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R&D Restructure – vale BSES & SRDC

Main Points

BSES & SRDC will cease to exist.

Their assets and roles will be transferred to Sugar Research Australia (SRA).

From July 2013, the compulsory statutory levy will increase from 7¢ to 35¢ per tonne.

The R&D Bills Pass

In June 2013, three Bills were passed by the Australian Parliament. These were the *Sugar Research and Development Services (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013*; the *Sugar Research and Development Services (Consequential Amendments—Excise) Bill 2013*; and the *Sugar Research and Development Services Bill 2013*.

What will change?

As a consequence, the assets and R&D programs of both the Sugar Research & Development Corporation (SRDC) and BSES Limited will be transferred to the company Sugar Research Australia (SRA). BSES & SRDC will be wound up and will cease to exist.

A statutory funding agreement (SFA) between the Commonwealth Government and SRA will set out the government's relationship with SRA, including the matched funding component.

From July 2013, mills will be compelled to collect thirty-five cents per tonne of cane delivered for processing.

The ACFA opposed the bills on the basis that the proposed reforms to



Australian sugar industry R&D, led by the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance (ASA) has been a political 'structure before strategy' exercise aimed at fitting our R&D needs into a predetermined budget. The Canegrowers organisation supported the miller led reforms because the mills had agreed to pay half of R&D costs. The ACFA does not agree that this is a suitable trade-off.

How much will farmers pay?

The current compulsory statutory SRDC levy will increase from 7¢ per tonne of cane accepted by a mill for crushing to 35¢ per tonne of cane delivered to a processor. This is a five-fold increase in the compulsory statutory levy and a tightening of the definition of cane that will attract the levy.

What will be different?

BSES and SRDC will cease to exist. SRA will take on the roles of both BSES and SRDC, and will be the statutory funder and the principle research provider.

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Don Murdy
Chairman

Chairman's Comment

R&D Reform

After much opposition from ACFA and allied groups, three Sugar Research and Development (R&D) bills passed through the Senate on Friday 28 June.

Although we argue that the outcome is not in the best interests of cane farmers, the ACFA is satisfied that our involvement with the sugar R&D reform process has achieved a better outcome for farmers than what was originally proposed.

Through a tireless campaign, the ACFA has ensured that the reform has had higher levels of consultation and transparency than what was initially being contemplated, with the overall outcome being somewhat more democratic. However the transparency and equality of the model falls short of our expectations.

Without ACFA's influence, the situation would have been far worse and we are satisfied that we have achieved a more palatable model.

It is now, more than ever, that the ACFA will fight to represent its members on all industry matters. More than ever, cane farmers need ACFA to represent their interests.

Despite reservations about the newly passed Sugar Research Bills, ACFA will work with the newly formed Sugar Research Australia (SRA) to ensure a smooth transition from the current model and to achieve the best R&D outcomes for cane farmers.

Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS)

YCS continues to cause apprehension among cane farms, miller and researchers alike as the mystery syndrome settles over the industry. The industry looks to BSES for answers as we ask questions such as;

What is it – a disease, a pest, a chemical imbalance or soil-health issue?

Where did it come from?

Is it here to stay?

How is it spreading and will it reach all regions?

Will it disappear as quickly and mysteriously as it appeared?

What impact will it have on our varieties and breeding program?

Most importantly, what impact will it have on our bottom line and bank account?

A one-year research project 'Solving the Yellow Canopy Syndrome' received a \$500 000 commitment from the Sugar Research Development Corporation (SRDC), \$276 000 from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ) and \$200 000 from BSES Limited (BSES).

The project will be supported by an Industry Stakeholder Group, a Scientific Research Panel, productivity service groups and other research organisations. ACFA General Manager Stephen Ryan will represent the ACFA on the Industry Stakeholder Group.

I wish each of you a safe and prosperous crushing season for 2013.

Don Murday



Stephen Ryan
ACFA General Manager

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Background – sugar poll 2012

For the last decade, some millers have withheld funds from R&D by not paying the full BSES levy.

These mills have agreed to pay 50% of R&D if the proposed restructure is accepted.

The Canegrowers organisation has agreed, based on the offer of millers to pay 50% of R&D costs. Mill owners are increasing their intent to exert authority in R&D.

The ASA representing the Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) and Canegrowers has driven the reform process.

Under Federal Legislation, in order to make the changes, the ASA needed to conduct a poll of all levy payers, seeking approval to increase the statutory levy and wind up SRDC in favour of SRA. The ASA then needed to make a submission to the Federal Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry for consideration. Following that, a special resolution of the members of BSES was required to wind up the BSES and transfer its assets to SRA.

After a review process which has spent approximately \$2 million, including the most intensive and sustained marketing campaign in the history of the industry, the Sugar Poll returned a 'yes' vote of 65% of levy payers, supporting the ASA plan.

After a similar campaign, the BSES vote returned a 'yes' vote of under 30% of all members, however it was an 89% yes vote of those who voted.

Criticism of the process

The cost of the process so far has not been fully disclosed. It is estimated to be at least \$2 million, which we argue would have been better spent on real R&D.

The reasons for the high level of voter apathy reflected in these results, is that farmers were told that they had no choice; that there was no alternative; and that the current model was unsustainable. We disagree.

The 'no' vote campaign did not have access to contact details or financial resources to present its case on an equal footing and the Minister, despite requests, chose not to ensure that the 'no' vote campaign had the opportunity to present its case to the electors and levy payers. The mills, who supported the 'yes' vote, chose not to supply the 'no' campaign with the contact details of all farmers. The mills are the only entities which possess this information.

The constitution of SRA has been a constantly evolving document, not allowing the industry any opportunity to debate the most appropriate structure or constitution.

Missed opportunity

The SRA model is one of 'structure before strategy', designed to fit R&D to a cost.

By vigorously promoting a single model, based on cost, the industry has missed a valuable opportunity to conduct a meaningful and considered process.

This should have been a thorough strategic process, focusing on the future options for industry investment; agreed goals for industry direction; the corresponding R&D costs; and a proper analysis of the most suitable delivery models.

It was an opportunity for cohesive talks and wide consultation with levy payers to discuss options for future R&D needs of our industry. Instead, it passed as an all-out marketing and PR exercise to promote a pre-defined agenda.

Criticism of ASA claims

That the current model is not sustainable

R&D in the Australian sugar industry does not suffer from a failed model or an inability to fund; rather from a withholding of funds by some of the milling sector, who seek to reform R&D according to their own agenda. The milling sector is majority foreign owned and, in our view, it is important that these entities participate in the industry in a fair and equitable manner which is in the best interests of their suppliers, the cane farmers.

That SRA will be more efficient, saving money

This is false. SRA will be a combination of existing structures. The statutory levy has been increased five-fold to fund SRA and the only possible savings over the current model might be the removal of the cost of the senior management of SRDC. Otherwise the SRA board, staff and R&D funding panel would cost a similar amount to the combined boards and executive of SRDC and BSES.

SRA may cost more to run than the current model. When considering the cost transfer onto productivity services and the increases in their running costs, we can expect that the aggregate spend on RD&E will increase under SRA.

That SRA will have access to more Commonwealth funding

This is false. The statutory funding mechanism is the same in both cases. The current model has the same ability to maximise Government's contribution.

That SRA will be transparent and accountable

The current model separates the main R&D funder, SRDC, from the main R&D provider, the industry owned BSES limited. Other research providers such as CSIRO and universities compete with BSES for funding by proposing projects to be funded by SRDC. This model is transparent and competitive: SRDC consults widely with all stakeholders, including the payers of its compulsory levy.

Under SRA, the functions of statutory R&D funder and industry owned R&D provider would become the two limbs of one company. Despite assurances from ASA, it is asking the industry to endorse a model that has an inherent conflict of interest, which can never be fully remediated, nor can it be managed as well as the current system, which is completely at arms length.

That SRA will lead to better extension outcomes

This is false. To date, the ASA program has forced BSES to retrench extension staff and refrain from one-on-one extension. This has broken the two-way research – extension – farm linkage, which is widely recognised as the most effective means of achieving practice change at farm level, while also informing research needs.

Sugar industry R&D now emphasises a multimedia unit, which, although helpful, is not a sufficient assistance for farmers and falls far

short of the traditional model of on-farm engagement.

The shortage of agricultural graduates is well acknowledged in the literature (Roush; Menzies & Basford). The BSES was once the premier organisation for training and career development and that has now been demised, with morale at an extreme low.

Under SRA, R&D staff have reported a concern that their job security will be from contract to contract. This will not retain, develop and build human capacity in the sugar industry.

The cost of extension has simply been transferred onto local Cane Productivity Service organisations, which have attempted to employ the shed BSES extension staff and have raised their fees accordingly.

The burden of extension cannot be placed on agribusiness suppliers who have a vested interest; or on agronomy consultants of which there are too few in the sugar industry.

