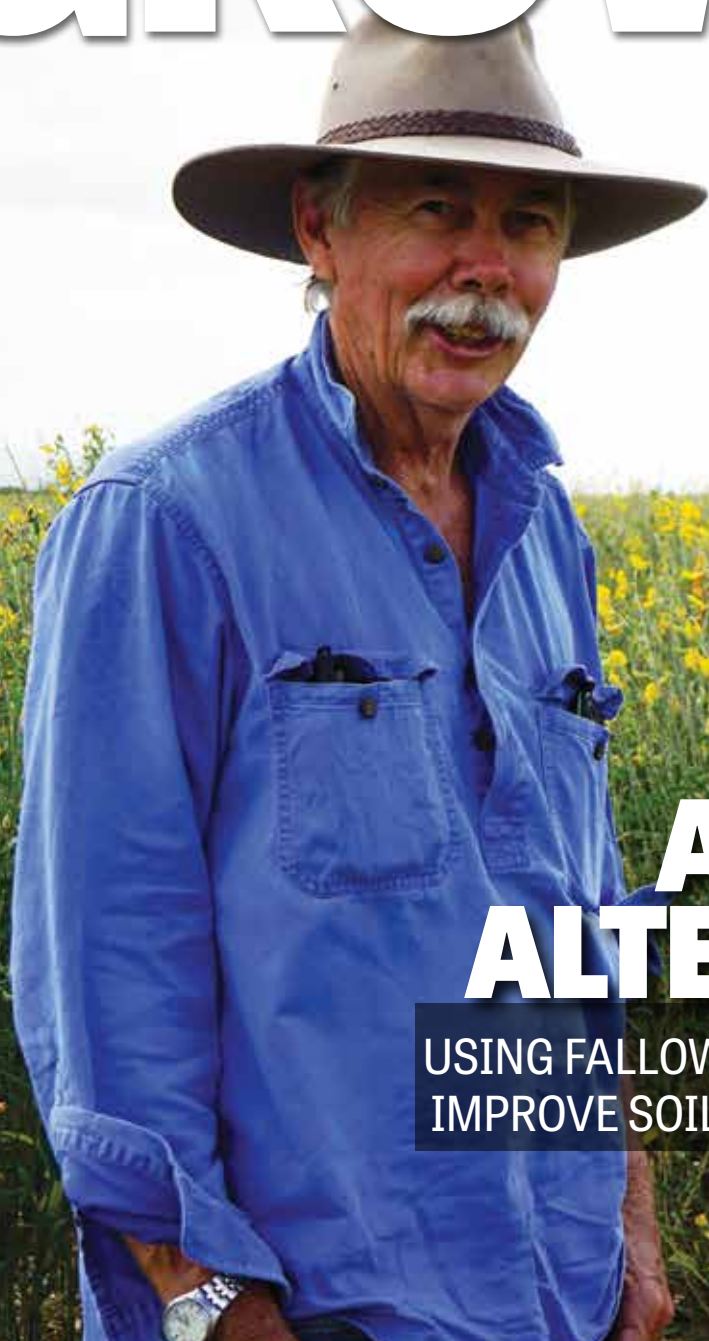




CANEGROWERS

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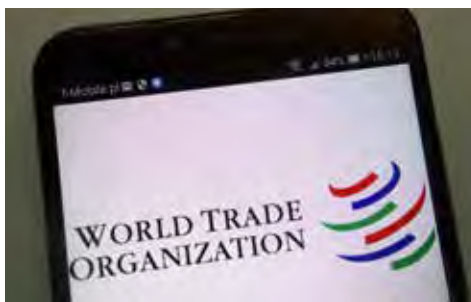
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STABLE NK: 21%N with 5%K and 5% organic carbon

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COVER IMAGE: Sun Hemp is just one of the alternative fallow crops Tableland grower Trevor Adil is experimenting with.

CONTENTS IMAGE: After 21 years representing growers, CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman Phil Marano will step down at the 2022 CANEGROWERS Elections.



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QSL gets into growing

Almost 100 years after its establishment as the Sugar Board in 1923, industry marketer Queensland Sugar Limited is getting into the cane growing game.

The company announced last month that it had invested \$20 million to buy a 20% share in Burdekin cane farming enterprise, Australian Cane Farms.

The capital injection will help bankroll ACF's planned expansion and "keep strategic properties under cane production," QSL Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer **Greg Beashel** said.

"QSL is always looking at ways that we can add further value for our members and the loss of cane-farming land to other industries is one of the biggest threats to the Queensland sugar industry's long-term viability," Mr Beashel said.

"It also potentially provides an option for farmers who would like to exit the industry while keeping their valuable land in cane."



"Our new partnership with Australian Cane Farms aims to not only help protect and maximise production from existing cane land, but eventually expand the land under cane.

"It also potentially provides an option for farmers who would like to exit the industry while also keeping their valuable land in production and jobs in cane."

Mr Beashel said that while this initial investment was based in the Burdekin, QSL was looking for other opportunities to support production and keep as many producers as possible viable around the state.

"Each region has its own challenges and priorities, and so we're keen to develop a wider program of work to leverage QSL's unique advantages and strengths

to help our members beyond just the marketing space."

Australian Cane Farms operates more than 2,250 hectares of sugarcane farms in the Burdekin region. ■



Deal struck for local AdBlue production

The Federal Government has announced an agreement with fertiliser manufacturer Incitec Pivot to secure local production of refined urea for the supply of diesel exhaust fluid (AdBlue) in Australia.

NFF CEO **Tony Mahar** welcomed the announcement commending the government on its quick response to issues with imports.

"Along with the stock already on hand, new shipments secured in the last month, and domestic capabilities coming online, farmers and the agricultural sector can move back to a business as usual approach without the fear of supply chain disruptions," Mr Mahar said. ■

Code review published

The Federal Government quietly published its post implementation review of the sugar industry Code of Conduct in December.

While the outcome of the review was already largely known, with Minister for Agriculture **David Littleproud** confirming in a letter to CANEGROWERS Chairman **Paul Schembri** in October that the government had withdrawn support for amending the Code or for a further review in two years, the report made clear that the government views the Code as delivering a benefit to the industry, despite millers reporting a negative impact.

"Across the sugar industry, views about the impact of the Competition and Consumer (Industry Code—Sugar) Regulations 2017 are inconsistent. Cane growers report a positive impact and millers reporting a negative impact. The Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment considers the code has delivered a net benefit to the Australian sugar industry because it provides a mechanism for resolving potentially lengthy and costly negotiation deadlocks. However, we recognise the code introduces a financial cost to the industry."

The next review of the Code will be ahead of its ten year anniversary in April 2027.



Bright future for industry as cane farm income continues to rise

Cane farm incomes have almost doubled in just seven years according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) in December.

The ABARES Financial performance of sugarcane farms survey found that Australian sugarcane farm cash income was up 91% compared to 2013-14, reaching an average around \$190,800 in 2020-21.

The report put the improved financial performance and profitability of cane farms down to higher yields, larger farms and lower interest payments.

CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** said it reflected the hard work of growers and a willingness to adopt new technology and practices.

"While monthly and annual farm budgeting can be challenging in the face of increasing costs, growers should feel heartened that over the long term, the survey indicated that the industry appears to have been on an upward trajectory," Mr Galligan said.

"The report indicates that a key reason is higher yields in some districts coming from hard work and constantly improving the farming system, so growers should feel proud of their efforts."

"The average farm size in the sugarcane industry has also increased over the period showing, that while some people may have retired out of the industry, farm consolidation has kept much of the land in cane production, because growers have invested in expanding their businesses.

"The report also helpfully identifies what a valuable and consistent contributor the sugarcane industry is to the economy of Australia and Queensland in particular – at \$1.3 billion gross value of production per year."

The ABARES report is another positive signal for the future of the sugarcane industry and provides useful information as work continues on a new Sugarcane Industry Roadmap, due to be completed early next year.

"While this analysis shows there are many opportunities in our industry, since the report was written we have seen wet weather and mill reliability problems lengthen the current harvest and put some regions at risk of cane being left in the field, meaning growers may miss out on some of their expected income from the current crop," Mr Galligan said.

The survey was commissioned by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) and Sugar Research Australia (SRA). SRA Chief Executive Officer **Roslyn Baker** said the Australian sugarcane industry has an exciting future.

"Sugarcane is a resilient crop and world demand for raw sugar is growing," she said.

"The industry's future is positive with some exciting opportunities to build grower profitability through complementary value adds," Ms Baker said.

For more information or the full report: <https://www.awe.gov.au/abares/research-topics/surveys/sugar> ■

"A key reason is higher yields coming from hard work and constantly improving the farming system, so growers should feel proud of their efforts."



Australia's WTO sugar win - what happens now?

The Australian sugar industry's complaints about Indian sugar subsidies pushing down global prices have been vindicated by an emphatic ruling of the World Trade Organization.

A WTO Panel has found that India's price supports for growers and export subsidies for millers have been in breach of international trade rules and must be wound back or stopped.

The three countries which took the case to the WTO, Australia, Brazil and Guatemala, are now waiting to see if India lodges a formal appeal.

CANEGROWERS and the Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC), which lobbied the Australian Government to take the action in 2019, have called on the Indian Government to embrace the WTO's findings and comply with the decision.

The case

Australia, Brazil and Guatemala challenged a range of Indian federal and state government measures arguing that they were inconsistent with India's obligations under two WTO agreements - the Agreement on Agriculture and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

In its ruling, the WTO Panel agreed and found:

- For five consecutive sugar seasons (2014-15 to 2018-19), India's domestic price supports for growers were in excess of the permitted level (10% of the value of the season's sugarcane production). The Panel found that India had consistently provided support close to 100%. The Panel recommended India reduce the measures to comply.
- India's export-contingent payments to sugar mills to assist with exports constitute prohibited subsidies. The Panel recommended India withdraw the subsidies within 120 days from the adoption of the Report by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body.►

"The trade umpire has now spoken. In the past three or four years, the world sugar price has been at or below the cost of production and that has exacted enormous economic damage to the Australian sugar industry."

CANEGROWERS Chairman
Paul Schembri



The reaction

The Australian Government welcomed the WTO ruling with Trade Minister, **Dan Tehan**, saying he was hopeful of a resolution without India lodging an appeal.

"This is a significant win in that what this finding shows is that support that the Indian Government has been providing has been harming our sugar growers here in Australia," he told ABC Radio.

"Now obviously, what we now need to work on is how we can resolve this dispute and we've begun discussions with the Indian Government."

Brazil's sugar industry group, Unica, said the report recognised the trade distortions caused by India's sugar

policies and it believed both countries could find a "collaborative solution" to the issue.

India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry however said in a statement, "The findings of the Panel are completely unacceptable to India."

The statement said the findings were "unreasoned" and "undermine logic and rationale". "India believes that its measures are consistent with its obligations under the WTO agreements," it said.

What's next

The Panel report will be considered at the 25 January 2022 meeting of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body and, unless appealed by India, will be adopted at that meeting. ■

"This has been a long, three-year road but it's been worth the fight. I am proud that CANEGROWERS and ASMC, on behalf of all growers and millers in the Australian industry, stood up for a rules-based world trading regime."

CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri

New era of UK trade ahead

Increased Australian sugar sales to Britain are a step closer with the official signing of the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (Aus-UK FTA).

The Australian Government has described it as a gold standard trade agreement containing commercially significant commitments for agricultural industries including sugar, beef, sheep meat, rice and dairy.

Negotiated after the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, the Agreement boosts access for Australia sugar which had been limited to a 9,925 tonne quota to the whole EU.

After the Aus-UK FTA comes into force, possibly in 2022, Australia will have immediate access to a duty-free quota of 80,000 tonnes, rising by 20,000 tonnes each year for eight years.

"While markets in the Asia-Pacific region will continue to be the main focus of Australia's sugar sales, this Aus-UK FTA will allow for some important diversification for our export-oriented industry which relies on a fair and rules-based world trading system," CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said. ■

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2022 ELECTION - LEARN & GROW IN LEADERSHIP

After 21 years representing sugarcane farmers, CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman Phil Marano will step down this year urging other growers to step up.

When Phil Marano decided to run for a seat on the board of Inkerman Canegrowers back in 2000, he had a plan - one term, to make sure younger growers were being heard and maybe inspire others to have a go, then back to concentrating on the farm full time.

It was a decision he came to after hearing young growers like himself complaining about the local industry body.

"I was at a barbecue with a few mates who were also growers and we were chatting about the state of the industry. We were all around the same age, in our mid-30s, so we would have been considered young growers," Phil recalled.

"Some of the blokes were complaining about Canegrowers, saying, 'They should be doing this and they should be doing that'. I just thought to myself, if you think they should be doing more, then we should be doing more, because we are them.

"If we believe things should be done differently, then we need to get in there and change the way things are done, not sit around complaining about it.

"The next day I went into the Inkerman Canegrowers office to find out how I could nominate."

Once elected, Phil's plan for a one term limit quickly went out the window, as he discovered an unexpected taste for the representative role, going on to become a foundation director of CANEGROWERS Burdekin in 2005 and joining the state policy council in 2007.

