remove the guaranteed minimum prices the Indian government mandates for a range of agricultural products.

Taking their tractors to the streets in Delhi, these reforms are being strongly opposed by Indian farmers. Others are welcoming the most sweeping modernisation of India's agricultural sector in decades.

India has a world class cricket team that plays hard and abides by the rules of the game. Like its cricket team, India is a respected country with its own high standards. CANEGROWERS simply asks and expects that India will abide by its international sugar obligations and play by the rules it agreed to in the WTO.

If this happens, we can be optimistic and 2021 will be a good year! ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Males'.

The Indian government delayed announcing the latest round of sugar export subsidies until 16 December ... when announced they were around half of the previous year's level.

# Membership Engagement

Face to face meetings are important. Grower meetings, whether they're in the paddock, in a grower's shed, or at the local CANEGROWERS office are a great way to connect, share information and grow relationships.

I get such good insight from talking with growers. It's an important part of the work I do for CANEGROWERS.

Thankfully, now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased, I've had been able to get back out into the districts and meet with growers.

Over the past three months, I have visited Mossman, Cairns, Innisfail, Herbert River, Burdekin, Proserpine, Mackay, Isis, Maryborough and Rocky Point.

October was a particularly busy month, with two CANEGROWERS Burdekin grower meetings in Giru and Clare, followed by two CANEGROWERS Herbert River meetings in Abergowrie and Ingham.

These meetings generated good discussions on a variety of important issues such as SRA varieties, reef regulations, Smartcane BMP, water pricing, electricity costs, productivity, fertiliser management, diversification, and the sugar price.

It was also great to have pockets of younger growers attending meetings, especially in Rocky Point and Proserpine, and to see their enthusiasm for the future of the industry.

There's some great work happening in the districts and over the course of 2021 I hope to use this column to acknowledge and highlight some of these great initiatives, starting with:

## Cairns School Initiative

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region has been doing some excellent work with schools throughout the district in a bid to promote the industry to the next generation and clear up misconceptions about cane farming.

So far, CANEGROWERS Cairns representatives have presented to 250 school students, highlighting issues such as improved farm practices, the importance of sugar to the Cairns economy, and how growers are supporting the environment.

Well done guys, keep up the great work. ■

*Pictured: CANEGROWERS grower meetings in (top left) Herbert River, (top right) Burdekin, (bottom left) Innisfail, (bottom right) Rocky Point.*



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](http://www.canegrowers.com.au) or email us at [ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au](mailto:ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au)

Next deadline is **23 January 2021**.

\* 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.

## Graham Twyford Machinery Sales Pty Ltd

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1994 AUSTOFT 7700 L10 cummins engine, 12"x 6 blade chopper, Underslung base cutter, plastic primary extractor hood & standard toppler. Good Tracks. Suit Plant Cutter or small group.

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NEW!  
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**[www.gtmachinerysales.com.au](http://www.gtmachinerysales.com.au)**

## Mossman-Tully

John Deere 7630 Articulated Tractor with 14t Carta Elevator Tipper. Will separate tractor & tipper. Tipper available with articulated hitch or gooseneck configuration. Ph: 0418181646.

2 of John Deere 7810 Articulated with 14 tonne Carta Bins VG cond for age POA. Ph: 0408713854.

2009 John Deere 7630 Articulated tractor with 14 tonne Carta Elevator Tipper. Tully Area. Ph: 0418181646.

S/s fert box with disc cutaways & crumble rollers; whole stick planter with suscon box; 3 fan cane stripper; plant cane cutter; 3 disc reversible plough; finger wheel rake; drill marker 5 ft; stubble shaver single row. Ph: 0428420973.

BSM 6t Double Side Tipper Bins \$55,000 + GST each. LG 6t Single Side Tipper Bin \$8,000 + GST. Located Childers. Ph: 0401260670.

Gessner Stool Splitter, 3 S/S Tanks, new condition, 2 years old. Ph: 0407590033.

5 Furrow Hodge Reversible Plough \$1200 negotiable, incl. GST. Ph: 0417647002.

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

2x Ian Ritchie 6t side tippers. VGC. Ph: 0740562063.

## Herbert River-Burdekin

Ford 7600 Tractor new engine VGC \$12000. Nuffield Universal Four Tractor \$1000. Chamberlain 306 Tractor Rops \$4000. JD Lx188 48" mower \$1000. 7' Howard EHD Slasher \$8000. 7'6" Field quip XHD slasher \$11000. Hodge 4 Blade Square Plow \$3000. 2 row 1.5t S/S Fert Box, C/W S/S worms \$1500. Kuhn maxima 4 row disc opener seeder C/W fert box & seed plates \$25000. Ph: 0417608868.