That mills will fund half of R&D

Not all mills have paid their share. The same mills are the ones which have withheld funds in order to drive and force the agenda to form SRA. From the indications of the draft SRA research priorities, it is possible that levy-paying farmers could end up paying a greater share of milling research and therefore paying considerably more than half. The average levy payer would have no recourse to remedy this.

That SRA will be accountable to levy payers

The constitution of SRA contains a delegate structure, which would take over the role of members in the general business of company meetings. This is an undemocratic and unnecessary power structure, separating the members who must pay a compulsory levy, from the board, in all but their basic

statutory rights. It is there for a reason which is not in the best interests of levy payers.

That SRA will lead the industry into a profitable future

SRA's R&D plan is heavily focused on raw sugar production & too little on diversification; it does nothing to address the long-term viability of farmers.

The SRA agenda is one of crystal raw sugar and does not adequately address diversification as the \$444 million Sugar Industry Reform Program 2004 (SIRP) required. Nor does it address the ability of smaller or non-mainstream groups to gain funding for projects such as biomass for biofuel or other novel end uses.

Under the SIRP, this type of innovation was recognised by the Australian Government as necessary to mitigate risk and investigate opportunity for long-term viability.

SRA does not address the issue of suitable R&D to diversify the industry in order to cope with climate change or any future price downturn, which the SIRP sought to address.

Further concerns about the SRA model

Governance

No amount of committees will adequately manage the conflict of interest of the R&D funder and provider under the one roof. This dual model falls far short of the arms length status and transparency of the current model under SRDC.

Other R&D providers such as CSIRO and universities will never know whether their project proposals will be fairly considered.

The SRA model may allow administration costs to be apportioned to projects; skewing both the efficiency of administration and R&D projects.

Levy-payer/member representation

The current SRDC R&D plan is derived from regular, wide consultation with all stakeholders.

Under its constitution, SRA will consult mostly with the ASA. ACFA believes that SRA should consult with its levy-payers rather than industry political organisations.

Voting

Mills will vote on tonnes, farmers will vote one per farm entity.

Large millers will therefore have more influence but large farmers will not.

The business of general meetings will be voted by regional delegates, rather than by individual members, which is the normal practice.

The BSES brand

The world-renown BSES will be wound up: its assets are to be transferred to SRA.

SRA will be permanently under a conflict of interest, as it will house the statutory R&D funder and the principle R&D provider under one board.

ACFA concerns for the future

For some time to come, SRA will trade on the intellectual property and success of BSES and SRDC. It will be up to SRA to build on this with a sound R&D investment plan to avoid using the current IP as a 'cash-cow' and eroding capacity.

The five-five increase in levy has not been matched by a commensurate increase in accountability to levy payers & control by the levy paying membership.

Summary

As Australian sugar industry R&D makes these radical and untested changes, the rest of the sugar world looks on with nervous anticipation. The sugar world has looked to BSES as the global leader and now must get to know SRA, its capability and its place in the world of sugar R&D.

ACFA argues that more transparent and competitive model would have been to maintain the status quo of BSES and SRDC as separate entities but raise the levy to secure R&D funds. ACFA promoted this but was not allowed equal access to levy payers, to put this position forward.

Under the ASA model, we argue that the risks are great and the benefits are marginal. Farmers will be captive funders of a system where they will not have a direct say. The levies will be collected and expended but will this be in the best interest of cane farmers?

The ACFA will be carefully monitoring SRA for fairness, transparency and direction. We will do our best to hold responsible those who have driven this process and those who will direct it from here.

Stephen Ryan



WWF comments about Reef condition slammed by ACFA

The Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) has slammed comments made by Nick Heath of the WWF regarding the decline in condition of the Great Barrier Reef.

Notwithstanding the concerns and criticisms identified in this article, the ACFA will work with SRA and the ASA to achieve the best outcomes for our members and the industry.

Issued by the Australian and Queensland Governments, the report into the overall condition of the Reef has revealed that it has gone from moderate to poor, with Mr. Heath insinuating that this is due to lack of adoption of improved practices by the sugar industry.

Don Murday, Chairman of the ACFA said that Heath's recent comments in the media are misleading and failed to reflect the great work the sugar industry is doing to improve on-farm practices.

"Farmers and industry professionals are working tirelessly to ensure practices are constantly being reviewed and improved for the benefit of the environment

"It is very irresponsible for statements to be thrown around on a public platform which point the blame for the reported decline at farmers" Murday said.

In the report, Federal Environment Minister Mark Butler and Queensland Environment Minister Andrew Powell both highlighted the good progress that farm management changes have had in reducing pollutant loads entering the reef.

"We cannot let these absurd comments overshadow the exceptional progress that our industry has already made or the work which is continuing to better farm practices"

The ACFA will continue to encourage, support and work with farmers to implement improved farm practices.

PHOTOS: Ben Crop

Great Barrier Reef 2011 Report Card

- Great Barrier Reef 2011 report card labels Reef health 'poor'
- Ministers praise farmers for adoption of improved practice
- WWF insinuates reported decline in health is farmers fault
- Renowned diver and conservationist says damage is not there



"I go out diving several times a week and the damage they talk about just isn't there."

Ben Cropp

This month, the Federal Government released The Great Barrier Reef 2011 Report Card which reported on the overall condition of the Reef going from 'moderate' to 'poor' in 2011.

Federal Environment Minister, Mark Butler, noted that the report card demonstrated that real progress has been made towards Reef Plan targets, particularly in the area of improved land management practices which have reduced pollutant runoff significantly.

Ministers praised the significant efforts made by graziers, cane farmers and other primary producers who have taken practical steps to reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients and pesticides to Reef catchment streams.

The report card highlights that it will take time for these achievements to translate into improved marine condition, given the extreme weather events that occurred in 2010-2011, including Tropical Cyclone Yasi.

Queensland Environment Minister, Andrew Powell, also attributed the decline in reef health to recent weather activity by saying "Extreme weather events such as Yasi continue to have significant impacts on the quality of the reef, of the water around the reef and the flooding that subsequently occurred in that year" as reported by the ABC.

Despite the praise both Ministers have given farmers for the adoption of better on-farm practice, the WWF have

passed comments insinuating that the reported condition of the Reef is due to lack of adoption of improved practice by farmers.

As reported by the Courier Mail, Nick Heath from WWF said "About 1000 reefs had been impacted by crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks at least once and outbreaks had been made more frequent by farm chemical pollution.

"Nitrogen chemical fertiliser was the Reef's most dangerous pollutant."

ACFA Chairman, Don Murday said "We cannot let these absurd comments overshadow the exceptional progress that our industry has already made or the work which is continuing to better farm practices"

In the past, Ben Cropp, renowned Australian documentary filmmaker and conservationist has expressed his dismay at reports on the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

"I go out diving several times a week and the damage they talk about just isn't there."

"In the 1970s scientists said big starfish plagues would cause the reef to crumble in a few years and it made good press, I was the only person who spoke up and said it was wrong

"I feel like the scientists should talk to people like myself who are expert observers who can tell you what it was like 50 to 60 years ago."

Finding the right staff for the upcoming harvest



OBI Director Peter Martin and OBI Recruitment Consultant Doug MacKenzie at the recent Case IH Step Up conference held at SeaWorld on the Gold Coast in March 2013.

It seems like only yesterday, OBI Recruitment Director Peter Martin, presented tips to cane growers about how to 'Attract and Retain staff', at the recent Case IH Step Up conference hosted by the Australian Cane Farmers Association at SeaWorld on the Gold Coast.

"It is obvious cane growers are expecting a busy harvesting and planting season, with OBI receiving record enquires for short, temporary and permanent staff, since the conference," Peter said.

For the past few months, growers have been preparing for the harvest, by coordinating cane burning, harvesting schedules, arranging for bins to be delivered from mills, finding haul-out drivers, machinery maintenance workers, and numerous other jobs that need doing around the farm.

"To be done well, all of these jobs need the right people doing them, and the right people are the foundation of any farming enterprise," Peter said.

"Most growers use accountants, lawyers, and mechanics with specialist skills to do the tough jobs and minimise costly errors. Today, more and more growers are turning to recruitment agencies to manage their staffing needs, recruitment, labour hire, payroll and administrative paperwork, so they can spend more time actually farming," Peter said.

Most growers don't realise the time they spend 1) trying to attract people, 2) selecting staff, 3) reviewing applications 4) checking references, 5) assessing people's ability and 6) finalising paper work for an employee to start work.

Peter says there are real benefits for using a professional recruitment agency to save time, reduce costs and increase productivity.

"If you develop a close relationship with your recruiter, they get to know exactly what type of people work well in your business and farm operation. Taking time to explain your workplace set-up, machinery descriptions and staff expectations will improve the likelihood of successful placements and retaining staff," Peter said.

Today, many growers are using the services of registered recruitment agencies to access a pool of highly skilled qualified workers for their business.

The first step employers need to do is contact OBI Recruitment to discuss the positions required and we will then work with to design a position description and employment terms for a suitable employee. During this time, OBI will also provide you with obligation free quote and information so you can clearly understand the process from recruitment through to appointment of an employee.