Now, as he prepares to step down more than two decades later, he still enjoys the challenge and rewards of working for his fellow growers.

"I discovered pretty quickly that I really enjoyed the role. Even after 21 years I still enjoy it, but I think the time is right to step down and clear the way for some new blood and fresh ideas," Phil said.

"Don't get me wrong, it can be a difficult job at times, but I've always

liked the cut and thrust of dealing with mills and politicians, trying to hammer out agreements or come up with new ways to meet industry challenges."

One thing Phil didn't expect when he lodged his nomination in 2000, was to become a regular media spokesperson for the industry.

From the ABC's Country Hour to Channel Ten's The Project, Phil has appeared on radio and TV countless times over the years, providing harvest updates, discussing government policies, or outlining the challenges facing the industry.

"Getting up in front of the TV cameras or microphones can be very daunting at first, but one thing about taking on a representative role is that it grows you as a person and builds your self-confidence, so that over time you become more comfortable in those situations," he said.

"I would certainly recommend that any growers who have an active interest in helping to shape the industry's future and helping their fellow growers, throw their hat in the ring and have a go. You learn a lot of new skills and you learn a lot about the industry, and it can be really interesting and enjoyable along the way," he said.

It's a sentiment that CANEGROWERS Herbert River board member Zenan Reinaudo shares. ►



"If you think they should be doing more, then we should be doing more, because we are them."





After just one year in the role, Zenan has been surprised by how much she has learned and how enjoyable her time as a grower-representative has been.

"I've really enjoyed the experience. It's been a big learning curve for me, but I've tried to listen a lot and ask a lot of questions and that's really helped me get a better sense of the bigger picture at the local and industry level," she said,

Zenan, who will run for re-election this year, is encouraging other women to put their hands up for a representative role.

"I can understand that a lot of women might be nervous about putting themselves forward for a board position. I was very nervous myself, but it turned out not to be anywhere near as daunting as I expected.

"Everyone has been quite welcoming and generous with their time and knowledge. It really didn't take me long at all to feel comfortable in the role. It certainly wasn't as scary as some people might think."

Even if she doesn't get re-elected for another term, Zenan is grateful for time on the board.

"I've only been there a short time so it would be nice to continue that journey and get even more involved. But whatever happens, I've learned a heap and I can take that learning and experience back to my own business."

Pictured: (top) After 21 years, CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman Phil Marano will retire from grower representation at the next CANEGROWERS elections in April; (left) Phil was one of the CANEGROWERS delegates that travelled to Canberra to help secure the industry Code of Conduct in 2017.

"Whatever happens, I've learned a heap and I can take that learning and experience back to my own business."

Nomination for the 2022 CANEGROWERS Election open on 1 February, with newly elected members commencing their terms on 1 May 2022. ■



Pictured: (above) CANEGROWERS Herbert River director Zenan Reinaudo would like to see more women running for representative roles; (below) Media interviews were just part of the job for Phil Marano.



CANEGROWERS ELECTIONS 2022 - KEY DATES

NEWLY APPOINTED DISTRICT BOARDS WILL APPOINT DELEGATES TO THE STATE POLICY COUNCIL. THESE DELEGATES WILL SELECT THE CANEGROWERS QUEENSLAND BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Nominations open on | 1 February 2022 |
| Official Rolls close at 5pm on | 25 February 2022 |
| Nominations close at 5pm on | 25 February 2022 |
| Ballot papers to be posted on | 15 March 2022 |
| Ballot papers returnable by 5pm | 14 April 2022 |
| Election counting of votes on | 19 April 2022 |
| Declaration of election results on | 20 April 2022 |
| Elected members term commences | 1 May 2022 |

CEO COMMENT

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

PLANS MADE BY GROWERS FOR GROWERS

We can all suffer from the anxiety caused by uncertainty in our lives. If the last two years have shown us anything, it's that there are many things out of our control.

The pandemic has thrown both business and personal plans into chaos and taught us a lesson in taking one day at a time. At the same time, in an effort to mitigate the risks, governments have gone to extraordinary lengths to impose laws and restrictions designed to protect us.

Through the chaos and uncertainty, the role of agriculture to provide a sense of stability by keeping food on the table and keeping people in jobs, cannot be underestimated.

This really is remarkable when you consider the typical volatility that agricultural supply chains must endure. Commodity prices, weather, supply chain shortages, and a lack of farm labour to name but a few.

The beginning of the calendar year is as good a time as any to reflect on the lessons of the past two years, make some predictions, and plan for the year ahead.

At CANEGROWERS, January is the perfect time for this exercise as we gear up with fresh energy and renewed enthusiasm.

We know enough now to lock in the uncertainty the pandemic will deliver, but we can do so now with confidence that together we can support each other through it.

We have big plans for 2022 and being flexible in the way that we execute these plans will be crucial.

A federal election is just months away and through the last couple of months of 2021, work was well progressed with our national peak body, the National Farmers Federation, to formulate a solid election strategy.

With elections on the mind, we turn to the important CANEGROWERS election. As reported in this magazine, this is a significant opportunity for growers to stand for district leadership positions.

The districts drive and inform the priorities of CANEGROWERS and they provide the front door access for all members of the organisation. As an organisation, behind the scenes we are ready to not only support the election process, but also provide training, support and expert back-up to both new and existing directors.

Beyond the board room we have big plans for supporting all growers in their businesses. CANEGROWERS is working through a range of strategic initiatives designed to maximise the profitability of growers.

We are working through our traditional policy efforts to increase revenue opportunities by ensuring that growers are not only well placed to share in any opportunity of future industry diversification but can also take advantage of existing opportunities in what remains a high sugar price environment.

Our policy efforts will continue towards driving down the cost of inputs and also working directly with growers to help refine their understanding of their business costs and ability to take profits when the opportunity arises.

Behind this will be constant and deep consultation with growers.

The target is to invest in the right topics and the right tools that deliver practical and tangible solutions for your business.

To be a part of this process is a rewarding and exciting opportunity that I hope many growers see themselves taking a hold of over the coming year. ■



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Andrew with Burdekin district facilitator, Jasmine



Contact your district facilitator to find out more.

CANEGROWERS Business Essentials course ready to roll

CANEGROWERS will roll out a new professional development program for growers next month with a focus on assessing and managing business risks (like volatile sugar prices).

The two-day CANEGROWERS Business Essentials course builds on the Pricing Essentials workshops held in 2021, adding new elements around risk management, business management, and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS).

The key components on calculating costs of production and exploring pricing options aimed at improving profitability remain largely unchanged.

CANEGROWERS Industry Manager Burn Ashburner said growers don't require any previous pricing or risk management experience to take full advantage of the course.

"Participants should expect to come away with a better understanding of their various risks and with a good start to a business risk management plan that can be used to help improve their farming business resilience," Mr Ashburner said.

The new program has received support from the federal and Queensland Government's Farm Business Resilience Program.

"The business risk management plan information that will be developed in the course can potentially be used by participants to access funding via QRIDA drought assistance," Mr Ashburner said.

"The business risk management plan and cost of production/budgeting tool can also be taken away by participants and further refined with their accountants and other business partners."

The cost of production/budget tool has been developed using district-specific information and the various risks to be reviewed will be tailor-made for each district and farm business.

The latest sugar market price outlook will also be included as part of the workshop sessions.

Sugar market consultant Dougall Lodge will again be one of the main workshop presenters, the first of which have been scheduled for Mackay on 8-9 February and Innisfail on 22-23 February, with venues to be confirmed.

Growers can register their interest by visiting <https://bit.ly/3pa9BpG>.

You can also read more about the program and register on the CANEGROWERS website. ■



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CANEGROWERS BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

professional development for growers

Cane growers manage their farm businesses in one of the world's most volatile commodity price environments. Growers are also exposed to production risks arising from extreme weather events and from an ever increasing regulatory burden and tightening environmental controls. CANEGROWERS, in conjunction with funding from the Federal and Queensland governments, is developing a suite of professional development opportunities to assist growers to face these challenges and maintain successful businesses.

CANEGROWERS Business Essentials will be tailor-made to assist growers:

- complete a resilience self assessment based on Smartcane BMP
- better understand and interpret financial reports, budgets and costs of production
- better understand risk and more specifically factors that influence commodity (sugar) prices
- devise strategies to manage risk including price fluctuations
- understand forward pricing tools and other emerging technologies and marketing tools
- develop a plan to manage the risks as far as possible.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST TODAY

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HOW TO REGISTER YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Use the online form via <https://bit.ly/3pa9BpG> or the QR code or contact your district CANEGROWERS office

LOCATION

The program will be delivered face to face over two days, with some online presentations at regional locations. Final locations will depend on participation levels

COST

The cost will be \$100.00 (ex GST) per participant

ELIGIBILITY

You're eligible for this course if you are:

- a cane grower, cane grower family member or work on a cane farm
- a permanent resident of Queensland



This program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Queensland Government's Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.



FROM THE CHAIR

By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS

A NEW YEAR OF CHALLENGE AND HOPE

As we take the first steps of 2022, it is timely to reflect on what a new year might herald for the Australian sugar Industry.

The resilience of cane growers and other industry stakeholders is truly remarkable. For the 40 years that I have been involved in CANEGROWERS, a new year always brings fresh hope for a better season and stronger industry.

For many growers, the disappointment of a late harvest and poor milling performance remains fresh in our minds. However, despite our disappointment, we always embrace the hope of a better season ahead.

Weather and sugar prices have always largely determined the fortunes of Australia's sugar industry.

While nobody can predict weather, it seems certain that the La Niña weather pattern will have a large influence on the 2022 crop. I suspect that there is a lot more water to flow under the bridge before we know what our crop prospects might be.

Perhaps the most positive turnaround in 2021 has been the substantial increase in world sugar prices. The upward movement in sugar prices has been driven by lower production in major sugar producing countries, coupled with a strong demand for commodities in the COVID-19 era.

How those factors play out in 2022 remains to be seen, but there is strong evidence that sugar prices will remain constructive this year as the world moves into a global deficit situation.

The ability to forward price has empowered Queensland growers to lock in sugar prices for future years. I hope growers are taking advantage of this power to capture the higher prices currently on offer.

If there is one thing that is certain it is that high sugar prices are always followed by low prices.

WTO Ruling

The World Trade Organisation's announcement at the end of 2021 that Indian export subsidies have broken WTO rules and should be phased out was a positive result for the Australian sugar industry.

The decision vindicates the strong stance taken by Australia, Brazil, and Guatemala, which warned that Indian sugar policies were destroying the world price.

While sugar prices are currently strong, we know that in recent years they have been at or below the costs of production. The Australian Sugar Milling Council asserts that the Indian subsidy regime has cost the Australian industry at least \$1 billion in lost income.

The WTO process can be slow and complex, but what's important is the independent umpire has ruled that India must cease its current subsidies.

Unfortunately, that doesn't mean the matter is closed and I can almost guarantee there will be further developments on this issue.

Elections

2022 will be an important year for your CANEGROWERS organisation, with our triennial elections scheduled to take place in April.

This is important as it ensures that CANEGROWERS remains accountable to its members.

Over time, elections for key industry positions have almost disappeared. CANEGROWERS, however, is owned by the members and electing representatives remains a foundation stone of the organisation.

I ask you to participate in two ways. Firstly, I encourage as many growers as possible to nominate for a board position in their local district. Having a choice of candidates to select is a great way to ensure accountability.

Secondly, I encourage you to vote. The ability of members to vote for candidates is at the very heart of CANEGROWERS' values. Ultimately, it is important that the elected representatives who speak on behalf of growers, are themselves cane growers and understand the challenges facing the industry.

What 2022 will deliver remains to be seen. Certainly, there will be some surprises, and no doubt old challenges will again raise their heads. Importantly, however, we will face the year together with the hope and expectation for a better season and a stronger industry. ■



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FRESH PERSPECTIVE

helps give a running start to cane growing

Supplied by HCPSL

When Todd Erkkila decided to return to the family farm in April 2021, his father Greg wanted him to have a running start.

Todd had recently completed a mechanical apprenticeship in town and was keen to get into cane growing – but in Greg’s words: “There’s much more to farming now than driving tractors. You have to be a lawyer, accountant, stockbroker and a computer programmer, while constantly being aware of your environmental footprint.”

So, when the chance came up for them to take part in a new project called Project CaNE™, they jumped at the chance to see what they could improve at their 400 hectare property at Abergowrie and also provide Todd with some fresh advice on farming.

The project is led by Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) and is funded through the partnership between the Australian Government’s Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and supported by TropWATER and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Queensland.

It is working with growers to improve farming practices through practical on-farm extension activities including one-on-one extension,

grower groups, workshops, water quality monitoring, and demonstration sites.

Greg said the project was a valuable continuation of the work he had done with Smartcane BMP accreditation and was especially useful for linking Todd with the agronomic support from HCPSL.

“It is valuable to sit down with the HCPSL agronomist and talk about all the things that link together on the farm,” Greg said.