2010 Case 88 Cane harvester Iveco engine & all pumps, 2 season old machine, GPS fitted, VGC. Chopper box fully overhauled, cut 80000t, reasonably priced. Ph Bill Micola: 0418778674.

Massey Ferguson 1085 2WD Tractor. AC Cab. No compressor fitted. Runs but motor needs attention. BKT Tyres all round 90%.

New Radiator. Any interest for \$3,300. Photo available. Ph John: 0417070844.

5 furrow reversible plough \$500. 1t double row fertiliser box with ten tines \$500. Trash rake \$300. Weeder rake \$200. Ph: 0408608664.

Telescopic ram for 14t Carta Tipper done up \$3000, telescopic ram for 14t Carta Tipper \$500, new 30" rim for JCB Fastrac, Bonfiglioli hub done up \$3000, 2010 John Deere 3520 Track Harvester excellent condition. All + GST. Ph Ray: 0417077343.

Don 20 plate drag offset with hydraulic ram, no hoses. 6ft page slasher with adjustable skids in good condition. Ph: 0747776148.

## Mackay-Proserpine

1995 Austoft 7700, L10 Cummins engine, GC. Has variable tap for billets, swing out radiator, tracks are 75%, 6 blade Westhill chop. Shredder toppler, comes with spare L10 engine \$55,000. Ph: 0423161662.

2x 3t side elevating bins on Vane double trailer with own hydraulics. Ideal for planting. Ph: 0418983163.

24 plate International Disc Offsets for sale, excellent condition always stored in the shed \$15,000 + GST. Ph: 0428782202.

AUSTOFT 7700 Track Harvester, 1996 model, 7510 genuine frame hrs, last 600hrs fully rebuilt engine, 4 Blade EHS Choppers, new 4ft 6 barrel & hood, Komatsu engine, leg base cutters, \$90,000 +GST. FORD Tractor, 1998, 8340, 16 Speed, 40 Km gear box, 7,200 hrs. All VGC. Ph: 0438541448.

Case Track Harvester 8800 (2016 Model), New Track Chains, Sprockets & Elevator Chain, 4685 Hrs; 10T Cane Side Tipper; 10T Cane Side Tipper on 2 axle trailer; Multiplier; Iveco Trakker Truck (Cab Chassis or with Earth Body & Cane Bin). All VGC. Ph: 0408755453 or 0438755459.

Refalo 2t fert box on wheels; 3-row trash rakes; 3-row multi-weeder; cutaways; grubbers for ratoon & fallow; cane break pushers & more. Ph: 0417612883.

CHAMBERLAIN C6100 TRACTOR with heavy duty bag lifter, dual hydraulic cylinders, adjustable extendable jib for long reach, lifts 5t close-up \$8,000 + GST. Ph: 0417612883.

## Classifieds

John Deere Tractor: 90H.P. 4WD. Air Cab, Low Hours, Near New Condition. Ph: 0427606328.

1x 100", 1x 80" Howard AH Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned. 2x 80", 1x 50" Howard AR Rotary Hoes fully reconditioned. Parts available for Howard AR & AH Rotary Hoes from \$50 to \$500. Ph: 49595885 or 0407643441.

Westhill plant cutter with topper \$1,500 incl. GST. Ph: 0409264351.

Moller Sorter Planter, contractors model, own hydraulics, liquid fert, steering, 250lt lersban tank, 700lt fungicide tank, GC, suit small contractor or medium size farm \$23,000 ONO. 2x 10t Tully welding work bins articulated on Ford 5000 Turbo & 4080B Chamberlain Turbo. Used for planting only. Both registered. \$15,000 each ONO. Ph: 0408733793.

At the end of 2020 crush, Claas Ares 567 ATZ 4WD tractor coupled with Ian Richie 6t side tipper \$46,000 + GST. Ph: 0428115456.

Hodge 4 furrow disc reversible plough \$1K; Montabert 750 Rockbreaker suit excavator \$4.5K; Montabert 125 Rockbreaker suit backhoe \$2.4K. All + GST. Ph: 0418185663.

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

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

### Bundaberg-Rocky Point

2 B Double Semi trailers, setup for hauling sugarcane with 5 side tipping bins attached. Ph: 0418711411.

John Deere 6901 \$28,600, Bonel 4F Rvsbl Plough \$6,600, 24 Plate Offset \$3,300, Yoemans 5 Tyne Toolbar \$2,750, 7 Tyne H/D Subsoiler \$3,300, Bonel Mintill Fert Applicator \$3,300, GST incl. Ph: 0408761463.

1996 7700 Austoft. 15" 6 Blade 95mm Chopper, blade saver, swing out radiator, 4'6" Vortex Fan, extension in elevator for 6' rows, new sec. hood \$60,000 + GST. Ph: 0408062248.