Established for over 20 years, OBI Recruitment has a great reputation for providing expert recruitment and human resource services for rural and regional clients across Australia. All OBI consultants have a rural background so they understand the needs and issues in agriculture.

OBI Recruitment currently has qualified staff available for the cane harvest and planting seasons in Queensland and New South Wales.

OBI recruitment can help you with:

- Labour hire and payroll services
- Award wages and superannuation administration
- Finding temporary, contract or permanent staff
- Sponsoring high skilled qualified workers from overseas
- Training and Development
- All human resource services
- Information about National Employment Standards
- Industrial relations and Fair Work Australia conditions

Contact: OBI Recruitment Director, Peter Martin on ph: 07 3720 8504 or peterm@obirecruitment.com.au or visit **website: www.obirecruitment.com.au**



About QSL

Update by QSL CEO and Managing Director Greg Beashel

With discussions continuing on possible future marketing arrangements it's fair to say there are some differing views throughout the industry. Be assured, without industry support QSL will not make any further changes to the marketing system beyond the model being finalised at present, where Millers have the option to sell their economic interest sugar.

Meeting with many of our members recently as part of these discussions, I've seen that a real opportunity exists for QSL to help our members better understand the many services we provide for the industry. This article highlights some of these.

Financing

QSL pays Millers for raw sugar milled as soon as it is received at one of the six bulk sugar terminals. This is before being paid by our customers and in some cases before the raw sugar is sold. Millers then pass this on to Growers which provides timely cash flow throughout the year – in and out of season. To do this QSL borrows money and due to our tonnage throughput can do so at very low rates - currently just over 3%. QSL does not add a margin to this interest cost for the advances program – we charge it at cost.



Greg Beashel
QSL Managing Director





We have recently completed negotiations for a three-year \$500 million cash advance agreement with our major banks. This, combined with what we refer to as a commercial paper program, ensures that QSL has good access to low cost financing to provide advance payments to the industry.

Pricing

Pricing decisions for Growers are often a balance of risk and reward. Our team manage a range of pricing pools which allow participants to choose how their sugar is priced, consistent with the level of risk they are willing to take – similar in a way to when choosing a superannuation fund. The reality is that for most Growers, profit margins are thin, and understanding this QSL works hard to achieve a price above the average market price. We monitor daily the changes to currency and sugar price markets and always aim to outperform market benchmarks – within the risk parameters for each pool.

I'm often told that one of the areas members value most about QSL is our transparency. All of QSL's profits are returned to the industry.

Marketing

People often tend to be confused by the term 'marketing'. Sometimes it is used to refer to all four of QSL's functions and sometimes it is used to refer to selling sugar to customers only. In recent discussions about changes to marketing arrangements, the term "marketing" has been used to refer to the sale of sugar to the customer only. This has caused a lot of confusion in the industry with some understanding that Millers being allowed to market their economic interest sugar means that this sugar is excluded from QSL completely.

Marketing is essentially for QSL the selling part of the process. QSL currently sells the majority of Queensland's export raw sugar to the international market. We currently supply more than 25 percent of total Asian raw sugar imports and also deliver to New Zealand and the United States.

A big part of QSL's role is securing high returning markets for Queensland's export sugar. As we manage the end-to-end logistics process we can match the specific quality needs and timing requirements for customers helping to establish strong customer relationships. One of our best returning markets today is Japan and this year we mark the delivery of more than 20 million tonnes of raw sugar to our long-standing Japanese customers.

Combine all of the above with our close proximity to the growing Asian market and we are able to attract premium returns on the bulk raw sugar we sell and this is returned to our members.

Logistics

QSL operates six bulk sugar terminals under a lease arrangement with Sugar Terminals Limited. We take delivery of raw sugar, co-mingle the sugar to optimise storage space and manage overall quality specific to customer needs and arrange the shipping of sugar to customers. Currently QSL charts around 80 bulk vessels each year. Collectively managing the terminals as one allows us to keep costs down.

As we work towards the end of the financial year, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of QSL.

Market Update

By Stephen Stone, Treasurer, Market Commentary

Sugar

After a long downtrend, we have seen signs of a potential recovery in raw sugar prices. As the Brazilian crush progresses we are seeing more support from ethanol production. Whilst somewhat impacted by rain delays in some areas, the latest UNICA report shows a relatively low 42% of cane crushed for raw sugar production. After making new contract lows at 16.17 c/lb, earlier in the week the JUL13 contract rallied to 17 c/lb, as we approach expiry. Given the length of the sugar price downtrend and the aggressive nature of the sudden rally we can expect further strength in the short-term.

A lift in prices may be modest however due to:

- The Brazilian currency depreciating by 10 % during the past month. This allows the Brazilian producers to accept lower global prices, bringing their hedging forward.
- Large Brazilian and Thai producers are underweight price hedging for the current season.
- As sugar prices rally, the diversion to ethanol quickly becomes less attractive. Ethanol will now behave like a price ceiling during the crush, capping price gains in sugar prices.

For these reasons, we are reluctant to suggest prices will rally significantly. Stronger prices should be taken advantage of, and should provide more attractive hedging levels for the latter part of the Australian raw sugar crush.

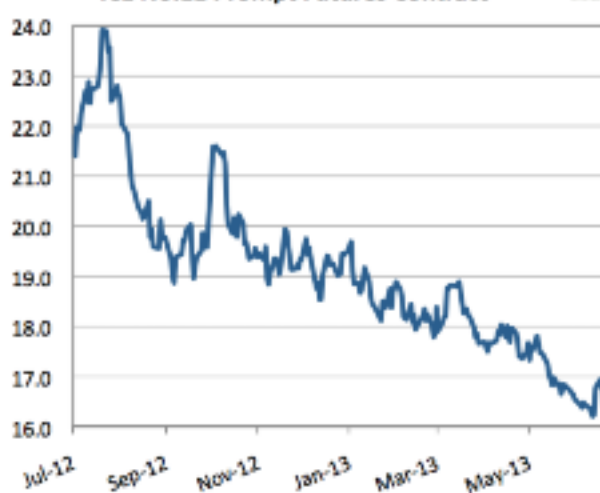
Currency

At this week's Federal Open Market Committee meeting, US Federal Reserve's Chairman Ben Bernanke confirmed their intention to rein in global market liquidity. The strength of his comments took markets somewhat by surprise, causing increased volatility as investors moved out of risky assets.

The immediate effect locally has seen continued pressure on the Australian dollar which has now fallen almost 20% from recent highs and now threatens the US\$0.90 cent level. We expect further falls in the currency which is a welcome relief for all Australian exporters.

QSL is a global leader in raw sugar marketing and supports the development of the Australian sugar industry by providing high quality marketing, information and logistics services to Queensland growers and millers. To receive market updates and other news via email, visit www.qsl.com.au.

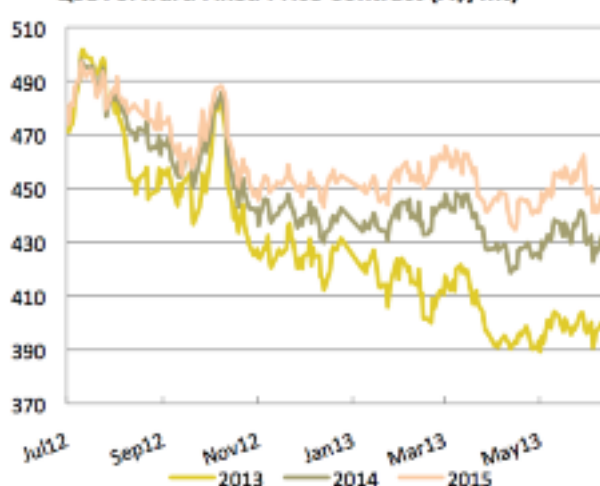
ICE No.11 Prompt Futures Contract



Australian Dollar (AUD v USD)



QSL Forward Fixed Price Contract (A\$/mt)



BSES - Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS)

Yellow Canopy Syndrome defined

In early 2012, several crops of cane in the Mulgrave Mill area, just north of Cairns, showed obvious leaf yellowing. The yellowing returned in early 2013 in the Mulgrave area, but in generally different crops. Cases were also reported in the Herbert and Burdekin regions. The condition has affected plant cane, replant cane and ratoons in a number of varieties.

Our researchers documented and examined cases across the affected regions and were able to understand the difference between this new condition, and the natural leaf yellowing which occurs in every growing season.

This new condition has now been clearly described so that everyone can be assured that those researching the condition and the general farming community are referring to the same thing.

To prevent confusion with other known 'yellow leaf' conditions, such as Yellow Leaf Syndrome which is a specific disease, this new condition has been named Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS).

Our investigations so far

Our Professional Extension and Communication Unit is coordinating a working group of technical experts from within BSES and staff from cane productivity services groups to identify the cause of the yellowing.