“We know soil sampling is important, as well as matching our nutrient plans to the soil sample, but through this project we can see the whole picture and put things into practice in the paddock.

“It has also been valuable to get confirmation that we as farmers are doing the right thing by the environment.”

HCPSL agronomist Adam Royle said Project CaNE™ was an integrated program that helped growers improve both productivity and profitability, while working towards longer term sustainability.

Pictured: Greg Erkkila has been part of work looking at the potential for nitrification inhibitors.

"We provide agronomic support and tailored nutrient solutions for the growers, working with them on farm to look at a range of factors like soil tests, agronomic constraints to productivity, and steps they can take to make improvements," Adam said.

"We've also partnered with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to help growers understand the economics of changing practice and with TropWATER to understand the water quality outcomes of what we are doing."

At the Erkkila farm, Greg said it was especially valuable when input costs like fuel and fertiliser were rising so rapidly.

"We don't have a lot of control over those costs, but we want to keep making sure we are efficient with all of our inputs," he said.

"Through grower groups, we are improving our understanding of the SIX EASY STEPS nutrient guidelines to get more efficient."

In the future, the Erkkilas are looking forward to getting involved in more of the activities with Project CaNE™, including the Clear as Mud™ demonstrations to help understand the potential for mill by-products and with Cultivate CaNE grower groups, which help growers through peer-to-peer learning.

"We've made big changes to our fallow management in recent years. Previously we would work our fallows prior to the wet, but we then had a problem if we had a population of weeds come through," Greg said.

"Then we moved to spray-out fallows, and we've tried bean crops (legume crops), with some failures.

"Through Project CaNE™, we are looking at different methods that could help the beans work such as through direct-drill planting.

"We might move to a system of spraying out the fallow, and direct drilling the beans, which would still leave us with a hard interspace to get in and control any weeds that come through."

After that, the next step could be variable-rate nutrient application.

"We're not there yet, but we've ordered a new tractor that will have that capacity, so it could be an option in the future.

"The beauty of this program is that we have a sounding board to bounce ideas around and see what is going to work for us."

Greg said that the industry had a very positive story to tell in terms of improving its sustainability credentials and that Project

CaNE™ was a chance to tell that story as well as to continue to make improvements on the farm.

"We love the Reef and want to do everything in our power to make sure we sustain it for generations to come," he said.

"Getting involved in this program is showing that. It has been worthwhile. If you're established in the industry, it can be valuable to check where you are at, and if you are new and want to learn more, then it is perfect for that too." ■

To see a video with Erkkila's about Project CaNE™ visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdTVGiXtUDc> or search for "Project CaNE" on YouTube.

Pictured: Greg and Todd talk farming systems with HCPSL's Adam Royle (below left). Project CaNE™ is running a range of grower groups and discussions.



There's much more to farming than driving tractors. You have to be a lawyer, accountant, stockbroker and a computer programmer, while constantly being aware of your environmental footprint.



QSL GROWER PRICING UPDATE

Current as of 17 December 2021.

Sugar Market & Currency



| Influence | Commentary | Outlook |
|-------------|---|---------|
| Brazil | Continued good rains through the last months of 2021 and indicative 2022 crop not as poor as previously thought. | |
| Ethanol | Weak oil prices dragged down ethanol parity to around 18USc/lb amid Omicron fears. Potential for oil price and ethanol parity to recover as economies strengthen post-COVID. | Neutral |
| India | Raw sugar prices need to trade higher to incentivise exports to the world market to fill the gap from the poor Brazil crop. | |
| Thailand | Harvesting has begun, with little insight into crop size. Increasing competition from cassava could limit the expansion of cane. | Neutral |
| Speculators | Specs reduced their position to 130k lots net-long as of 7/12/21. Lots of room now to reset their positions and increase their net-long position, but they may be unlikely to take a strong view over the Christmas period. | |
| Macro | Global markets should respond positively as economies recover and the world learns to live with COVID-19. | |
| Currency | With US inflation at its highest level since 1982, the Fed has flagged 3 interest rate hikes in 2022. Here in Australia, the RBA is seemingly uninterested in raising rates until late 2023/early 2024. The Aussie Dollar looks poised to slip against its US equivalent. | |

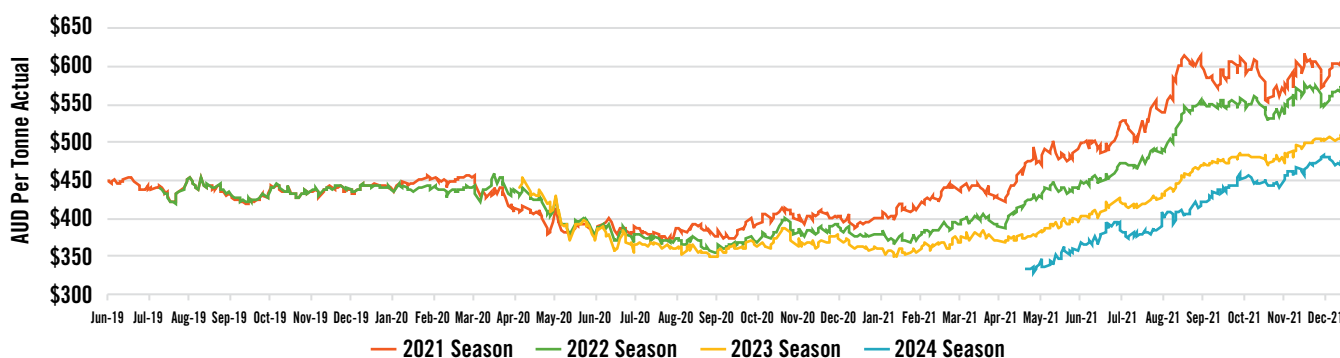
The outlook ratings above are in relation to AUD/tonne sugar prices. A bullish outlook is considered positive. A bearish outlook is considered negative.

KEY INDICATORS

| | 17/12/2021 | Monthly change |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| ICE11 Prompt (Mar22) | 19.40 USc/lb | -0.71 USc/lb |
| Brazilian Real/\$US exchange rate | 5.69 BRL | +0.10 BRL |
| Brent Crude Oil | \$US74.63/barrel | -\$US7.57 |
| Ethanol/Raw Sugar Parity | 18.00 USc/lb | -2.00 USc/lb |
| Net Spec Position | 130,000 (net long) | -60,000 |

| | 17/12/2021 | Monthly change |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| \$AUS/\$US exchange rate | \$US0.7184 | -\$US0.0044 |
| \$US Index | 95.99 | -0.50 |
| Chinese Yen/\$US exchange rate | 6.37 CNY | -0.02 CNY |
| S+P 500 Index | 4,668.67 | +219.69 |
| RBA Overnight Cash Rate | 0.10% | 0.00% |

RAW SUGAR PRICES



This is a whole-of-season ICE 11 price chart current as of 17.12.21, based on a 1:2:2:1 pricing ratio for the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 Seasons.

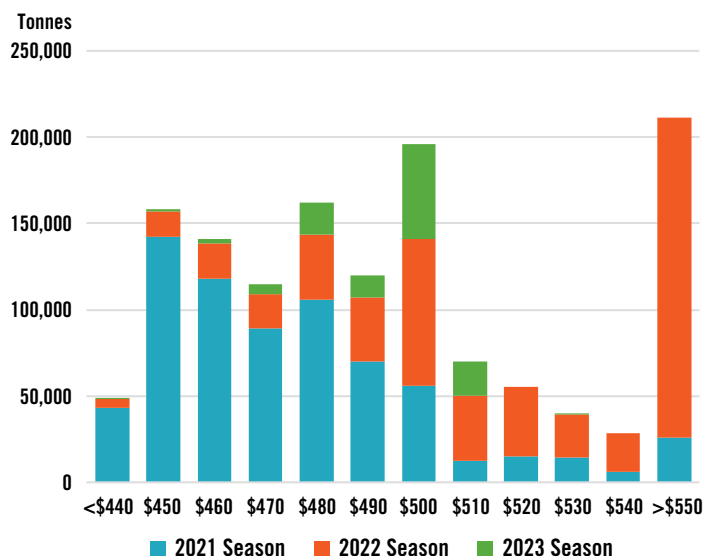
Disclaimer: This report contains information of a general or summary nature and is based on information available to QSL from many sources. While all care is taken in the preparation of this report, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial or 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.

Grower Pricing



- The highest grower-managed pricing levels achieved as of 17 December 2021 (all gross price actual/tonne) are:
 - 2021 Target Price = \$610 / IFC \$625 (Mar22)
 - 2022 Target Price = \$575 / IFC \$590 (Jul22)
 - 2023 Target Price = \$505 / IFC \$520 (Jul23)
 - 2024 Target Price = \$480 / IFC \$485 (Oct24)
- Got questions about grower pricing? Your local QSL office will be holding pricing education sessions in coming weeks. Please contact them for details.
- 21 February 2022 is the last day to fill any remaining 2021-Season Target Price Contract orders before the pricing window is automatically extended and roll adjustments apply. In MSF Sugar milling districts, this date is also the 2021-Season Pricing Completion Date unless your miller has granted an extension.

QSL GROWER-MANAGED PRICING FILLS – 2021, 2022 & 2023 SEASONS



This chart captures all pricing achieved as of 17.12.21 using QSL's Target Price Contract, Individual Futures Contract and Self-Managed Harvest products. Prices quoted at AUD/tonnes actual gross.

2021 Recap: The market in review

ICE 11 PROMPT PRICE (AUD/TONNE)



2021 was a strong year for raw sugar prices, with many unexpected macroeconomic and fundamental events moving the 2021 seasonal price through a \$200/tonne range, from lows of \$396/tonne in January to highs of \$616/tonne in November. The chart above captures some of the major market influences on the ICE 11 and Foreign Exchange markets during the past 12 months.



CHRISTMAS CRUSH

As this issue of *Australian Canegrower* went to print, Mackay growers were preparing to harvest cane through the Christmas period, as Mackay Sugar scrambled to make up for time lost to rainfall and poor mill performance in the 2021 season.

On 10 December, growers were notified of the mill's intention to continue crushing cane "as long as possible and viable", including through Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

"It's the first time that I can ever recall us harvesting through the Christmas period and growers are very unhappy about it," CANEGROWERS Chairman and Mackay grower **Paul Schembri** said.

Harvesting contractors are also far from happy with the extended crush, with

some flat-out refusing to cut cane over Christmas, Mackay Area Committee Chairman **Joseph Borg** said.

"As of today (21 December) we have about 200,000 tonnes to go," Mr Borg said.

"Mackay Sugar is committed to crushing through Christmas and, weather permitting, we're probably looking at a 28 December finish date.

"Obviously that also depends on getting harvesting crews into the paddocks,

which is something that Mackay Sugar is working on at the minute.

"Many harvesting groups have said they're not willing to harvest through Christmas, but others have said they will. Mackay Sugar is doing a ring around to see just how many harvesters they can get."

Despite the late finish, growers remain eager to get as much cane off as possible so they can take advantage of the high sugar prices currently on offer.

Dear Grower

It has been a long season – longer than anyone of us wanted it to be let me again make it clear that Mackay Sugar has taken all relevant learnings from this year and previous years and will work hard to make an improvement on milling performance next year.

The majority of equipment needed for our planned capital projects has been ordered and manufacturing is well under way and, in some cases, items are already shipped and on their way to Australia.

 **Mackay Sugar**
Member of Nordzucker Group

20 December 2021



"We had two of the three necessary ingredients for a great season - a good crop and high sugar prices. Unfortunately, the final ingredient - good mill performance - is where we were let down. That was a real smack in the face for growers."

Pictured: Mackay Sugar's Racecourse Mill struggled with poor performance all season.

"The CCS has dropped off quite a bit and is currently sitting around the mid to low-11s, but with the world sugar price where it is, it's still worth cutting as much cane as possible," Mr Borg said.

While heavy rainfall through the season played a small part in extending this year's crush, poor performance at Mackay Sugar's Farleigh, Marian and Racecourse mills was by far the biggest factor.

However, Mr Borg was reluctant to lay the blame entirely at the feet of Mackay Sugar owner, German company Nordzucker.

"Growers are very disappointed and disheartened at the situation," he said.

"We had high hopes for the best season we've had in years, and we got two of the three necessary ingredients to make that happen - a good crop and high sugar prices.

"Unfortunately, the final ingredient - good mill performance - is where we were let down. Marian Mill was probably the worst, but all three mills had problems. That was a real smack in the face for growers.

"But Mackay Sugar have put their hand up and acknowledged that. They know that mill performance was totally

unsatisfactory, and they've committed to taking steps to rectify the situation ahead of next season.

"While Nordzucker is ultimately responsible for the operation of the mills, I don't think we can lay the blame entirely at their door. They spent a large sum over the slack on maintenance, but all three mills have been so badly run down over a long period under the previous administration, that it will take more time and money to get them up to scratch," Mr Borg said.

Mackay wasn't the only district to struggle with milling problems this season. Mossman, Tableland and Herbert River have all struggled with poor mill performance at various stages throughout the season.