Toft 6500 DI 3306 Cat 4 foot fan, bent elevator, great machine for cutting plants. No longer needed \$25,000 ONO. Ph: 0447493573.

2005 Austoft 7000 harvester. New motor 2,000 hrs ago \$90,000 + GST. Ph: 0412628671.

1000ltr Silvan spray tank with booms \$4.75k, AH Howard rotary with crumble roller 90"

\$4.3k, HYD trickle winder \$2.2k, Steel work bench \$350, Kawasaki 250 \$3.2k. All + GST. Bundaberg. Ph: 0412644616.

Tall spray tractor \$27000. Track infielder \$35000. Grizzly ripper 9 Tyne \$9000. 3 row fert box 1 1/4" Tyne \$5000. Land plane \$9000. 3 row multi weeder \$3000. 3 row plant cane cutaway \$1500. Howard 4 furrow plough \$5000. Thrasher \$600. HBM billet planter Billet cane trailers \$17000 + GST. Negotiable. Ph: 0447532490.

Secondary plastic extractor hood, suits Austoft 7000 cane harvester \$550. Ph: 0413584728.

Ford 8401 tractor, 2x Ford 7000 tractors, 3x LNG 6 ton single axle tipper bins, 100 inch

Howard rotary heavy duty near new, 3 inch 2 in 1 Avoca double reel water winch, 4 inch Avoca 2 in 1 heavy duty water winch. Ph: 0427598333.

2012 John Deere 3520 wheel harvester, New Holland 8560, New Holland 8360, John Deere 6820 - all with 10t Newton tippers. Ph: 0400844581 or 0488415781.

TVT New Holland tractor and 14t Carta Bin, 9t Hi Lift full track Transporter Toft. Ph Joshua Zunker: 0428937164.

415 Avoka water winch. Cane rake. Case cane planter. High clear david brown sprayer. 3 separate tipper bins. Tool bar, cutting discs & duck feet. Make an offer. Ph: 0412133555.

## Rainfall Report

Brought to you by Sunsuper

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)			Average rainfall (mm)
	Month prior (Nov 2020)	Month to date (1 Dec-16 Dec)	Year to date	Jan-Dec
Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman)	116.2	123.2	1,833.8	2,939.7
Mareeba Airport	0.4	44.6	525	824
Cairns Aero	54.4	16.6	1,310	1,998.5
Mt Sophia	124	57	2,338	3,385.8
Babinda Post Office	51.9	0	2,849.1	4,259.2
Innisfail	57.4	23	2,798.1	3,547.2
Tully Sugar Mill	70.9	53.5	3,008.2	4,063.6
Cardwell Marine Pde	35.2	33.9	1,533.7	2,117.2
Lucinda Township	0	0	1,652.5	2,124.5
Ingham Composite	16.4	14.2	1,688.1	2,092.8
Abergowrie Alert	15	4	647	1,394.3
Townsville Aero	3	13	801.4	1,132.4
Ayr DPI Research Stn	0.2	1.8	1,037.8	930.9
Proserpine Airport	19.2	6.4	823	1,439
Mirani Mary Street	56.2	64.4	1,140	1,491.2
Mackay MO	48.4	14	1,238.4	1,584
Plane Creek Sugar Mill	0	0	1,012.6	1,751.5
Bundaberg Aero	1	36.8	560	1,003.2
Childers South	1.6	64	547	885.8
Maryborough	8.8	78.2	833.8	1,144.9
Tewantin RSL Park	44	209.2	1,720	1,553.7
Eumundi - Crescent Rd	28.6	226.8	1,559.8	1,668.5
Nambour DPI - Hillside	37.2	252.4	1,738.4	1,749.6
Logan City Water Treatment Plant	26.3	204.4	1,251.6	1,067.5
Murwillumbah Bray Park	8.7	391.9	1,949.3	1,571.7
Ballina Airport	38.2	321.8	2,114	1,789.6
New Italy (Woodburn)	20.4	293	1,703.7	1,291



**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](http://www.bom.gov.au). Weather report sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology Recent Rainfall Tables.



Trash incorporator \$10,000. Farmall-AV \$5,500. Whole stick planter & trailer, whole stick cutter & Cotton King \$1,500 (for all). 1000 litre spray tank on trailer \$980. All + GST. Ph: 0419577110.

Single Row HBM Billet planter \$3750, 4 Row Janke Eliminator \$4000, 1200lt Fuel Tank \$400, Grain Bin Trailer \$1000, Side Dresser Fert Box \$1200, Single Row Stick Planter \$600, Tractorpac welder/generator \$600, PTO Driven Flood Pump \$500, ½T Linkage Spreader \$500, Linkage Back Blade \$350. All + GST. Ph: 0488662313.

2 harvester tyres and rims 23 5R 25, near new condition. Ph: 0429917799.