To date our thorough investigations of affected fields have failed to identify any potential causal agent that is common to all fields. There are also no obvious conclusions as to what is causing the yellowing.

Ensuring an accurate diagnosis of the condition is essential for providing correct on-farm advice. This may take some time, as we saw some years ago when Northern poor root syndrome was first identified.

BSES would like to reassure you that our most experienced researchers including plant pathologists, entomologists, agronomists and crop nutrition experts, and our industry partners are working on this matter as a top priority.

What we know so far

Our Professional Extension and Communication Unit and technical experts including entomology, pathology and agronomy researchers have worked steadily since early this year to understand YCS.

Our observations, initial tests and consultations with industry and research partners have produced the following conclusions:

- Some varieties (e.g. KQ228, Q200, Q247, MQ239) are more susceptible to YCS.
- YCS does not resemble any known systemic viral, bacterial or fungal disease and its distribution within a block and within regions is not characteristic of these types of diseases.
- The symptoms on younger leaves are not typical of any known air-borne or water-borne bacterial or fungal disease.
- The symptoms and field distribution are also not characteristic of root diseases. Poor root growth in some affected crops could be associated with YCS but is unlikely to be the cause of the yellowing.
- The widespread distribution of the condition on many soil types in three regions would make it extremely unlikely to be a nutritional or chemical problem.
- Some of the symptoms and field observations may be consistent with damage caused by an insect – • Some of the symptoms may be associated with environmental stress.

Our conclusions are explained in more detail in BSES's latest newsletter

You can also find out more about the research we are conducting to understand this condition better and develop management strategies aimed at reducing its impact on our industry.

Current trials

As the cause is not yet known, we have begun a research program that aims to pinpoint the factors contributing to YCS.

Trial one: Transmission of yellowing by planting material.

With the planting season upon us local productivity service boards are being asked by growers whether YCS can be transmitted via planting material.

At this stage, we don't believe it can – but this has not been ruled out conclusively. An experiment at Tully has been initiated to investigate this further under highly controlled conditions.

Trial two: Linear bugs. Linear bugs have been found on leaves in some affected crops. An experiment will be initiated shortly in the Mulgrave area to determine if linear bugs contribute to YCS.

Seeking research funding for YCS

We are currently developing a project proposal for out-of-round funding from SRDC. The project will firstly aim to identify what is causing YCS and secondly develop approaches to ease possible cane losses associated with the condition.

Planting material

Until the results of the Tully trial are known we recommend that growers stick to the basic principle of using the best quality planting material they can access.

Cane that is severely affected and not growing actively is unlikely to germinate well and establish vigorously so should be avoided.

Solving the Yellow Canopy Syndrome project

The Solving the Yellow Canopy Syndrome project seeks to better understand and manage Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS).

The project has received:

- \$500 000 from the Sugar Research Development Corporation (SRDC)
- \$276 000 from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ)
- \$200 000 from BSES.

Additional trials are investigating the possible transmission of YCS via planting material and whether linear bugs are contributing to the condition.

Information about the project

The project involves large-scale monitoring, sampling programs and data collection activities in the Herbert and Burdekin cane-growing districts. These results will enable a comprehensive study of the occurrence and development of the YCS over time.

As more becomes known about the condition, supporting investigations which explore new causal possibilities will also be undertaken.

Who is involved in the project

BSES is fully supported by an Industry Stakeholder Group; a Scientific Research Panel; productivity service groups; and other research organisations.

With representation from the Australian Sugar Milling Council, CANEGROWERS, Australian Cane Farmers Association, Burdekin Productivity Services Limited (BPS), Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) and Plant Health Australia, the Group is responsible for monitoring the project and communicating the ongoing progress, outcomes and findings to their organisation and members.

The Panel provides supporting scientific opinion about the direction of the project and will include members with national and international recognition in a range of supporting disciplines including plant physiology and molecular pathology.

HCPSL and BPS continue to provide an essential on-the-ground presence in two of the most affected areas.

DAFFQ has contributed their remote sensing expertise which may enable easier identification of affected cane and provide information about the spread of the condition.

http://www.bses.com.au/page/Library/Yellow_Canopy_Syndrome/Solving_the_Yellow_Canopy_Syndrome_project/

Nearly \$1 million invested to fight Yellow Canopy Syndrome found in sugarcane

The Australian sugarcane industry and Queensland Government have pooled their financial and scientific resources in a joint initiative to better understand and manage Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS) - an undiagnosed condition affecting some cane-growing regions.

The one-year research project Solving the Yellow Canopy Syndrome received a \$500 000 commitment from the Sugar Research Development Corporation (SRDC), \$276 000 from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ) and \$200 000 from BSES Limited (BSES).

SRDC Executive Director, Annette Sugden, said this program is a terrific example of how industry and government are collaborating to combat a major issue.

"The short timeframe it took to gain funding and support reflects the importance industry and government place on this issue," Ms Sugden said.

The project will be supported by an Industry Stakeholder Group, a Scientific Research Panel, productivity service groups and other research organisations.

The Industry Stakeholder group will be represented by the Australian Sugar Milling Council, CANEGROWERS, Australian Cane Farmers Association, Burdekin Productivity Services Limited (BPS), Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) and Plant Health Australia. The Group will play a key role in monitoring the ongoing progress of the project and communicating outcomes and findings to their organisation and members.

The Scientific Reference Panel will provide supporting scientific opinion about the direction of the project. The Panel will include members with national and international recognition in a range of supporting disciplines including plant physiology and molecular pathology.

"It's also critical to involve industry at a local level where this condition has been found. To date, BSES has worked extensively with HCPSL and BPS and these productivity groups will continue to provide an essential on-the-ground presence in two of the most affected areas," Ms Sugden said.

Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry John McVeigh welcomed the research, describing the sugarcane industry as the lifeblood of many regional communities.

Last year we committed an additional \$4.6 million over four years to BSES for sugarcane research to help boost yields and importantly, to identify and find solutions to production risks such as YCS.

"My department has valuable expertise in remote sensing applications to manage cane yield variability and make yield predictions at regional and field scales.

"This experience will undoubtedly assist the YCS project and enable easier identification of affected cane and provide information about the spread of the condition," the Minister said.

BSES Chairman, Mr Paul Wright, said BSES is well-placed to lead this project given its expertise in key scientific fields, an existing extension system and networks within the scientific community.

Reports from pre-crush investigations indicate that cane which shows symptoms consistent with YCS could have less sugar. This means less profit for growers and millers this season. It is also likely that YCS could impact on ratoonnability and future yields," said Mr Wright.

"The BSES Board also contributed funds to the project to ensure that it is fully staffed and resourced so that those involved can focus exclusively on understanding this condition.

"It is only through a continued methodical and scientific approach that we will gain an accurate insight into YCS. We can then develop successful approaches to minimise its economic damage and get the industry back on track."

The project, which has already started, involves large-scale monitoring,

SRDC backs Nuttfield Scholarship for cane farmers

sampling programs and data collection activities in the Herbert and Burdekin cane-growing districts.

These results will provide a comprehensive study of YCS over time, allowing supporting investigations to be undertaken as more becomes known about the condition.

Information about the project, its progress and findings will continue to be communicated to industry by BSES's Professional Extension and Communication Unit.

"This issue has the potential to affect everyone in our industry, so it's important that everyone remains informed about YCS, even if they have not seen it on their farm," said Mr Wright.

"YCS has captured the attention of our best minds. I would like to reassure everyone in our industry that solving YCS is our highest priority."

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Applications have now closed for the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) funded Nuffield scholarship commencing in 2014.

A total of 24 scholarship places will be offered across a wide range of industries for primary producers nationally.

During the Australian Society of Sugarcane Technologists (ASSCT) conference in Townsville in April, SRDC Executive Director, Annette Sugden said, SRDC will provide a \$30,000 scholarship for one cane grower to complete the Nuffield program within a maximum of two years.

Ms Sugden encouraged cane growers to apply for this once in a life time experience and join the honour board with other cane growers currently undertaking the Nuttfield program- Bryan Granshaw from Ayr, QLD and Joe Muscat from Mackay, QLD.

Through the adoption of best practice, professional development and with a network of industry leaders, the Nuffield scholarship promotes excellence in all aspects of Australian agricultural production, distribution and management.

The winning scholar will have the opportunity to study farming practices overseas to investigate agricultural marketing, trade and environmental issues, and experience the social and cultural aspects of many regions.

Nominations for the SRDC scholarship have now closed, with shortlisted applicants interviewed this month and winners announced in September 2013.

Nuffield Australia is offering a total of 24 scholarships for the 2014 program for practicing farmers or farm managers for the benefit of the Australian farming community.

For more information, please visit the Nuffield website at www.nuffield.com.au



Bryan Granshaw
2012 Nuffield Scholar



Joe Muscat
2013 Nuffield Scholar



BSES announces new sugarcane varieties for release in 2013

Southern Region

New sugarcane varieties approved for release in the Southern region in 2013

Based on the recent endorsements from the regional sugarcane Variety Adoption Committee, hosted by BSES Limited (BSES), an exciting new variety is now available to growers in the Southern cane growing region.