Rocky Point's perennial problems with an underperforming co-gen plant also persisted in 2021, with the district calling time on their crush on 17 December, leaving almost 100,000 tonnes of standover in the paddock.

Meanwhile, Isis and Maryborough's first combined crush following the closure of MSF's Maryborough Mill last year, struggled with delivery issues due to problems with the new transloader facility in Childers.

Continues next page ►

Inkerman Mill suffered constant breakdowns and boiler issues.



In the Burdekin, Inkerman Mill had a particularly bad run this year, with Wilmar's south bank mill finishing up more than a month after its north bank counterparts.

"The north bank mills had a pretty good season with decent mill performance and that saw them finish up around mid-November, which is exactly where you want them to be," CANEGROWERS Burdekin Chairman Phil Marano said.

"It's totally unacceptable to have one mill finishing a whole month after the others. the mill has acknowledged the problems and has laid out a plan to fix it."

"But Inkerman struggled with frequent breakdowns and boiler issues, then we had that big rain event late in November which just added to the problems it had experienced all season.

"It's totally unacceptable to have one mill finishing a whole month after the others.

"To their credit, the mill has acknowledged the problems and has laid out a plan to fix it over the next two years. They seem confident that they can get the crop off successfully and on time next season and I think growers are satisfied that the mill will address the issue," Mr Marano said. ■

Revamped courses help protect ag against pests

Plant Health Australia (PHA) has recently revamped three online courses that now offer greater interactivity and designs to enhance the online learning experience.

One of these courses, Pest Reporting (for Growers and Researchers) will be of interest to growers. The short course is aimed at growers, farm workers and agronomists, and provides a better understanding of reporting and responding to plant pests.

"By reporting an exotic pest or disease early, there is a greater chance it will be successfully contained and eradicated. For this reason, it is vital to report any suspected new pests, pathogens or new hosts," said Dr Susanna Driessen, PHA's General Manager, Emergency Response.

"This course focusses on the role of growers in reporting and responding to plant pests in Australia. .

"Reporting increases the chance of effective control and eradication, which reduces the impact on agriculture.

"This is what will keep our industries competitive, healthy and in-demand for years to come."

Information on how to register is available on the PHA website at planthealthaustralia.com.au/resources/training/biosecurity-online-training/ ■



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Appealing alternatives

crop rotation and weed management

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention and on the top of the Tableland amongst bobbing yellow heads of sun hemp, Trevor Adil's declining cane yields were his necessity for comprehensive research into crop diversification and ultimately weed control opportunities.

In 1989, Tableland farmer Trevor Adil decided to try his hand at growing sugarcane. For a time he was happy with his high yielding crops, but over the years he has seen those yields steadily decline.

In 2014 he decided to take action - not by throwing more fertiliser at his cane, but by using alternative crops to improve soil health and control problem weeds, while also making a bit of cash.

"We went from growing rice to growing cane. We also had pasture paddocks for grazing cattle that went to growing cane and the yields were outstanding," Trevor said.

"After watching the trend of declining yields, I started researching extensively, I found the Sugar Yield Decline Joint Venture of interest."

The Sugar Yield Decline Joint Venture was a 12-year Sugar Research and Development Corporation project in the

BY ROBYN DEVINE

1990s, designed to help sugarcane and legume growers to refine their farming systems to reduce input costs while maximising productivity.

With a background in engineering, Trevor was keen to find a solution to his yield problem.

He studied industry research, including the work by CSIRO on sustainable soils in diverse agriculture settings, as well as publications like the Wet Tropics Terrain NRM *Tropical Soils - a guide to soil health* for practical ideas.

"Then about six or seven years ago we decided to try planting soybeans but the crop was pretty poor," Trevor said.

"We tried to use a no-till planter into a cane stool. It wasn't successful, we probably got 10% germination.

"So we started playing around with other crops, hybrid sorghum seeds, mung beans, cotton, and now sun hemp.

Pictured below: Cotton has become a profitable commercial crop in Trevor Adil's quest to improve his soil health.





"There is nothing easy about growing other crops, if you're passionate about it then you'll do it, if you are halfhearted about it then you won't."

Pictured: Trevor, at his Mareeba sugarcane farm, is always looking for opportunities to improve soil health and says the research is out there to help growers.

"Each crop has some benefits and some pitfalls about them. In this environment, around Mareeba, cotton seems to be the only crop that will tolerate a lot of water and still yield commercially viable returns."

Trevor has planted and harvested three cotton crops to date. The first, a mere 10 hectares, was the pilot project. Whilst small, the yield proved optimistically profitable - more than Trevor had anticipated.

"The following year we planted 100 hectares into a ploughed-out cane paddock. That yield was not so good.

"There were significant areas affected by residual herbicides used in the sugarcane.

"The expert advice at the time recommended that six months in the heat should have been adequate to basically metabolise the herbicide in the soil but that wasn't the case.

"Most agronomists have experience based in traditional cotton growing areas, the conditions are different up here on the Tablelands."

By the time the cotton hit the subsoil it was badly affected. Disheartened, but with lessons learned from his efforts, Trevor has become diligent in reading the fine print on chemicals to assist with managing any residues in the soil.

Trevor's subsequent crop, harvested in August 2021, was much more encouraging and averaged better across the 100 hectares than the results they

had achieved with the original 10-hectare trial.

Sun hemp is the newest pilot project that Trevor has embarked upon.

The seed, currently a valuable commodity, is sold to a distributor on the Tableland and this year will be his third planting of the vibrant crop.

As this project is in its infancy, Trevor says the jury is still out on the commercial viability, but he remains optimistic.

Once harvested, a mulcher is put through the sun hemp stubble and then Trevor plants cane. He did a no-till cane planting trial after the last year's sun hemp, and it turned out to be quite reasonable.

"It's interesting, we haven't side dressed it and don't intend to side dress it to see what contribution the sun hemp can make to the organic nitrogen in the soil," he said.

All of the crops have a different range of herbicide tolerances, Trevor explained. Being able to mix and match the chemistry is an important part of his rotational program

"In sugarcane we have an ongoing problem with guinea grass but with the cotton rotation the round-up is applied early in the growing season.

"You get in early with low rates of round-up to do the job. It acts as a great weed control for the cane with minimal chemicals needed.

Continues next page ►

"Each crop has some benefits and some pitfalls"



"What's also interesting about growing cotton is the stems on a cotton plant are as thick as your finger and these stems are bits of wood, timber as such.

"We've never had any success in building soil carbon here but after the second year of cotton crops, we now have something that shows up on soil testing reports, that says we now have some organic carbon.

"This could only have come from the cotton crop."

Trevor's cotton goes to Emerald, attracting hefty transport costs, yet he is content that even with these expenses the present pricing continues to ensure cotton is a commercially viable option for him.

While Trevor is passionate about his trials with alternative crops, he's the first to admit that crop rotation and diversification is not an easy option.

Tractor hours are substantially higher for cotton growing than sugarcane. There is a lot of work involved and skilled farm labour is hard to find.

It's time consuming and can be expensive, but he enjoys the research and the problem-solving opportunities that arise, keeping his mind sharp and active.

"The year just gone I have done all the ground prep associated with the cotton by myself which means some long days in the tractor," he said.

"There is nothing easy about growing other crops, but if you're passionate about it then you'll do it.

"If you're half-hearted about it then you won't. It's a passion."

The current strong world sugar prices have provided a conundrum for Trevor as he had intended, in his crop rotation management, to plant out another 100 hectares of cotton. The paddocks are now being ratooned rather than pulled out for fallow rotation.

"The price has ironically disrupted my rotation and trials. With the price the way it is, every stick of cane I can send to the mill this year will be going to the mill."

Trevor is using his trials with crop rotation to provide positive soil health impact and potential solutions to his declining yield.

"You can bury your head in the sand with yield decline and say it's got nothing to do with mining the soil. You can believe that if you want and throw more fertiliser at it or try to grow a different bred variety with better vigour," Trevor said.

"All of these things will contribute to maintaining a position but won't, generally speaking, advance your position.

"I'm not looking to make work for myself, but the bigger picture at the end of the day is if the industry isn't going to be sustainable by doing what we are currently doing then we have got to find a way around that problem.

"The evidence for me is pretty compelling - if you go looking for the evidence you will find it."

Trevor remains committed to continually researching, trialing and learning, looking for diverse and yet commercially viable options.

He believes it's an investment in his future that is interesting, exciting and showing attractive rewards. ■

Pictured: The peacocks run carefree all over this Tableland farm and the colourful yellow blossoms of the sun hemp add to the bright skyline whilst providing a potential commercially viable crop option.





Introducing Australian Retirement Trust

- QSuper and Sunsuper announced on 6 December that the \$230 billion fund resulting from their proposed merger this year will be called 'Australian Retirement Trust'.
- QSuper and Sunsuper plan to deliver a fee reduction for their more than two million members from 1 July 2022¹.

New name and a step forward

The future Australian Retirement Trust Chief Executive Officer, Bernard Reilly, said the announcement of the merged fund's name was an important step forward in the merger process since the signing of a Heads of Agreement in March this year.

"Australian Retirement Trust will be a force for good, to make the world for our two million members better, guiding them to and through retirement," said Mr Reilly.

"Australian Retirement Trust captures the key elements of our proposed organisation: our fund is for all Australians, no matter where they live or what industry they work in. We will guide our members to and through retirement, and as a fund that works for members, not shareholders, we will be trusted to work in their best interests.

Focus on members

"As two of Australia's largest profit-for-members super funds, Sunsuper and QSuper have together taken care of their more than two million members' superannuation for a combined 140 years.

"Australian Retirement Trust will continue both Sunsuper's and QSuper's focus on working for members, aiming to deliver strong, long-term investment returns and low fees and providing the tools and advice to help members feel on top of their super.

"Whether our members are starting out their working life, already retired, or somewhere in between, we'll guide them to help ensure they're secure, confident and protected. We'll leverage our size and scale to be a force for good to make our members' world better, seeking out investments to guard and grow their savings and retirement income."

Post-merger fee reduction

Australian Retirement Trust's future trustees have flagged that they are committed to deliver a post-merger fee reduction for most members to apply from the start of the next financial year, with final details to be communicated to members prior to 30 June 2022.

The current 1.4 million Sunsuper members will become members of Australian Retirement Trust's public offering as will all new members not connected to the Queensland Government. The QSuper brand will continue as a part of Australian Retirement Trust, dedicated to providing superannuation products and services to Queensland Government employees and their families.

Australian Retirement Trust will be headquartered in Queensland, with offices around Australia. The planned merger is on track to proceed on 28 February 2022 pending final Board, regulatory and legislative approvals.

¹Fee reduction is subject to confirmation by the Trustee of Australian Retirement Trust. Australian Retirement Trust will contact members before 1 July 2022 to confirm the fee reduction.

Disclaimer: This article has been prepared and issued by Sunsuper Pty Ltd, (ABN 88 010 720 840, AFSL No. 228975) the trustee and issuer of the Sunsuper Superannuation Fund (ABN 98 503 137 921, USI 98 503 137 921 001). It contains general advice and does not take into account the investment objectives, financial situation or needs of any particular individual. You should consider if the advice is appropriate to your own circumstances before acting on it. Consider the Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before deciding and Target Market Determinations (TMDs). Visit [sunsuper.com.au](https://www.sunsuper.com.au) or call 13 11 84 for a copy of the PDS and TMDs.

FARM NITROGEN AND PHOSPHORUS BUDGET

required for the 2022 season

Supplied by Department of Environment and Science Queensland

Sugarcane growers in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin and Mackay Whitsunday regions need to develop a farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget before applying fertiliser in the 2022 season.

This will help you work out the N&P rates for each block: you then have the flexibility to refine the rates across your blocks as long as you do not exceed the whole-of-farm amount.

Refined rates should be based on sound agronomy to ensure productivity is maintained and water quality risks are minimised.

N&P budgets need to be developed and verified by an appropriate person such as an agronomist.

That person must have relevant qualifications, training, skills or experience and the ability to provide nutrient management advice based on evidence.

You can develop and verify your own budget if you have the appropriate skills, qualifications or experience obtained through a training program endorsed

by the Department of Environment and Science.

We recognise the commitment to improved practices by growers who are



already accredited under the Smartcane BMP program.

These growers do not need to use an appropriate person to develop or verify their budget. They will also be the lowest priority for compliance inspections under the Reef protection regulations.

Growers in these regions must also comply with the minimum practice agricultural standards which include requirements relating to keeping records, applying fertiliser and having appropriate erosion and sediment control measures.

The regulations are designed to help retain nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment on your farm to minimise run-off, improve profitability, productivity and local water quality.

Find out more at www.qld.gov.au/ReefRegulations

Reef protection regulations

IMPORTANT INFORMATION for sugarcane growers in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin and Mackay Whitsunday regions

From 1 December 2021, under the minimum practice agricultural standard, you will need a farm nitrogen and phosphorus budget to calculate the amount of fertiliser you can apply. This must be developed prior to applying fertiliser in the 2022 season.