## Wanted

2 or 3 Row Stainless Fertiliser Box. Innisfail area. Ph: 0409882433.

8.25x20 front tractor tyre in reasonably good condition. Innisfail area. Ph: 0405056515.

165 Massey Ferguson Front Wheel Rim 16 inch. Cairns area. Ph Michael: 0740562821.

SusCon boxes. Mackay area. Ph: 0437113511.

3140 John Deere Tractor for parts. Mulgrave area. Ph: 0740554446.

STL shares wanted. Best price, quick cash payment. Ph: 0408448227.

## Positions Vacant

Harvesting contractor for 2021 Season. Hawkins Creek area in the Herbert River District. Approx. 3,000 tonnes (60 acres planted). Ph Kevin Melvin on 0747761450 or Pauline Biasi on 0747762242.

Full time sugarcane harvester operator position available. Applicant must have experience and be able to conduct maintenance of plant and equipment. The harvesting contract is in the Edmonton to Gordonvale area. Current drivers licence required. Email stel\_zap@bigpond.net.au or Ph Dino Zappala: 0427650360.

General Farm Hand/Cane Planting Operator. Must be self-motivated, energetic, current driver's licence (truck licence advantageous). Able to use GPS, current ChemCert ticket or willing to obtain. Able to service, maintain machinery. Practices good farm hygiene. Works well in a team. Bundaberg area. Email chapmanag@bigpond.com or Ph Tony: 0438139637.

## Work Wanted

Cane harvester & haul out operator for the 2021 season. Can do farm work, maintenance, case 7700-8800 and other farm machinery. Located in Mauritius. Em: cyrilgilbert1956@yahoo.com Ph: +230-57523057.

## Property

Wanted. Cane farm to lease Racecourse mill area Mackay. Young farmer wishing to expand. Ph: 0408011983.

Mulgrave cane farm. 47 ha total. 11.5 ha high flat fertile land. River flat 40 ha prime river silt land. River frontage. Water available for irrigation. Ph: +44427525173.

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.

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.

## WANT THE LATEST NEWS AND PHOTOS?

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## STICKER SPOTTER COMPETITION



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

**Is this your number plate? If so, you're a winner!**

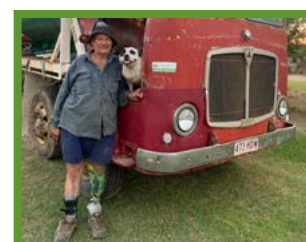
**936 VMC 204 DQT BEN 41**

**900 JNX 021 VMN 661 WVC**

Can't find your bumper sticker? Need another one for another vehicle? Contact your local CANEGROWERS office.

### How to enter:

- ✓ Make sure your CANEGROWERS bumper sticker is on your vehicle
- ✓ Wait for 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 listed, contact CANEGROWERS Brisbane office to claim a prize.  
Phone 07 3864 6444 or email [info@canegrowers.com.au](mailto:info@canegrowers.com.au)



# PRICING ESSENTIALS FOR CANE GROWERS

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### THE PROGRAM

**New sugar marketing and pricing opportunities have given cane growers new opportunities. To make the most of those opportunities, understanding your cost of production and how to reduce risk through forward pricing is essential.**

In the 2020 season, growers who actively engaged in forward pricing secured better returns than those that did not. This is your opportunity to learn how to increase your profitability.

CANEGROWERS has teamed with TAFE Queensland, and the Rural Jobs Skills Alliance to create a course for sugarcane growers in this new environment. The course will develop :

- the ability to better understand and interpret financial reports and costs of production
- understanding of factors that influence commodity (sugar) prices
- strategies to manage the risk of price fluctuations
- knowledge of forward pricing tools and other emerging technologies and marketing tools
- understanding and management of business risks

Growers who enrol in this skill set will complete the following units:

**Manage small business finances (BSBSMB421)**

**Manage risk (BSBR501)**

### HOW TO REGISTER

To register for the program, use the online form (link below) or contact your district CANEGROWERS office. Be sure to tell us your preferred location. Once you register, you will receive a confirmation email. When the program is ready for enrolment, we will contact you.

### DELIVERY LOCATIONS

The program will be delivered face to face over two days at regional locations in most cane growing districts. Final locations will depend on participation levels.

### DELIVERY DATES

The program will be delivered between February 2021 and May 2021.

### COST

To be advised.

### ELIGIBILITY

You're eligible for this course if you are:

- a cane grower
- a permanent resident of Queensland
- an Australian citizen, or a New Zealand citizen, or hold an eligible visa as identified by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/inclusive/visa-eligibility>

**REGISTER YOUR INTEREST TODAY**

**HURRY, PLACES ARE LIMITED**

**VISIT: [tafeqld.edu.au/skillsetcanegrowers](https://tafeqld.edu.au/skillsetcanegrowers)**