"A promising variety Q249A with blanket approval to plant in all regions has been added to the regional Recommended for Planting List by the Variety Adoption Committee," said Gae Plunkett, Development Officer – Varieties, Professional Extension and Communication Unit, BSES.

"Q249A is a Central region variety which has produced high Tonnes Cane per Hectare (TCH) in trials across all soil types in the southern region. It has moderate to high Commercial Cane Sugar (CCS) – a measure of recoverable sugar in the cane – throughout the season. Although it is resistant to Fiji leaf gall, leaf scald and smut it has only intermediate resistance to Pachymetra root rot."

Growers are encouraged to contact their local Productivity Services groups for planting material of this released variety.

Approval for the release of a new Q Variety – Q252 – is also being sought from the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Queensland. Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) are also pending.

"A request for approval for all the new Q varieties, including Q252 has been submitted and if approved this variety will be released in the Southern region later this year," said Ms Plunkett.

"Q252 produced from parents Q208A and Q96 has shown high TCH and moderate to high CCS in recent Southern BSES trials. This Burdekin variety has shown good ratooning ability and has survived dry conditions well. It has intermediate resistance to smut and Pachymetra root rot."

"By delivering new varieties that are more productive and disease-resistant BSES is helping growers and the Australian sugarcane industry become more productive, profitable and sustainable."

NSW

New sugarcane varieties approved for release in NSW in 2013

Based on the recent endorsements from the NSW sugarcane Variety Adoption Committee, hosted by BSES Limited (BSES), three exciting new varieties will become available to growers in the NSW cane growing regions this year.

"The most promising varieties advancing from the BSES Variety Improvement program have been added to the regional Approved for Planting List by the Variety Adoption Committee," said Ms Gae



Female and male flowers are positioned in a 'lantern' to facilitate pollen transfer and prevent contamination.



Potential new varieties are screened for disease resistance by BSES Pathologists.

Plunkett, Development Officer – Varieties, Professional Extension and Communication Unit, BSES.

“These include Q248A, Q254 and Q255 for NSW.”

Q248A is a vigorous variety that produces average Tonnes Cane per Hectare (TCH). Released in Maryborough in the Southern region and Rocky Point last year, it is recommended as a late season variety for a one-year old harvest. Although its disease rating is good for most diseases, growers are advised to monitor smut levels as it is susceptible to this disease.

Q254 is a high TCH variety with average Commercial Cane Sugar (CCS) – a measure of recoverable sugar in the cane. Recommended for one or two year cropping it has intermediate resistance to smut and *Pachymetra* root rot. With Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) still pending it has been extensively tested in variety trials in the Broadwater, Harwood and Condong milling areas in NSW.

Q255 produces high TCH and good CCS and is recommended for one and two year cropping. This variety has intermediate resistance to smut and *Pachymetra* root rot. With Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) still pending the performance of this variety has been consistently sound in one and two year trials.

“Growers are encouraged to contact NSW Sugar Agricultural Services officers to order planting material of these released varieties,” said Ms Plunkett.

“By delivering new varieties that are more productive and disease-resistant BSES is helping growers and the Australian sugarcane industry become more productive, profitable and sustainable.”

Burdekin

New sugarcane varieties approved for release in the Burdekin region in 2013.

Based on the recent endorsements from the Burdekin regional sugarcane Variety Adoption Committee, hosted by BSES Limited (BSES), two new varieties have been recommended for planting in 2013.

“Q240A and Q252, two of last year's releases to Burdekin Productivity Services Limited (BPS) have been added to the regional Recommended for Planting List,” said Mr Roderick Fletcher, Development Officer – Varieties, Professional Extension and Communication Unit, BSES.

Q240A is a Southern region variety produced from parents QN81-289, and SP78-3137 from Brazil. It has blanket approval in all regions and has performed well in local trials and has shown increased Tonnes Cane per Hectare (TCH) compared with the standards of Q171A; Q183A; Q208A and KQ228A. It is resistant to smut and leaf scald and will be useful in the Burdekin region. Local advice should be sought as it has been observed to produce many suckers.

Q252 produced from parents Q208A and Q96 is a Burdekin variety which is resistant to leaf scald and has intermediate resistance to smut. It has performed well and shown equal Commercial Cane Sugar (CCS) – a measure of recoverable sugar in the cane – and higher cane yield than the standards of Q171A; Q183A; Q208A and KQ228A.

“Growers are encouraged to contact BPS for planting material of these newly released varieties,” said Mr Fletcher.

Other important endorsements made by the Variety Adoption Committee include Q253 and Q238A – two new niche varieties approved for release to the BPS Distribution plot. These varieties will be made available to growers in 2014.

Q253 produced from parents QN80-3425 and Q209A has been recommended for release based on its good TCH and possible suitability for marginal lands. Local advice should be sought when considering this variety as it has lower CCS compared to the standards of Q171A; Q183A; Q208A and KQ228A.

“Q238A is a Central region cane produced from parents Q138 and Q155. It had average performance in our trials, but is highly susceptible to chlorotic streak, which may limit its suitability in some areas of the Burdekin. It has no other pest, quarantine or milling restrictions,” said Mr Fletcher.

“By delivering a range of new varieties that are more productive, disease-resistant or suitable to specific growing conditions BSES is helping growers and the Australian sugarcane industry become more productive, profitable and sustainable.”

Northern Region

New sugarcane varieties approved for release in the Northern region in 2013

Based on the recent endorsements from the regional sugarcane Variety Adoption Committee, hosted by BSES Limited (BSES), two new varieties are now available to growers in the Northern cane growing regions.

"The most promising varieties with blanket approval have been added to the regional

Recommended for Planting List by the Variety Adoption Committee," said Mr Roderick Fletcher, Development Officer – Varieties, Professional Extension and Communication Unit, BSES.

"For the Northern region these include Q232A and Q240A".

Q232A produced from parents QN80-3425 and QS72-732 has been grown commercially in the Northern districts with blanket approval. This variety is resistant to smut, is a heavy flowerer, and has good cane yield.

Q240A produced from parents QN81-289, and SP78-3137 from Brazil is a Southern release variety which has blanket approval in all regions. It is resistant to smut and leaf scald. It has performed equal to the standards of Q200A; Q208A; Q231A and Q241A.

"Growers are encouraged to contact their local cane productivity services group for planting material of these released varieties," he said.

Based on decisions made at the Northern Variety Adoption Meeting, South Johnstone miller and canegrower representatives also requested the release of Q256. Achieving good cane yields in the Final Assessment Trails

(FATs) mainly in plant crops and vigorous growth in local propagations the representatives stated that this variety would make a good addition in their region.

"Q256 produced from parents Q136 and N21 from South Africa, is a Northern bred variety. This variety is susceptible to smut and Pachymetra root rot. It has produced very good plant crop results in our trials, but has shown severe decline in the following ratoons," said Mr Fletcher.

"Tully, Mulgrave and Mossman mill areas agreed not to release and recommend this variety in their mill areas; however they accepted its release in the South Johnstone mill area."

Approval from the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) will be sought for the release of Q256.

"There are more highly productive new varieties on the horizon for the Northern region, especially clones in the QN05 series which have been derived from seedlings planted in 2005. These will be further assessed and progressed through to adoption stage in the immediate coming years," he said.

"By delivering new varieties that are more productive and disease-resistant BSES is helping growers and the Australian sugarcane industry become more productive, profitable and sustainable."

For more information go to
www.bses.com.au



Seedlings grown from true seed from crossings are planted to the field for assessment.



Measuring cane yield with commercial harvesters and weighing equipment. Sucrose content (CCS) is analysed by Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIR).



The Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) works in partnership with the sugarcane industry and the Australian Government to foster an innovative and sustainable sugarcane industry, through targeted investment in research, development and extension.

It is SRDC's role to manage RD&E projects linked to goals and priorities identified by industry and Government across four programs.

Growing the Crop - A profitable and market driven industry underpinned by advanced technology producing a reliable and increasing supply of sugarcane,

Milling the Crop - A profitable milling sector utilising new and improved technologies and processes,

Sustaining the Environment - Coordinate, facilitate and extend, as appropriate, existing environmental stewardship programs, and

Skills and Capabilities - An industry committed to supporting a culture of education, learning and innovation.

SRDC aims to seek out and invest in strategic research, development and extension which will underpin an innovative and sustainable Australian sugarcane industry characterised by:

- World-class farming, harvesting, transport and milling practices
- Average cane yields in excess of 100 tonnes per hectare
- Being capable of reliably exceeding 36 million tonnes of sugarcane per annum
- Providing leadership in environmental stewardship and social sustainability
- Extending the value proposition of the sugarcane plant.

SRDC believes in the value of investing in the future of Australian sugarcane researchers to ensure the industry maintains its competitive edge as a global leader in sugarcane production.