The requirements still use soil testing and the regulated method (including parts of the SIX EASY STEPS™), to work out N and P rates for each block. However, you can now refine these rates across your farm as long as you do not exceed the whole-of-farm amount.

Refining rates with support from an appropriately skilled person and based on sound agronomy can help to improve nutrient use efficiency.

Find out more

For further information, including a video outlining the process to develop a budget, or to order an information pack:

visit | www.qld.gov.au/ReefRegulations

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REACCREDITATIONS SHOW BEST PRACTICE HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE

By Kate Gowdie
Smartcane BMP Manager

With 20% of all accredited growers successfully undertaking third party reaccreditation in the past 12 months, Queensland sugarcane farmers are proving that their sustainable, profitable and productive practices are not a one-off.

The vast number of successful reaccreditations, coupled with the extremely high retention rate for accredited growers is testament to the flexibility of the program that ensures participants are operating at or above industry best practice while at the same time farming their way.

Smartcane BMP has a retention rate for accredited growers of over 98%. The majority of growers who didn't renew their accreditation had sold their property or changed what they farmed.

CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri, who grows sugarcane at Farleigh near Mackay with his brother Joe, *pictured right*, was one of the many growers who was reaccredited in 2021 after initially becoming accredited in 2016.

"Farming on the Queensland coast is one of the most environmentally challenging roles, but this shows we are up for the challenge," Paul said.

Paul believes that while initially there may be some new concepts to get your head around when working towards



accreditation, once you have the right systems in place it's only a matter of documenting the work that you are already doing.

After being BMP accredited for the past five years, Neil Maitland, pictured left, from the Mulgrave district found the reaccreditation process straight forward.

"Once you work out a record keeping system or the templates that are easy for you to maintain, it makes it easy when it comes time for the reaccreditation."

"Once you work out a record keeping system or the templates that are easy for you to maintain, it makes it easy when it comes time for the reaccreditation."

Neil Maitland



Smartcane BMP facilitator John Barbetti assisted several growers from the Tablelands district with their re-accreditation in 2021.

"There is a growing realisation that Smartcane BMP is providing growers with a farm management system that allows them to compare and measure sustainability in farm management for a range of practices from environmental, cultural, financial, safety and forward pricing," John said.

In 2022, more than 80 enterprises will undertake reaccreditation, moving towards 30% of all accredited growers maintaining the Smartcane BMP standards for five years or more.

We wish to congratulate all accredited growers on their commitment to their industry. We recognise the work they do each and every day to ensure Australian sugarcane farming is both valuable and sustainable. ■

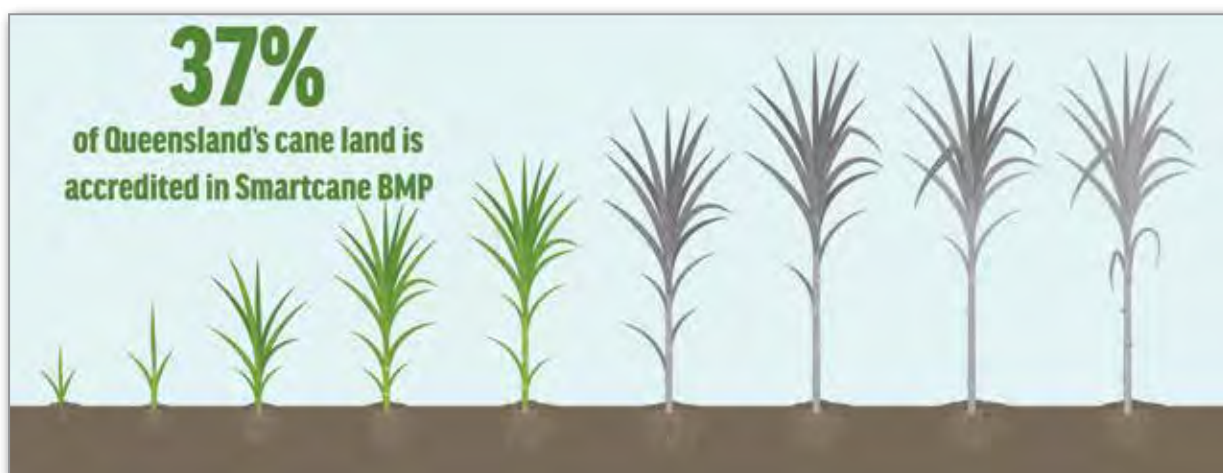
Pictured: (top left) Neil Maitland proudly displays his Smartcane BMP Accredited Grower sign amongst a Sun Hemp fallow crop on his Aloomba cane farm; (left) Joe and Paul Schembri's Mackay cane farming business was just one of many farms reaccredited in 2021; (above) Smartcane BMP facilitator John Barbetti assisted Tableland growers with their accreditation.

"There is a growing realisation that Smartcane BMP is providing growers with a farm management system that allows them to compare and measure sustainability in farm management for a range of practices from environmental, cultural, financial, safety and forward pricing."

John Barbetti

Not yet accredited in Smartcane BMP?


Contact your local facilitator or visit www.smartcane.com.au





CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

Supplied by CANEGROWERS district offices

MOSSMAN

 Harvest week - 22

 CCS to date -12.29

 Tonnes to date - 639,890
100.15% crushed to date

With the final wash-up at the end of crushing and minor adjustments made, Mossman Mill crushed 639,890 tonnes of cane for a mill average of 12.29 CCS and toll-crushed 93,399 tonnes of cane at the MSF Tableland mill.

The November rainfall managed to surpass the monthly average by about 25mm. There haven't been excessive falls during December but most areas have received a good drenching so plant and ratooning cane is getting away to a good start for 2022.

CANEGROWERS Mossman held its AGM on 23 November 2021, which was well attended. Growers heard from **Peter Dibella** about factory performance and production statistics, from **Bronwyn Dwyer** about the latest bio-precinct developments regarding value-add, from **Gavin Rodman**, SRA District Manager for Far North, about the change to SRA structure, personnel and services, and finally from **Ash Bessant** about the Queensland Country Health offer for CANEGROWERS members.

Gavin was back again on 29 November with SRA Chair **Rowena McNally**, CEO **Ros Baker** and executive manager for Industry services **Hywel Cook**, pictured, with miller

and grower representatives to talk about the industry, future plans, and to hear feedback on how SRA should be performing.

On 6 December, MAS and Terrain ramped up the Prod180 project with a workshop for growers on farm drainage treatment systems and how they can help manage water flow and runoff, which in turn may assist with improved yields and less loss of nutrients and herbicides. Growers have the opportunity to put forward an Expression of Interest in a Grants Program MAS will be running as part of a Prod180 project milestone.


Mill and grower industry representatives met with SRA on 9 December to talk about Ratoon Stunting Disease (RSD) research and the problems RSD is causing throughout many cane growing districts. It is becoming a major industry obstruction in some districts due to its prevalence within plant and ratooning cane and the lack of action being taken by many growers to manage their risks and the spread. The MAS and Terrain NRM Prod180 project is also targeting this issue in the Mossman cane growing area as part of its objectives to improve grower and industry yield.



TABLELAND

 Harvest week - 26

 CCS to date -14.02

 Tonnes to date -630,508
100.08% crushed to date

The season has finished for both mills, not without some issues along the way due to poor mill performance and reduction in quality and quantity of cane.

Mossman Mill finished a 22-week season on 3 November 2021 reporting a total of 639,948 tonnes crushed with a CCS of 12.27. The mill continues with the value adding project and the pilot program has commenced. Interesting times ahead.

Tableland Mill completed the 2021 season crush of 26 weeks on 21 November 2021. Total tonnes crushed were 630,508 with a CCS of 14.02.

Both mills are to be congratulated on getting the cane crushed.

This season has seen a reduction in tonnes per hectare and CCS across the whole of industry, which has caused concern for both mills. The market has rallied with some good pricing

available until 2024 season. Hopefully growers have taken advantage of the good prices.


The AGM was held on the 25 November at the Mareeba Leagues Club. There were representatives from Mossman and Tableland mills giving a summary of mill performance and the season in general. Professor **Frikkie Botha** (University of Queensland) was the guest speaker, presenting on the energy cane trials being held on the Tablelands and in the Mossman area. **Drewe Burgess**, agronomist attached to the Tableland office, gave a quick summary on importance of irrigation, but also the correct amount of water and scheduling, to get optimum returns. Thank you to all who attended and those who gave presentations.

Happy New Year to all members from the team at CANEGROWERS Tableland.

CAIRNS

 Harvest week - 23

 CCS to date - 11.49

 Tonnes to date - 1,195,036
100.01% crushed to date

As the year draws to an end, growers are finalising spraying and fallow crop planting prior to Christmas.

The CANEGROWERS Cairns Region AGM was held on 23 November 2021 at the Gordonvale Bowls Club. CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** attended as the guest speaker and updated attendees on the organisation's focus for the future and the recently-released school resources that have been developed by CANEGROWERS.

To date, the direct drill planter has assisted members to plant over 150 hectares of fallow crops, with growers still in line to

hire the implement. The mud spreader has also been in high demand this season, assisting members to apply mill by-products direct into plant cane drill of over 105 hectares of plant cane across the district.

QSL representatives have been in the area holding grower meetings, as well as meeting with CANEGROWERS Cairns Region representatives.


The organisation, on behalf of QSL-aligned growers, is continuing to engage with all parties to achieve better outcomes regarding availability of pools.



INNISFAIL

 Harvest week - 24

 CCS to date - 11.45

 Tonnes to date - 1,226,206
100.02% crushed to date

A small number of growers in the Innisfail district are exploring their non-delivery options with the 2021 crop performing well below estimate.

Innisfail district growers continue to support Smartcane BMP with many completing their reaccreditations or becoming newly accredited in recent weeks.

Feral pigs continues to cause significant damage to otherwise promising ratoons across the region with CANEGROWERS Innisfail, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, and MSF Sugar now combining their efforts to develop an integrated program of works to reduce pig populations.

In late November, the Board and management of CANEGROWERS Innisfail welcomed the opportunity to meet the newly appointed Chair of SRA, **Rowena McNally**.

This meeting, which included SRA CEO **Ros Baker**, Executive Manager Industry Services **Hywel Cook** and District Manager Far North **Gavin Rodman**, was extremely positive regarding the short, medium and long-term needs of the district. MSF Sugar representatives were also an integral part of these discussions.

In early December, the organisation held its annual post-season grower meeting with many topics being discussed, including mill performance, non-delivery options, workplace health and safety issues, GBRF project funding, and Smartcane BMP.

CANEGROWERS Innisfail farewells **Dalton Howden** as he and his fiancé move back to the Sunshine Coast.

Dalton, *pictured with Peter Angelini*, joined the team as a trainee Extension Officer in February 2019 under the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project and his contributions to this project and other initiatives have been highly valued. We wish Dalton and Amy all the best for their future.





Continues next page ►

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

HERBERT RIVER

 Harvest week -25

 CCS to date -12.71

 Tonnes to date - 3,801,168
97.72% crushed to date

It was a challenging season in the Herbert, with tonnes, sugar, milling and transport all impacted by wet weather and all too frequent breakdowns at the mill.

The final production figures for the Herbert saw Macknade Mill crush 1,247,179 tonnes for the season at a CCS of 12.7 and Victoria Mill crush 2,550,049 at a CCS of 12.8. The miller has reported that Macknade and Victoria have a large maintenance and capital program in place with work already commencing on jobs.

As we reflect on how challenging the past year has been, now is a good time to prepare for the slack and enjoy some family time.

Earlier this year we saw the official launch of the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program. As part of the Reef Trust Partnership, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, in collaboration with CANEGROWERS Herbert River and a

number of program partners, implemented a series of regional projects aimed at improving the quality of water flowing from the Herbert River catchment.

We look forward to again educating growers on how these projects are being delivered on-ground by the Herbert sugar industry and the addition of the Major Grants Project commencing in late January.


CANEGROWERS Herbert River Radio has proven to be popular among growers who have been able to access the online radio station via the CANEGROWERS Herbert River website. More than just music, it is an information station including local news and weather updates, regional district round-ups and podcasts.

The CANEGROWERS Herbert River Board and staff hope all members had a very merry Christmas and may 2022 be a prosperous year for all.

BURDEKIN

 Harvest week - 27

 CCS to date - 14.38

 Tonnes to date - 7,839,565
99.87% crushed to date

The last of the Burdekin sugar factories, Inkerman Mill, crushed out on 9 December 2021, bringing the season to a close. It was muddy finish, with wet weather gear required to haul cane out of wet paddocks.