Australian Government
Sugar Research and
Development Corporation

SRDC

Investing in sugar research innovation

Contact the Sugar Research and Development Corporation ph: 07 3210 0495 or visit www.srdc.gov.au

Sweet revolution in sugarcane harvesting



The upcoming Case IH Austoft 8800 Multi Row Series features technology to harvest more than one row of sugarcane at a time

Australian sugarcane growers are waiting with bated breath for the arrival of Case IH's revolutionary variable spacing sugarcane harvester which will be tested in Australia during 2013.

Designed to meet the growing demand for reduced operating costs, the new Multi Row features a unique patented crop divider system which offers the flexibility of harvesting in different row spacings and can be adjusted to suit the needs of the producer.

According to Dale Chapple, Case IH Product Manager for Sugarcane Harvesters, Australia, the crop divider system is set up to work in various types of sugarcane plantations.

"This new system will cater for both reduced spacing and combined spacing, and also enable the harvesting of 1.5 metre adjacent rows, totalling three metres in mechanised cutting width," he says.

The system includes two cutting blades, one on each crop divider at the front where the cane is cut, without needing to knock cane down to perform cutting.

"After cutting, the cane is directed toward the feed rollers, with the basecutter serving as a sugarcane gathering component in this new configuration, facilitating machine feeding," says Dale.

The new harvesting technology does not require knocking down the cane before cutting and all basecutters are controlled independently.

As per Case IH standard, the harvesters cut at a height that does not damage ratoons, resulting in low rates of loss and mineral impurities.

"This increases the longevity of plantations and the quality of raw material," says Dale.

New features on the Austoft 8800 Multi Row Series:

- Increased operating capacity
- New hydraulic technology on cutting platform
- Revolutionary independent cutting adjustment system
- Case IH FPT Industrial (Fiat Powertrain Technologies) engine with Smart Cruise™ software standard

The increase in operating capacity, aligned with efficiency in fuel consumption and excellence in cleaning, will make this harvester model unique on the market.

"Customers can put it to use without needing to adjust the field to the machine," says Dale.

The 'open and close' system on the harvester's cutting platform features new hydraulic system technologies to harness available engine power without interfering in the operation of other harvester attachments or increasing fuel consumption.

The Austoft 8800 Multi Row Series harvester comes with a revolutionary independent cutting adjustment system which can adjust cutting heights according to the irregularities of ground contours, minimising losses.

The Austoft 8800 Multi Row Series sugarcane harvesters use Tier III Case IH FPT Industrial engines with a rated/maximum power of 358 horsepower.

"Improved engine components provide greater strength and durability, ensuring more robustness and a longer service life," says Dale.

Smart Cruise software, developed by Case IH to improve fuel consumption in lower load situations, will be standard on the new model.

The software is designed to automatically adjust the harvester's work speed based on the load required for operation. The system also controls fuel consumption in situations where the machine is at idle.

"If the harvester is stationary for more than 15 seconds, at work speed, Smart Cruise automatically reduces engine speed, helping to improve fuel economy," says Dale.

"Unlike other fuel saving solutions on the market, Case IH Smart Cruise will not present any operating losses, because there is less demand on the hydraulic system.

"The primary extractor reaches work speed, even with the system activated, and there is a reduction in the engine speed adjustment by the operator."

While the Case IH Austoft 8800 Multi Row Series harvester is already commercially available in Brazil, the unit needs to be tested under Australian conditions before farmers here can buy one of their own.

"Case IH prides itself on a thorough test program," explains Dale.

"We know cane growers are keen to access this technology but before we release it here we need to make sure it will stand up to Australian conditions and that it will deliver the productivity improvements growers expect.

"And once it's been proven we'll be making it available for Australian farmers as soon as possible."

Growers wishing to see the test machine in Australia should contact their local Case IH sugarcane harvester dealer to register their interest.

ACFA thank John Blanckensee for 13 years service



John Blanckensee with his wife, Kathy at the Case IH Step UP! Conference in March 2013

It was an emotional farewell at the ACFA Annual General Meeting in April as the organisation said their good-byes to retiring Director, John Blanckensee.

After 13 fantastic years on the Board of ACFA, John decided it was time retire to spend more time with his grand children and his cane farm.

On behalf of the organisation, ACFA Chairman, Don Murday, extended his warmest thanks for all the hard work and outstanding contributions John has made to ACFA over the years.

It was recognised the amount of time and energy that John had invested in ACFA and the great contribution he has made to the organisation and it's members.

\$10 million investment to help flood-affected farmers

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

The Honourable Andrew Cripps, Tuesday, May 07, 2013.

Landholders in areas hard-hit by flooding caused by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald will benefit from a new \$10 million dollar support package announced by the Newman Government today.

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Andrew Cripps, detailed the funding at Trevor and Gail Garrad's cane farming property south of Bundaberg today, an area facing severe land management challenges due to vegetation loss and erosion because of January's record flooding.

Mr Cripps said the Queensland Government's contribution matches federal government funds provided under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

"This \$20 million on-farm productivity and riparian recovery program will deliver practical on-ground solutions to repair damage and better prepare primary producers for future flood events," Mr Cripps said.

"It will support primary producers and community projects in the hardest-hit regions, particularly the Bundaberg, North Burnett, Fassifern and Lockyer Valley areas.

"Many in these areas were still recovering from the severe flood and storm events of early 2011 when they were hit by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald in January 2013."

Examples of the types of projects that would be considered for funding include:

- advice on weed control to help recovery of pastures destroyed by flood and aquatic weeds
- repairing and restoring fencing and other farm infrastructure, removing excessive or dangerous debris, particularly those threatening the local or downstream environment or infrastructure
- advice on rehabilitating or reconfiguring cropping or grazing lands, on farm soil conservation, gully and contour banks design and water management
- removal of flood waste
- building understanding and capacity about managing water among landowners
- improving flood and vegetation mapping at regional, local and property levels

- advice on rebuilding farm roads to reduce the likelihood of soil loss and impact on fisheries

- repairing, stabilising and rehabilitating flood damaged riparian areas.

Mr Cripps said the program will be led by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

"Queensland's network of community-based regional natural resource management groups will manage funding applications and coordinate projects," he said.

"Groups involved will include the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management, Condamine Alliance, Fitzroy Basin Association, Queensland Murray-Darling Committee, and South East Queensland Catchments.

"Priority on-ground actions are expected to commence in the near future and the program is expected to be completed by mid-2015."

CEO of the Burnett Mary Regional Group, Penny Hall, congratulated the Newman Government.

"It will enable us to support primary producers in their battle to recover from flood impacts, help restore productive agricultural land, and enhance the stability and resilience of our major river systems and flood plains," Mrs Hall said.

"The BMRG will work with expert advisers, industry groups, regional councils, community groups, volunteers and contractors to help the region recover and move on."

Further information is available at:
www.dnrm.qld.gov.au

Land audit shows strong agricultural growth

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
The Honourable John McVeigh, Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Queensland's niche market opportunities, unique climatic areas and production diversity will continue to drive the State's strong future growth, according to the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit released last night.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister John McVeigh said the audit showed the Newman Government was right to make agriculture one of the four pillars of the economy.

"Queensland has the highest percentage of land area being used for agriculture (83 per cent of State area) compared with other Australian States," Mr McVeigh said.

"The State's agricultural industries have grown and evolved as markets, infrastructure and services have evolved and this will continue well into the future."

Mr McVeigh said to achieve the goal of doubling Queensland food production by 2040, we needed to identify the best land and how to develop it. "The audit identifies land that is important to current and future agricultural production throughout the State," he said.

"It is a key reference tool that will help guide investment in the agricultural sector and inform decision making to ensure the best use of our agricultural land in the future.

"The audit is an initiative that supports the Government's vision for a bigger, stronger and more productive agricultural sector as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy."

Mr McVeigh said the audit covered the State's 12 regions, based on planning boundaries, and assessed the opportunities and constraints, including current land use, infrastructure or logistical issues and planning processes.

Some highlights from the Audit include:

- The gross value of production for agriculture, fisheries and forestry in Queensland was \$11.2 billion in 2010–11, which represented 21 per cent of Australia's total gross value of production.
- In 2010–11 Queensland exported \$6.3 billion worth of agriculture and food products.
- Queensland's largest agricultural commodities by value are beef cattle (worth \$3.4 billion in 2010–11), fruit and vegetables (\$1.9 billion), sugarcane (\$910.3 million), cotton (\$776.1 million), wheat (\$378.4 million) and poultry (\$395.5 million).
- Queensland's seasons occur slightly different to the rest of Australia,

which enables it to send produce south to complement southern supplies, thus creating niche markets.

- Queensland's unique climatic areas, diverse production locations, well-acclimatised varieties and production methods result in good yields and high-quality products.

Mr McVeigh said decision makers did not previously have a single reference document on which to be informed.

"The audit will provide a range of useful information to help investors and to guide regional and local planning in the State," he said.

"It has been more than 30 years since an equivalent study of this nature has been undertaken and during that time significant changes have occurred.

"Over the years there has been increasing pressure on farmers to consolidate and innovate in the face of declining terms of trade and increasing mechanisation of farming systems.

"The population has more than doubled and become increasingly urbanised.

"Additionally, demand for non-agricultural land use such as housing, infrastructure, mining, energy, recreational uses and conservation has, and will continue to grow.

"The challenge ahead is to balance the demands on agricultural land resulting from those changes while adapting and planning for future needs."

Mr McVeigh said the audit preceded the Queensland Agriculture Strategy that would be released shortly. "The strategy will include a range of initiatives across government that will assist in growing agriculture, fisheries and forestry and delivering on the commitment to double food production," he said.

"The strategy will provide a clear vision for the sector and a strategic framework for growth based on key pathways."

Download your copy of the Queensland Agricultural Land Audit at www.daff.qld.gov.au

2013-14 BUDGET

The Government says that the 2013-2014 Budget aims to strengthen the foundation of Australian agriculture, prepares farmers for future challenges, and lays the groundwork to make the most of new opportunities, especially in Asia.Body

Since 2007, \$16.2 billion has been invested in regional Australia through this portfolio.

The 2013-14 Budget provides for Farm Finance to 'strengthen farmers' foundations by helping them tackle unmanageable debt.'

The new \$99 million Farm Household Allowance, is the governments' 'key commitment' to National Drought Program Reform.

The Government says that they are laying the groundwork for new opportunities through continued improvements to the biosecurity system and on-going matched spending in research, development and extension.

The 2013-14 Budget confirms the previously announced support for Regional Natural Resource Management organisations and Landcare through the Gillard Government's \$2 billion Caring for Our Country program. The groups will share in \$669 million to continue their work to enhance and maintain Australia's biodiversity and environment over the next five years.

It has also been confirmed that landholders and farmers will be given assistance to reduce the run-off of chemicals into the Great Barrier Reef, under the \$200 million extension to the Reef Rescue program for another five years.

\$429 million will be invested through the Carbon Farming Futures program. This program will take the best abatement and greenhouse gas reduction research and convert it for use on the farm, with an aim to reduce emissions and improve productivity.

This Budget allocates more than \$230 million to our research and development (R&D) corporations. Investment in R&D increases innovation and productivity and will help ensure Australian primary producers and their products continue to be among the world's best.

As announced in previous Budgets, the Government will invest \$117.9 million through the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio in 2013-14 in biosecurity to ensure the continued delivery of a modern system that is responsive and targeted, comprising:

\$73.3 million for quarantine border security;

\$30.6 million for moving core functions towards reform;

\$5 million for foundation elements of biosecurity reform; and

\$9 million for information communication technology systems.

This funding is in addition to an allocation of \$60.6 million in 2012-13 to commence construction on the \$379.9 million Post Entry Quarantine Facility at Mickleham in Victoria (also announced in last year's budget).

\$25 million will be provided for a National Produce Monitoring System, agreed to by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers on 3 May 2013. This will mean that farmers can continue to market Australian products as clean, world class.

The 2013-14 Budget includes \$18 million as the Government's contribution to the FRDC (Fisheries) – more than 2.5 times the receipts from industry levies. The Government will also contribute up to \$2.1 million in matching R&D funds for Forest and Wood Products Australia so that it can support the continued productivity and innovation in the forestry sector.

As part of our contribution to the Tasmanian Forestry Agreement the 2013-14 Budget also includes funding for the national certification standard for the forestry industry through the Forest Stewardship Council.

You can read more about the 2013-14 Budget at www.budget.gov.au



New Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, appoints new-look Cabinet

After being sworn in as Australia's Prime Minister for a second time, Kevin Rudd appointed his new-look cabinet in late June.

A number of Mr Rudd's supporters have been promoted while some of Julia Gillard's backers have had their portfolios changed, reported the ABC.

Strong Rudd supporter, Richard Marles, joined the Cabinet for the first time as Trade Minister along with other Cabinet first-timers Jacinta Collins as Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, and Julie Collins as the Minister for Housing, Homelessness and the Status of Women.

The Cabinet sees the most women being appointed in Australian history which includes Catherine King, who will become the Minister for Regional Australia.

Returning to the front bench, key Rudd supporters Joel Fitzgibbon and Kim Carr have been appointed Agriculture Minister and Industry and Innovation Minister respectively.

Some Gillard supporters remain in Cabinet but will take on different roles: Tony Burke shifts from environment to the challenging area of Immigration, formerly held by Brendan O'Connor, who will now become the Minister for Employment reported the ABC.

After switching his vote to Mr Rudd in the final hours before the caucus vote, Bill Shorten retains his Workplace Relations portfolio and has gained the portfolios of Employment and Education.

Deputy Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will keep his Transport and Infrastructure portfolios, but will take over Communications and is now responsible for the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN).

| Portfolio | Minister | Since |
|---|------------------|-------|
| • Prime Minister | Kevin Rudd | 2013 |
| • Deputy Prime Minister | Anthony Albanese | 2013 |
| • Minister for Infrastructure and Transport | | 2007 |
| • Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy | | 2013 |
| • Minister for Finance and Deregulation | Penny Wong | 2010 |
| • Minister for Mental Health and Ageing | Jacinta Collins | 2013 |
| • Treasurer | Chris Bowen | 2013 |
| • Minister for Defence | Stephen Smith | 2010 |
| • Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs | Jenny Macklin | 2007 |
| • Minister for Disability Reform | | 2013 |
| • Minister for Foreign Affairs | Bob Carr | 2012 |
| • Minister for Immigration, Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship | Tony Burke | 2013 |
| • Minister for the Arts | | |
| • Minister for Regional Australia, Local Government and Territories | Catherine King | 2013 |
| • Minister for Education | Bill Shorten | 2013 |
| • Minister for Workplace Relations | | 2011 |
| • Minister for Climate Change | Mark Butler | 2013 |
| • Minister for Environment, Heritage and Water | | |
| • Attorney-General | Mark Dreyfus | 2013 |
| • Special Minister of State | | |
| • Minister for Emergency Management | | |
| • Minister for the Public Service and Integrity | | |
| • Minister for Resources and Energy | Gary Gray | 2013 |
| • Minister for Tourism | | |
| • Minister for Small Business | | |
| • Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry | Joel Fitzgibbon | 2013 |
| • Minister for Health and Medical Research | Tanya Plibersek | 2011 |
| • Minister for Housing and Homelessness | Julie Collins | 2013 |
| • Minister for the Status of Women | | |
| • Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development | | |
| • Minister for Trade | Richard Marles | 2013 |
| • Minister for Employment | Brendan O'Connor | 2013 |
| • Minister for Skills and Training | | |
| • Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research | Kim Carr | 2013 |
| • Minister for Higher Education | | |

ACFA Soil Health Forum



**Prof. Susanne Schmidt
addresses the ACFA
Soil Health Forum**

The Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) hosted their inaugural Soil Health Forum on Monday 15th April 2013.

Cane farmers from all over Queensland and New South Wales gathered together in Townsville at the Holiday Inn to listen and discuss soil health issues with guest speakers.

After the opening address by ACFA Chairman, Don Murday, Professor Susanne Schmidt from the University of Queensland, commenced proceedings with an update on her research into 'Ecogenomics of Sugarcane Soils'.

Professor Schmidt spoke to the forum of how her research is the world's-first comprehensive characterisation of soil and root associated microbes in sugarcane.

Professor Schmidt explained the three main objectives of her research;

- Use leading-edge genomic and bioinformatic technologies [to] characterise the diversity and capacities of microbial communities from QLD sugarcane soils;
- Identify the bacteria and genes that drive the ability of soils to cycle nitrogen, resist fungal pathogens & sequester and retain carbon;
- Develop strategies to manage, leverage and supplement soil microbial communities in sustainable sugarcane production.

Following Professor Susanne Schmidt, Tom McShane from BBIFMAC spoke of his work of investigating the role of microbes and carbon in soil-plant interaction in Burdekin sugarcane soils.



**Great Land results in
Tully, QLD.
Left: untreated,
Right: treated with
Great Land.**

Mr McShane gave an insight into his current project and how he and his team are working towards further understanding the soil-plant interaction in the Burdekin region.

Agronomy expert Jayson Dowie from Farmacist spoke to the delegates about the Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) funded project on Microbes in Sugarcane. Through his presentation, Jayson explained the role of microbiology and the importance of quantifying the effects of microbial additions to sugarcane soils on crop productivity.

Jayson and his team will be trialling their project in four Queensland regions (Mackay, Proserpine, Herbert, Burdekin) and explained the variables that they will be measuring;

- Soil chemistry over time;
- Physical soil changes over time (water holding capacities, bulk densities);
- Changes in biological populations over time;
- Trash decomposition over time;
- The effect of different feedstock's for the biology;
- Ascertain whether reduced nutrition can maintain yield;
- Nematode populations over time;
- Pachymetera populations over time;
- Effect of biology on different soil types, under different climates and different farming systems;
- Yield, CCS, tonnes of sugar produced;
- Profitability.