The district ended up harvesting 7.88 million tonnes of cane and the statistics across all four of the mills were as follows:

| Item | Kalamia | Invicta | Pioneer | Inkerman | Total |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Start | 8/6/21 | 8/6/21 | 8/6/21 | 8/6/21 | 8/6/21 |
| Finish | 10/11/21 | 11/11/21 | 13/11/21 | 9/12/21 | 9/12/21 |
| Tonnes | 1,552,306 | 3,050,928 | 1,625,328 | 1,654,431 | 7,882,993 |
| Reliability | 91% | 88% | 91% | 79% | 87% |
| CCS Provisional | 14.13 | 14.5 | 14.6 | 14.24 | 14.39 |

The original estimate for the 2021 season was for 7,970,000, which was later revised down in-season to 7,850,000. The actual tonnes crushed came in between these two estimates. The forecast CCS for the 2021 season was 14.62, but this was set back after the rain event on 31 August from which a CCS recovery did not eventuate. The overall Burdekin provisional CCS was 14.39 which was 0.23 units below budget.

The North Bank mills had a great season due to good mill performance, which enabled them to finish crushing in mid-November, just in the nick of time before a wide-spread rain event occurred. Mill performance in the North Bank ranged from 88% - 91% and this type of reliability resulted in growers getting their cane off within an acceptable timeframe, which enabled ground to be worked in preparation for next season.

The South Bank was a different outcome with a reliability rate of just 79% at Inkerman Mill. This is a poor result that is clearly not acceptable nor sustainable. Had Inkerman Mill not experienced the level of breakdowns that it did, then this mill


would have also had a mid-November finish instead of being nearly a full month behind the other mills. We need Wilmar to deliver a 90% reliability rate across all of their mills as both Wilmar and the growers benefit from good mill performance.


CBL held its AGM on 1 December, which 63 growers attended. It was heartening to see this level of interest from growers. Members got to hear from Chairman **Phil Marano** and guest speaker CANEGROWERS Chairman **Paul Schembri**, and both announced their retirements after many decades of representing growers.


We will be sorry to see them go and we have all benefitted from their leadership and their valued contribution to the sugar cane industry and wish them all the best for their futures.



PROSERPINE

 Harvest week - 22

 CCS to date - 14.43

 Tonnes to date - 1,556,289
100.02% crushed to date

Proserpine's 2021 crushing season was wrapped-up on 19 November. Since then, growers have been busy preparing the 2022 crop.

Intermittent showers have supported crop development and there is quiet expectation for a reasonable crop next year. While some useful rainfalls have been received, not all areas have benefitted.

With minimal rain forecast for most of the month, growers are expecting to be

irrigating over the Christmas and New Year period.

A community Cut-out Party was held on 4 December with over 300 people in attendance. This inaugural event was organised by 'Farmers500plus' with all proceeds donated to The Black Dog Institute. To support the event, special edition 2022 calendars are on sale for \$25 from participating local businesses.




Pictured: CANEGROWERS Matt Kealley with Proserpine grower and harvesting contractor, Lui Raiteri at the Proserpine Cut-out party.

TULLY

 Harvest week - 26

 CCS to date - 12.40

 Tonnes to date - 2,513,803
100.03% crushed to date

A big thank you to all involved in growing, harvesting and milling for making it a safe season. The 2021 Season was completed on 4 December, with a final tonnage of 2,513,803 and a season to date CCS on 12.40. It was a big effort from all involved to get the crop off, with rain threatening in the final week.

The early forecast for 2022 is good, with additional plantings and rain boosting the plant cane and ratoons.


There will be a review of the season in the new year, looking at what worked and any improvements that might be made.

Industry recently met the SRA Chair **Rowena McNally** and CEO **Ros Baker** and discussed future work plans and what was important to Tully. The industry meetings with SRA around the Local Expert Analysis (LEA) is progressing with the formation of working groups to progress items to be the focus of the Tully Strategic Plan.

MACKAY

 Harvest week - 28

 CCS to date - 13.93

 Tonnes to date - 4,933,052
91.5% crushed to date

Plane Creek Mill wrapped up the 2021 crushing season on Sunday 12 December with the last cane crushed at 10.33 pm.

The mill processed just over 28,000 tonnes in its final week, bringing the total for the 2021 season to 1.367 million tonnes.

The final season CCS was 14.34 units.

The highest final week CCS was 14.7 units from a rake of Q183 1R from the Ilbilbie productivity district.

Meanwhile, Mackay Sugar's mills continue to crush with an end to the season not expected until between 27-31 December.

As at 12 December, Mackay Sugar was at 91.5% through the estimate with 400,000 tonnes still to be crushed.

The ground remains wet with more storms forecast.

CCS has now dropped, as expected, to around 12 CCS with the cane starting to expend energy on suckering.

However, the Plane Creek average for the whole season was 14.34 while the Mackay Sugar season average is at 13.94.




Pictured: Young growers group tour the Renewable Biocommodities Pilot Plant at Racecourse Mill.

PLANE CREEK

 Harvest week - 26

 CCS to date - 14.34

 Tonnes to date - 1,367,482
100.55% crushed to date


Continues next page ►

CANEGROWERS REGIONAL ROUND-UP

BUNDABERG

 Harvest week - 25

 CCS to date - 14.20

 Tonnes to date - 929,971
99.87% crushed to date

Whilst welcome rain fell across the district there has been significant impact with some grower and mill-owned cane being left behind. The mill ceased on Sunday 12 December.

Bundaberg Sugar Mills processed 13,753.97 tonnes for the week ending 12 December. This brought the season total to 929,970.93 tonnes


The average CCS for Bundaberg Sugar Mill for week 25 was 11.31 CCS, with a season CCS average of 14.20 CCS.


The highest individual CCS for the week was 13.30 units for variety Q252 First Ratoon.

The four major varieties supplied for Week 25 to Millaquin were Q240A with 29.9% of supply and an average CCS of 11.11 units and KQ228 with 27.5% and a CCS average of 11.15, followed by Q240A with 14.6% of supply and a CCS average of 11.45 units and Q252A with 13.5% supply and a CCS average of 12.36 units.

ISIS

 Harvest week - 24

 CCS to date - TBA

 Tonnes to date - 659,902
94.27% crushed to date

After wet weather slowing the end of the 2021 Isis – Maryborough crush, it is anticipated the cutout date will sometime in the week of 20 December.

The main issues CANEGROWERS Isis has been working on for members this month are:

- Currently undertaking a thorough Smartcane BMP district review to underpin an integrated and customised 2022 Reef Ready and Workplace Health and Safety compliance initiative called "We've got your back".
- Hosting the CANEGROWERS Isis and Isis Productivity Ltd Annual General Meetings, *pictured below and right*, held on Friday 10 December with SRA guest speakers Jason Eglinton and Lisa Devereaux.
- Hosting CEO Ros Baker and new Chair Rowena McNally in the district to discuss our southern region priorities.
- Finalising the actions from the internal financial sustainability review putting the final touches on internal efficiencies to support membership to 'do more with less'.
 - Transitioning the district's Irrigation and Energy Initiative supported by Pat Daley to a fee for service across the diversified agribusinesses being serviced.
 - Engaging with the mill on identifying improvements in the 2021 Isis Cane Analysis Program and actively working with Isis Mill staff to improve the reports and data we receive from them in readiness for 2022.
 - Finalised the membership review to enable the district office to better support our members and continue to offer value for levies paid.



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MARYBOROUGH

 Harvest week - 24

 CCS to date - 14.02

 Tonnes to date - 430,284
82.75% crushed to date

CANEGROWERS Maryborough wishes all members and their families a Happy New Year. Hopefully you've had an enjoyable Christmas break.

By the time this update is printed a few things should have happened. We should have finished the 2021 crushing. A last minute surge of harvesting activity as farms have dried out makes the final supply figure a hard one to estimate at time of writing, but 460,000 will be very close to the mark.

We should also have held our AGM and end of season BBQ with Christmas shirts on!

We should have a better idea of transport costs for 2023 & beyond.

We should also have been able to fertilise and / or spray, so that the 2022 crop can continue to show great promise. We also hope for some more rain in January.

Not much to ask for, really.


While 2021 has presented many challenges, the learnings, fixes and changes needed should see 2022 function much better.

The CSA negotiations will be well advanced and with plenty of interest in pricing for 2023, thanks to the current good sugar price, the establishment of a collective pool for that year is a priority.

ROCKY POINT

 Harvest week - 20

 CCS to date - 14.19

 Tonnes to date - 234,094
68.75% crushed to date

The wet weather has continued to cause delays and the harvest finally finished on 18 December.

In the final weeks, CCS has dropped to 12.64.

Unfortunately, Rocky Point has around 96,000 tonnes left as stand over.

The final tonnes crushed were 250,732.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point was looking forward to hosting an End of Season Function/Productivity Awards Night on 23 December.

Deb Telford has been in the region a working with some growers to finalise their Smartcane BMP accreditations.

Growers are looking for some fine weather to finish fertilizing and to plant soybeans.



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GROWERS

The Queensland Government recently announced that, “New drought assistance programs will focus on fostering greater preparedness and business resilience for a broader range of eligible Queensland primary producers”.

While the sugarcane industry is not often at the forefront of drought assistance programs, cane growers can benefit from the Farm Business Resilience Program.

This program, funded by the state and federal governments, has enabled CANEGROWERS to build on the success of the Pricing Essentials workshops launched in 2021.

We have expanded on the concept and are now offering a new course, CANEGROWERS Business Essentials – professional development for growers.

The objective is to provide tools that growers can use to deliver greater profitability and therefore improve business resilience.

The course will take the form of a two-day workshop, similar to the Pricing Essentials course but without the TAFE involvement.

These workshops will give growers the tools to determine their costs of production, understand the sugar market cycle, and lock in forward pricing with more confidence.

INDUSTRY AND FARM INPUTS BURN ASHBURNER

As one of last year’s participants said, “If you understand your cost of production and the market cycle, you can get a lot of leverage and make sure you don’t go broke.”

Growers will also be encouraged and assisted to develop a good business plan, or the equivalent of a Farm Business Resilience Plan, by the end of the workshop.

This business plan is required in order to access other drought assistance in the form of grants and loans through QRIDA.

One of the new drought assistance measures which is perhaps more applicable to cane growers (particularly irrigated growers) will be the Drought Preparedness Grants through QRIDA.

Primary producers can now apply for a grant of 25% of the cost of purchasing new permanent capital infrastructure to a maximum amount of \$50,000.

The grant aims to assist producers with the cost of implementing on-farm capital improvements and carrying out drought preparedness activities identified in their Farm Business Resilience Plan.

I would encourage all growers and family members involved in the business to attend the CANEGROWERS Business Essentials workshops.

You will learn more about how to look at your business and the sugar market, and will have some good discussions with knowledgeable presenters and fellow growers.

Please refer to pages 12-13 for additional information and how to register your interest. ■

KEY POINTS:

- ▶ CANEGROWERS is building on the success of the Pricing Essentials workshops launched in 2021. We have expanded on the concept and are now offering a new course, CANEGROWERS Business Essentials – professional development for growers.
- ▶ These workshops will give growers the tools to determine their costs of production, understand the sugar market cycle, and lock in forward pricing with more confidence. Growers will also be encouraged and assisted to develop a Farm Business Resilience Plan required to access drought assistance.
- ▶ Primary producers can now apply for a grant of 25% of the cost of purchasing new permanent capital infrastructure to a maximum amount of \$50,000.

A YEAR FOR OPTIMISM AND OF OPPORTUNITY!

An upswing in prices was a feature of the sugar market late in 2021. As we enter 2022, the up trend appears set to be replaced by a period of prices trading in a constructive US18-20c/lb range.

The weaker Aussie dollar, down 6% and now buying USD0.71, has provided a huge boost to forward sugar prices for the 2022, 2023 and 2024 seasons.

Aside from sugar fundamentals, how speculators react to a range of macro factors – potential new strains of COVID, economic growth, rising inflation, the threat of rising interest rates, and uncertainty about oil prices as the world deals with the politics of climate change, to name a few – are likely to drive further sugar price and currency volatility and with it opportunity.

The ABARES *Financial performance of sugarcane farmers 2020-21* report indicated that the financial performance and profitability for cane farms had improved since 2013-14 due to higher yields, larger farms and lower interest payments. Identifying higher prices amongst other things, ABARES also predicted further improvements in financial performance in the 2021 season.

Unfortunately, wet weather, mill reliability and related issues means some growers will not capture the full extent of the projected gains from the 2021 harvest.

The upside of recent wet weather is that in many districts the growing season for the 2022 crop is off to a good start. Reflecting the price upturn and strong price outlook, we have received reports that in some districts additional land is being planted to cane. A welcome sign that optimism is returning.

Further good news is that Australia, Guatemala and Brazil have secured a comprehensive win in the World Trade Organization (WTO) against India's price-distorting sugar production measures and export subsidies.

The WTO Panel found that India was acting inconsistently with its WTO obligations, specifically that domestic price supports are in excess of the permitted level and should be reduced to comply and that export contingent subsidies are prohibited and should be withdrawn.

In September, the Indian government announced that it would not be providing export subsidies for its 2021/22 season. It also announced the accelerated roll out of India's roadmap for ethanol blending, which will see six million tonnes of sugar diverted to ethanol production by 2025/26. This vision for ethanol was reinforced in India's COP-26 pledge of sourcing 50% of its energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030.

Without export subsidies, the world sugar price needs to be around US20c/lb to attract Indian exports.

Uncertainty remains about the strength of sugarcane recovery from drought in CS-Brazil. Oil prices are expected to remain firm in 2022, as travel returns so expect Brazil's mills to look closely at ethanol / sugar parity prices when making their production decisions. If sugar falls below US18c/lb, ethanol production is likely to be more attractive than sugar.

While ongoing price volatility seems assured, 2022 looks set to be a year for optimism and a year of opportunity for growers looking to increase their sugarcane production.

Register your interest in CANEGROWERS Business Essentials which commences soon. This program is designed to assist growers navigate the complex sugar world with confidence. ■



TRADE AND ECONOMICS WARREN MALES

KEY POINTS:

- The weaker Aussie dollar has provided a huge boost to forward sugar prices for the 2022, 2023 and 2024 seasons.
- Financial performance and profitability for cane farms had improved since 2013-14 due to higher yields, larger farms and lower interest payments.
- Australia, Guatemala and Brazil have secured a comprehensive win in the World Trade Organization (WTO) against India's price-distorting sugar production measures and export subsidies.
- 2022 looks set to be a year for optimism and opportunity for growers looking to increase their sugarcane production.



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

MICK QUIRK

KEY POINTS:

- Sugarcane is unlikely to be under great pressure domestically to reduce its emissions. Growing sugarcane produces only about 0.5% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions. There could even be opportunities for growers in the market for carbon credits
- Cane farming emissions arise mainly from the use of fossil fuels (fuel, electricity) and fertiliser (nitrous oxide losses).
- One of the potential downsides is the imposition of 'carbon' taxes on Australian exports by countries or trading zones with more ambitious emission reduction targets.

DEMYSTIFYING 'NET ZERO'

There has been a lot of talk recently about reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide.

Ice-core measurements indicate average global CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere during the mid-1800s were around 280 parts per million (ppm). This concentration now sits around 417 ppm, following a very rapid rise since the 1950s.

Net zero emissions is now the aim. But what does 'net zero' mean? And how do we know when a country, or the planet, reaches this goal?

Achieving net zero emissions means that an entity, be it Australia, China, or the planet, has achieved an overall balance, each year, between the amount of greenhouse gases it emits and the amount it removes from the atmosphere (in vegetation or soil).

While the world continues to generate net positive emissions, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will continue to increase and, consequently, the potential for global warming also increases.

Should the whole planet reach net zero, the total amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will stabilise. It does not mean that the risk of human-induced global warming has declined though, as the accumulated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, apart from methane, will remain for many decades. But it does put a ceiling on the amount of heating that could occur. That is why you hear mention of various targets for emission reductions that are needed to limit likely temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

What are the implications for the cane industry from Australia's adoption of a 2050 target to achieve net zero emissions?

Australia currently emits about 550 Mt CO₂e each year, so there is work to be done to reach net zero.

On the upside, sugarcane is unlikely to be under great pressure domestically to reduce its emissions. The ag sector is responsible for about 15% of Australia's emissions, and most of this due to methane emissions from livestock. Growing sugarcane produces only about 0.5% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions.

There could even be opportunities for growers in the market for carbon credits. Cane farming emissions arise mainly from the use of fossil fuels (fuel, electricity) and fertiliser (nitrous oxide losses). So, the best opportunity could be an approach that reduces emissions from a combination of practices related to cultivation, fertiliser and irrigation.

Increasing soil carbon levels is another option. However, organic carbon levels in cane soils remain remarkably static, even with all the retention of trash, so R&D is needed to sort this out.

One of the potential downsides is the imposition of 'carbon' taxes on Australian exports by countries or trading zones with more ambitious emission reduction targets. The EU, for example, is already establishing what they call a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

The opportunities and risks from Australia's adoption of the 2050 net zero target require a proactive approach from industry if we are to ensure any upside is maximised and any downside is avoided. ■

Happy New Year

Welcome to 2022! When I hear the number 22, it immediately transports me back to the 90's, sitting in my car listening to comedian Billy Birmingham doing his famous impressions of the cricket commentary s the Twelfth Man.

"Two for twenty-two," was a famous line and if you know it, you will be parroting that back to yourself right now.

After the difficult two years we've had with COVID-19, I'm hoping that, like **Billy Birmingham's** impersonations, 2022 brings us a bit of light relief.

Pandemic interruptions and lockdowns have made member engagement challenging, but as we open back up, I am looking forward to what this year brings.

Engaging young growers

Membership engagement activities for 2022 will continue to focus on face-to-face meetings with growers.

Pleasingly, we managed to hold meetings in most districts in 2021, with good attendance. I firmly believe community is important to the future of CANEGROWERS and it was great to see our community in action at the first-ever Proserpine Cut Out Party, *pictured below*, to celebrate the 2021 sugarcane harvest.

What a marvellous event!

More than 300 people attended from all parts of the sugar supply chain. It was family-friendly and had a strong sense of community with a mix of growers, harvesters and haulout contractors, millers, and businesses that are part of the local industry.

Indi Lade, Shirley Norris and the Proserpine young growers group organised a great evening, which

was supported by many local businesses, with proceeds going to the Black Dog Institute for men's mental health.

The young grower community is alive and well and it's great to see - and it's not just in Proserpine with Rocky Point, Mackay and Cairns also having vibrant young growers' groups.

I am looking forward to working with them, understanding what they would like from CANEGROWERS and encouraging them to get more involved with the organisation.

Some of this work has started and is an outcome from the 2021 CANEGROWERS member survey. A focus group-style workshop with growers aged under-30 has been held to ask about their needs and what they want from CANEGROWERS.

The responses will be used to guide CANEGROWERS to better engage with younger growers and follow-up work will occur in 2022.

January is planning month

Finally, if you are enjoying some well-deserved time off but find your mind wandering to farm work, don't forget to look at the CANEGROWERS website for some useful tools and services.

CANEGROWERS offers plenty of benefits for growers, so don't hesitate to give your local office a call or check out the members resources section at www.canegrowers.com.au

All the best for a marvellous 2022! ■



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





Road to legal liability

Growers regularly raise with me the legal liabilities arising in two common circumstances, mud on roads and irrigation overspray on roads. In both circumstances growers, their contractors and employees should do all they reasonably can to avoid interfering with roads and road users. The purpose of this article is to explain the potential legal liabilities that can arise.

PROSECUTION FOR BREACH OF ROAD AND TRAFFIC LAWS

There are a variety of state and local council laws which make it unlawful for any person to interfere with or cause any matter or substance to be deposited on state or local roads.

The *Transport Infrastructure Act* (section 33) prohibits a person from interfering with a state-controlled road. The *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act* (section 137) makes it an offence for any person to deposit or drop on a road any substance likely to cause injury or damage to another person or vehicle. It is also an offence under this Act if the substance is not promptly removed.

The Traffic Regulations (section 149 and 151) also prohibit a person from interfering with, or depositing anything, on a state or local road that may cause an obstruction or danger to any person or traffic.

Most local councils will also have local laws dealing with road use. For example, Mackay Regional Council has subordinate Local Law (No.4) that prohibits any activity that creates a nuisance on a road. A nuisance is really anything that unreasonably interferes with the public's entitlement to reasonable and safe use of a road.

The depositing, even unintentionally, of mud or water overspray on a road could potentially be in breach of these various state and local laws. Fines and penalties can be imposed.



By Chris Cooper,
CANEGROWERS
Legal Advisor



CIVIL LIABILITY FOR ACCIDENT, LOSS AND DAMAGE

Road users have a general duty of care to other road users. They must not do or allow anything to be done which will, or is likely, to cause damage or injury to another road user. Every road user must exercise reasonable care when using a road.

If a road user was injured or suffered vehicle damage as a result of mud on roads or water over spray, then there may well be a course of action available to the injured person to recover damages and compensation from the person who caused the mud or water to be on the road.

PROSECUTION UNDER WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY RULES

Persons in charge or control of a work place and working operations have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of those involved in or coming into connection with work activity.

The use of contractors can have an impact on the extent of responsibility and liability for mud and water on roads. As a general rule, growers are not liable or responsible for the acts of their independent contractors.

However, there are always exceptions to the general rule, and the risk to the grower still remains even if the relevant activity is carried out by a contractor.

Growers of course are directly liable and responsible for the acts of their employees.

Always in these liability and responsibility questions, the particular facts and circumstances of each case must be taken into consideration.

However, there is no doubt that there is a risk of prosecution and liability and civil responsibility for the depositing of mud and or water on roads.

Growers should take all reasonable steps to ensure that mud and water overspray do not interfere with the neighbouring roads.

If there are no alternatives, then actively consider what steps can be taken to minimise the interference and to limit to risk of any problems arising.

Use farm and minor roads where possible and keep to low speeds. Use practical measures to remove or limit the amount of mud being deposited .

Local education programs in conjunction with the council may help, while placing warning signs on the side of roads may also assist road users.

It is also essential that growers maintain comprehensive public liability and business management liability insurance cover.

(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. ■

CANEGROWERS community news

Agripreneurial sponsorship

CANEGROWERS Mackay recently sponsored Grade 11 student **Jessie Borg**'s participation in a course designed to teach secondary students entrepreneurial thinking in agriculture.

The course, called Entrepreneurial Learning in Action, is funded by AgriFutures, a research and development organisation working to advance agriculture.

Jessie had to create a new agribusiness idea and learn how to pitch the concept to potential investors.

Her idea 'AgriLink', is a business that connects Australian farmers via an app to help them find employees during a farm labor shortage crisis.

The app would also help rural families to connect and support each other with



mental health initiatives and would provide training videos specific to the agricultural sector.

At the end of the course, Jessie gave a Zoom presentation to judges

from Westpac Davidson Institute, AgriFutures and EvokeAG, as well as the 117 student participants at the National Brilliant Business Kids Festival on 15 October.

If you have news to share with the CANEGROWERS community, send us an email editor@canegrowers.com.au

Calling young growers

A free social get-together for a new young growers group in the Mackay/Plane Creek region will be held at 5.30pm on Friday 21 January.

It will launch a young farmers group and outline plans for activities during the slack.

A group of growers from across the region met in October 2021 to talk about developing and enhancing an industry young growers (18-40) group, with the objective of encouraging networking for support and sharing new ideas and activities.

Interest was expressed in helping to facilitate the group from CANEGROWERS Mackay, Mackay Sugar, Wilmar, SRA, MAPS, PCPSL, ACFA, DAF, and the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) and Racecourse Projects.



Young growers who are interested in attending the launch should RSVP for catering purposes to **Stephanie Duncan**, sroberts@sugarresearch.com.au or 0459 863 298 or to **Chris Walker** Christine_walker@canegrowers.com.au or 0427 178 370.

Pictured: A group of young growers talk to George Williams on farm at Racecourse Projects.

CANEGROWERS remembers

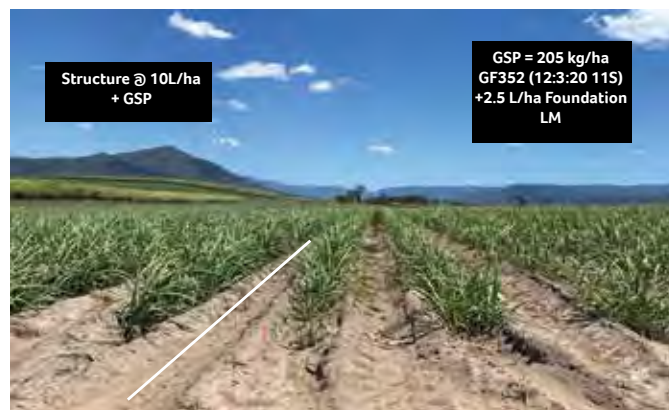
CANEGROWERS Herbert River expresses condolences to the family of Peter Costanzo, who died recently.

Peter was an active, constructive and loyal CANEGROWERS Herbert River member. He served on the Victoria Mill Suppliers Committee from 1989-92 and as a Councillor with Hinchinbrook Shire Council from 1991-94.

Introducing Structure; Highly Efficient Phosphate Technology.

Using Structure (9-12-0 0.26Zn +7% RCT) ensures your crop gets more available phosphorus, potentially reducing your environmental footprint.

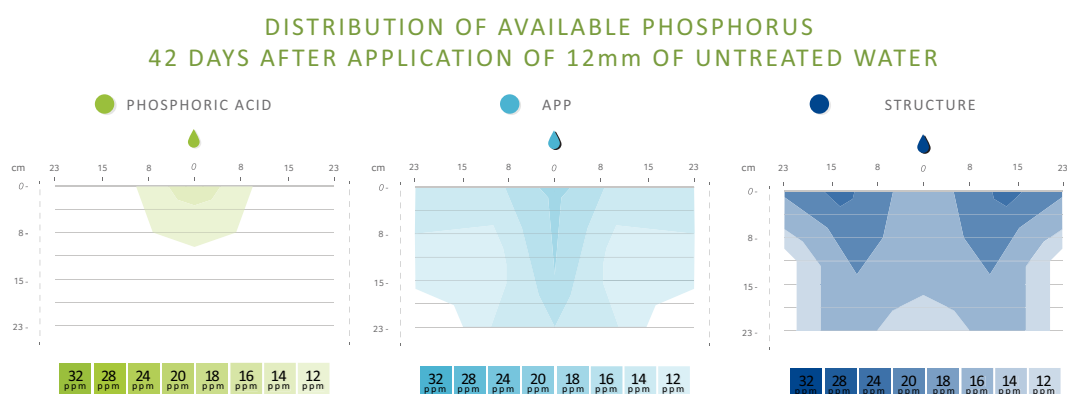
The phosphorus challenge for cane growers is being able to supply the sugarcane crop with enough phosphorus to optimize productivity whilst reducing runoff losses to the environment. Phosphorus strategies are evolving to comply with the reef SIX EASY STEPS nutrient management plan. With this comes, in some cases limited application of phosphorus fertiliser to the sugarcane fields. Nutrien Ag Solutions® proprietary product, Structure, is a liquid Phosphorus product that is more efficient at delivering phosphorus to the plant than standard phosphorus products, especially in high phosphorus fixing type soils. The soil types that lead to phosphorus tie up are dominated by aluminum and iron in acid soils and calcium and magnesium in alkaline soils.



Grower commercial trial 2021 Pinnacle QLD

The trial above was in the Mackay region, Structure was added to the fungicide at planting at 10L/ha on top of 250 kg per ha of GF352.

This diagram below shows how Structure, as a source of phosphorus, is more efficient in these high fixing soil types. This research was conducted at the University of California and presented at the Fluid Fertilizer Foundation journal. You can see how phosphoric acid (precursor to MAP & DAP) and APP move less and are less available over time giving more efficient phosphorus fertiliser. Structure has been tested in addition to grower standard practice at planting, as per the above trial.





Outstanding phosphorus availability.



Structure



Loveland

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Find out more [lovelandagriproducts.com.au](https://www.lovelandagriproducts.com.au) or contact your local Nutrien Ag Solutions branch.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

FIRST 5 LINES FREE* FOR CANEGROWERS MEMBERS!

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

Next deadline is **18 January 2022**

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

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HBM Single row planter 2014 model, 2 x 150 Litre stainless tanks fitted, 1.6 or 1.8 planting. Very Good Condition.

CAMECO CH2500 Track frames, undercarriage rollers fitted, no hubs or chains. Case pumpbox 2006 model with pumps

TOFT 6500 track frames, chains fitted and rollers, no drive hubs. Toft 6500 pumpbox and pumps

Whole Topper late model CASE as new complete with hydraulic valve. Suit 7000/8000

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International tractor 766D rear tyres 18-4-38. A good reliable worker. \$6,500 + GST. Ph: 0412797006.

Fiat 980 2WD-3,500hrs, Fiat 1000 2WD - 5,000hrs, John Deere 4040 2WD - 3,600hrs, Chamberlain JD 4080 2 WD - 5,000hrs, Case 2590 2WD - 5,700hrs, Michigan 110-14 Elevator Scraper-new engine & spare engine, D Massey Ferguson 3635 4WD - 5,500hrs, 6tonne tipper bin, Silvan Euro Spand CX2 spreader, portable bulk bin, Hustler Super Z Zero turn mower, Massey Ferguson 148 - 1,396hrs, Bunning Lowlander Mk 40-60 Ag Spreader (near new), complete tracks to suit cane harvester, half tracks to suit cane harvester and fuel trailer tank. Mulgrave Area. Ph: 0407160673. A 4-tonne stool splitter with confidor tank. 4 years old. Ph: 0473332751.

Expressions of Interest - 2014 Miller Nitro 5240 3450 hours. 4400L tank, 400L rinse tank. Hyd shift from 3m to 4m centres. 4 wheel steer. 26m Boom with 250mm nozzle spacing. Set up to take Irvin Legs. Ph: 0427238320.

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

Mackay-Proserpine

Case 8810 track harvester (1 year warranty & approx 1500hrs). Massey Ferguson 7720 Tractor (approx. 1100hrs). 1994 Carta 12 tonne elevator bin. 2001 Acco truck - service truck (includes 3000 litre diesel tank and auto pump, CFM185 compressor & enclosed area with tool box). 10 Tonne Smithy bin. 2007 Acco truck & yellow bin. 10 Tonne blue tipper bin. Proserpine area. For further information & prices Ph: Joh - 0404772118, Marvin - 0427647168, Eddie - 0437261021. Howard 80" AH rotary hoe fully reconditioned. Howard 80" AR rotary hoe reconditioned x 2. Parts available for Howard AR, AH & HR models. Taking orders for reconditioning of hoes on AR, AH & HR models with most sizes available. Ph: 0407643441 or 49595883.

Case Track Harvester 8800 2016 Model, new tracks, sprockets, elevator chain, serviced

& work ready, 4691 Hrs, VG Condition; 10T Cane side tipper bin; 10T Cane side tipper bin on 2 axle trailer. Prices negotiable. Proserpine. Ph: 0408755453 or 0438755459. .

FARM IMPLEMENTS: various including: McLeod 5-leg ripper; McLeod 2-leg ripper; Double-row ratoon grubbers with arch; Hodge 4-furrow reversible plough; Cane break pusher; McLeod 3-row frame. Call for prices. Ph: 0417612883.

CHAMBERLAIN C6100: very good condition; enclosed ROPS cab; Perkins 6354 engine, high-flow hydraulic pump; draw bar; good tyres. \$7,000 + GST. Ph: 0417612883.

6 tonne Farview engineering side tipper, \$15,000. Ph: 0407761364.

1997 Cameco 2500, full track. Wrecking. Ph: 0427185558.

Massey Ferguson 8110 4-wheel drive with cab, 135hp, only 2,636 hours in good condition. \$55,000 incl. GST. Ph: 0438606578.

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

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

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

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Good Condition with many added extras

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Classifieds

Celli Tiger spike hoe, 2.5m wide with hydraulic crumble roller and oil cooler. Very good condition. Mackay. Ph: 0438606578.
6t side tipper Ian Ritchie, Excellent condition \$15,000 + GST. Ph: 0478719294.

Bundaberg-Rocky Point

K-line Speedtiller 2900 Model Ford 8401 coupled to 6 tonne Ritchie tipper, new 23-1-34 tyres, PTO clutch, hydraulic pump high-low, air con, also wet weather buggy wheels. \$22,000 incl GST. Will separate. Ph: 0409875241.

4.5m cut, currently on 4m cut. This machine is a folding 3 point linkage machine for travel up the road. Very good condition. \$39,000 + GST ono. Ph: 0458212792.

1 Massey Ferguson 102 cane harvester, VG working condition, 205 elevator, enlarged primary ceiling fan, on tracks. \$3,000 + GST negotiable. Ph: 0477704134.

Wanted

Tyres and Rims to Suit 411R Fiat – 13.6 x 28 Steering Box 434 International Tractor. Mulgrave Area. Ph: 0409761715.

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

Positions Vacant

Position available on a sugarcane farm in the Tully Area. Duties involve the preparation of farm land, fertilising, spraying, machinery maintenance and general farm duties. Must have Drivers licence. Experience in the operation of farm equipment preferred. Contact 0418181646.

Work Wanted

48 yo male seeking employment (general shed duties (not welding)) 1 day per week. Foxdale-Lethebrook area. Ph: 0436397416.

Harvester operator and general on farm jobs, during and after the crop seasons on any farm, Mackay region. Can do farm work, repairs and maintenance on farm machinery and operate harvesters and tractors during crop seasons and after, 2022 season. Please email cyrilgilbert1956@yahoo.com.

Property

840 meters opposite Moore Park Beach. Coastal Cane Farm 93 Acres and 146 megalitres of ground water. Large storage

shed. 1 x diesel irrigation pump for the underground irrigation. There are 2 fenced off areas, currently used for horses and cattle. No house on this property. Comes with crop. Ph: Larry on 0418496864.

DEERAL Cane Farm for sale. 52.9ha on 2 titles. Only 45mins to CBD. Peaceful location, close to panoramic river, boat ramp & mountain views. 186 Ross Road, Deeral. Ph: 0412968434.

Want to buy farm in the Mackay or Proserpine area. Must have two good condition houses and irrigation. Contact Paul on 0447545550.

WTB: Grazing & Irrigation Property. Grazing to run 300-500 head. 100 - 200acres irrigation. Located Sarina-Proserpine Regions. Contact James on 0429621145.

BUYERS BEWARE

Buyers please be aware of scam emails when buying online. Scammers may try to intercept emails between genuine buyers and sellers by sending the buyer a fake invoice with different account details for the payment. Buyers should check with the seller by phone for accurate account details before making payment.

Rainfall Report

Brought to you by Sunsuper

| Location | Recorded rainfall (mm) | | | Average rainfall (mm) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | Month prior (Nov 2021) | Month to date (1 Dec-20 Dec) | Year to date | Jan-Dec |
| Whyanbeel Valley (Mossman) | 183.4 | 42.2 | 2677.4 | 2939.2 |
| Mareeba Airport | 24.6 | 44.4 | 879.2 | 827.3 |
| Cairns Aero | 95.4 | 22 | 2380.4 | 2008.9 |
| Mt Sophia | 175 | 6 | 3739.6 | 3396.6 |
| Babinda Post Office | 235.7 | 0 | 4042.2 | 4262.4 |
| Innisfail | 120.4 | 11.6 | 3449.6 | 3547.3 |
| Tully Sugar Mill | 231.5 | 23 | 4836.9 | 4074.6 |
| Cardwell Marine Pde | 259.8 | 18 | 2425.6 | 2119.9 |
| Lucinda Township | 100.8 | 16.2 | 2000 | 2127 |
| Ingham Composite | 265 | 20 | 3331.4 | 2118.3 |
| Abergowrie Alert | 104 | 2 | 1664 | 1411.8 |
| Townsville Aero | 157.8 | 4.6 | 1079.8 | 1130.9 |
| Ayr DPI Research Stn | 151.8 | 7.8 | 1101.6 | 934.7 |
| Proserpine Airport | 96 | 34.4 | 1111.4 | 1435.6 |
| Mirani Mary Street | 111.7 | 103.2 | 985.3 | 1475.8 |
| Mackay MO | 205.2 | 66 | 1301.2 | 1581.9 |
| Plane Creek Sugar Mill | 303.4 | 12.6 | 832.2 | 1742.6 |
| Bundaberg Aero | 406.2 | 57.6 | 824.4 | 1000.3 |
| Childers South | 354.8 | 23.4 | 834.2 | 886.3 |
| Maryborough | 310 | 69.4 | 942.6 | 1144.5 |
| Tewantin RSL Park | 153.4 | 141.4 | 1357.2 | 1554.7 |
| Eumundi - Crescent Rd | 206.4 | 106.6 | 1281.1 | 1667.5 |
| Nambour DPI - Hillside | 237 | 125.8 | 1304.8 | 1727.4 |
| Logan City Water Treatment Plant | 235.4 | 103.8 | 1277.2 | 1092.6 |
| Murwillumbah Bray Park | 214.9 | 199.8 | 1718.9 | 1596.8 |
| Ballina Airport | 102.8 | 299.6 | 1778 | 1738.6 |
| New Italy (Woodburn) | 134.8 | 230.6 | 1540.9 | 1311.8 |



sunsuper

dream with
your eyes open

Zero indicates either no rain or no report was sent. These rainfall figures are subject to verification and may be updated later. Weather forecasts, radar and satellite images and other information for the farming community can be accessed on www.bom.gov.au. Weather report sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology Recent Rainfall Tables.

Cane Farm, 47 acres. 23 acres Cane Production for 2021, remainder fallow. 40MG Kinchant Dam Allocation. Supplied to Racecourse Mill. 20 mins from Mackay. Ph: 0466241656.

Wanting to lease - cane farm in the Walkerston/Eton/Pleystowe areas and surrounds. Ph: 0421520331.

2 Mackay cane farms on 4 lots; one farm 113.62ha with total area 74.67ha CPA and second farm 126.57ha with total area 82.17ha CPA. Farms have common boundary. Ph: 0415881092.

Young grower wanting to expand. Looking for farms to lease. Mulgrave Area Ph: 0431036229.

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 2021 crop. Selling due to health reasons. Ph: 0408733793.

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EX DEMO & NEW STOCK

JCB/20 TONNE EX DEMO \$390,000 +GST

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 planthealthaustralia.com.au/sugarcane for further information and a list of the top priority cane pests.



**IF YOU SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL,
CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE**

☎ 1800 084 881

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The Austoft 9000 offers Australian sugar cane farmers leading edge technologies designed to increase efficiency in the field. Boasting a more powerful engine, a more intelligent hydraulic system, and coupled with on-board innovations, it promises to provide greater harvesting capacity at a lower operating cost.

Combined with the renowned AFS Autoguidance system and a new telematics system allowing 4G connectivity for better data capture for higher levels of precision and agility in decision-making - the new Austoft 9000 is all about maximising your productivity in every stage of the production cycle.

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