BBIFMAC project in the Burdekin

Following Jayson Dowie, John Bletsus from Soils First NQ spoke about the three main properties of healthy soil; physical, chemical, biological. John explained to the forum that the health of soil can be determined by the interaction of these three properties and explained in depth the important role both phosphorus and calcium play in healthy soil.

After a brief talk from David Reid and Rachael Olsen from Aon on 'how to manage your business risks in the current insurance market', the Soil Health Forum heard from Steve Capeness from Advanced Nutrients.

Steve spoke of 'Enhanced Efficiency Fertilisers for Sugarcane' and presented on yield decline in sugarcane, soil health initiatives for sugar, nutrient application rates and enhanced efficiency fertilisers; 'Black Urea', 'Bang P', 'Enhance Plus'.

Final speaker for the day, Andrew Bauer, Senior Sales Consultant from Great Land, spoke on 'The Secret Life of Soil'. Andrew told the delegates of how soil is a complex ecosystem filled with countless creatures and explained the importance this ecosystem plays on soil health.

Andrew listed the commercial trials of Great Land in sugarcane in Far North Queensland and reported on the good results being recorded.

Overall, the ACFA Soil Health Forum was a successful, informative day with researchers and farmers alike leaving with the most up to date, cutting edge information in sugarcane soil health.

Case IH Step UP! Conference

March was a big month for the Next Gen program, with it hosting the inaugural 'Case IH Step UP! Conference' on the Gold Coast. Farmers and stakeholders young and old attended from throughout the Australian industry.

Farmers' young and old descended on Sea World to contribute to the conversation about profitability, sustainability and innovation in the cane farming industry.

Australia's sugar cane farmers, from all generations, had the first major opportunity in the history of the industry to discuss the future of the industry at the Case IH Step UP! conference in March this year.

The young farmer Next Gen groups got to network and encounter new information, before going back to their home areas recharged and inspired to step-up and take the reins in their local industry.

As part of the Australian Cane Farmers Association's (ACFA) Next Gen program, which fosters the next generation of young farmers, the Case IH Step UP! conference focused on three key industry drivers – profitability, sustainability and innovation.

Acting Next Gen Officer, Gerard Puglisi, said the early interest from canefarmers across all sugar regions was overwhelming.

"Young cane farmers in particular are crying out for industry knowledge and advice that will help them run profitable businesses into the future," he said.

"There are also more experienced cane farmers who attended the conference as they want to continue to play an active role in the industry they love and transfer knowledge to the next generation of farmers."

There has never been a conference in Australia like this, which encourages participation of all generations of sugar cane farmers.

Farmers had the rare opportunity to ask questions of leading research, accountancy, financial, and legal experts and get honest answers from them.

Over the three-day event the discussions informed a 10-point action plan for the next 12-months which will be used to inform Government on key issues impacting the industry.

"The future of our industry is in the hands of young farmers and they need the support and knowledge of their more experienced counterparts to push the industry forward," said Don Murday, Chairman of Australian Cane Farmers.

The conference was opened by the Hon Dr John McVeigh Qld Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry. Former Australian Wallaby and inspirational businessman John Eales was the key motivational speaker along with the much-admired and humorous Sam Kekovich as the dinner speaker.





The Next Gen Farmers enjoying the trade stalls

The ACFA called on young cane farmers across all key sugar regions to apply to be their local Next Gen representative and these were announced at the conference.

The venue was chosen with families in mind so that the whole family, after a challenging year, could take the time to relax and enjoy the Gold Coast.

The Next Generation program (Next Gen) has been developed in response to a major issue the sugar cane industry is facing regarding its main asset – its farmers.

The industry has identified a need to entice young farmers into a career in agriculture, specifically in the sugar cane industry.

It is also important to ensure the more established farmer is encouraged to transfer the wealth of their knowledge to the incoming generation.

Highlights from the Case IH Step UP! Conference...

- Opening address by The Hon. Dr John McVeigh, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Rugby legend and motivational speaker, John Eales speaking about 'Business Insights and Inspirations'
- SRDC panel discussion
- Case IH Global Harvesting expert; Guilherme Belardo
- Machinery display by Case IH
- Suncorp Family BBQ
- Brent Casey, QSL, & Nicolas Wainwright, Czarnikow, on 'The sugar market, prices and what to expect in 2013'
- 'Innovative Farming Practises' panel with Robert Quirk (ACFA), Nick Goodall (Bonsucro), Robert Coco (Reef Catchments), Bradley Hussey (BSES), Guilherme Belardo (Case IH)
- As well as key sessions from Vita Health, Basic Training Solutions, OBI Recruitment, Suncorp Agribusiness, McKay's Law & Proactive Accountants Network



The Hon. Dr John McVeigh



Motivational speaker and rugby legend, John Eales, with the iconic 'Cane Captiva'

We would like to extend a huge *thank you to all* of our sponsors and conference attendees who all helped make the Case IH Step UP! Conference such a success.

PlantZap: new diet drink revolution

AS global beverage companies search for ways to reduce the calories in soft drinks and juice, the



A product developed by a team of scientists at Queensland's health and food sciences precinct promises to reduce the calorie content of carbonated soft drinks, energy drinks, juice and dairy foods by as much as 50 per cent while increasing sugar mill output by up to 2 per cent.

The product, known as PlantZap, is extracted from cane juice but has only 1 or 2 per cent of the calories of sugar and is full of electrolytes, such as potassium and magnesium.

PlantZap is almost tasteless and colourless, but can mask the bitter aftertaste of sweeteners such as stevia, which is used in low-calorie soft drinks, such as Pepsi Next.

When liquid PlantZap is added to foods and beverages, it produces the same mouth-feel as sugar and increases volumes without adding calories, The Australian Financial Review reports.

Queensland businessman Mike Lehman believes PlantZap has the potential to become the fourth building

block in the food and beverage industry alongside sugar, grains and oils – providing nutrition benefits while reducing production costs.

"Big food and beverage companies are under pressure to reduce calories," says Mr Lehman, pointing to Coca-Cola's pledge last month to put calorie labelling on the front of its packages and to promote no-calorie and low-calorie drinks.

Mr Lehman's company, Nutraceutical and Natural Products (NNP), acquired the global commercial rights to PlantZap from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry a few years ago and is in advanced discussions to raise \$US30 million (\$31.6 million) from financial and commercial partners to build the first full-scale plant.

NNP has built a calibration plant on the site of Grupo Azucarero Mexico's sugar mill at Guadalajara in Mexico, proving the process works under a constant flow production process.

Sugar cane can also be used to produce PlantZap, a low-calorie sweetener developed in Queensland.

Photo: Rob Homer

Article taken from <http://www.northqueenslandregister.com.au/news/agriculture/general/news/plantzap-new-diet-drink-revolution/2659642.aspx>

11 June 2013, Sue Mitchell.



Flood-hit port begins exporting sugar backlog

By Frances Adcock

The first commercial sugar export will leave Bundaberg next week, five months after floods extensively damaged the port in the southern Queensland city.

A dredge has been used to remove silt and debris and 19 navigation aids have been replaced after they were washed away in January.

Bundaberg Port manager Jason Pascoe says last season's sugar will be shipped out before this year's crop can be exported.

"There's about 180,000 tonne of sugar that we need to load out of the facility pretty quickly so we can make room for this season's crop," he said.

"Production is about 20,000 tonnes a week, so that's once they start the crush which will be around mid-June."

Mr Pascoe says it has been a time consuming process.

"Dredging is always a difficult process but we were very fortunate we had good weather," he said.

"We were able to dredge more material than we expected, which was a positive but there's also been challenges with the establishments of those navigational aids."

Article taken from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-06-05/flood-hit-port-begins-exporting-sugar-backlog/4734512?section=business>

Sugar crush expected to be the lowest in almost 20 years

By Averyll Loft

AFTER one of the most extreme growing seasons in living memory, the Maryborough Sugar Factory is predicting its worst crush in almost two decades.

With just over a month until the factory roars to life for another year, general manager Stewart Norton said the estimate was for a total of 560,000 tonnes this year - down from last year's 665,200 tonnes.

He said the combination of a bone-dry start to the growing season followed by Maryborough's two floods in January and February had devastated more than 10% of the region's crop.

"There's probably 10 growers who suffered the most damage," he said. "However, the crops that weren't flooded over are expecting reasonable yield."

This year's crush estimate is the lowest since 1995, when the Fraser Coast's 180 growers produced 555,000 tonnes. Canegrowers Maryborough has estimated the flooding caused around \$144m of damage to the industry across Wide Bay.

But the show must go on and workers were busily preparing the mill for the start of the crush, Mr Norton said.

"Everything's got to be bolted back together. Then we've got to fire everything up and there's a lot of testing to be done."

The new \$1.5m laboratory and engineering office would be ready in time too. "It's absolute state-of-the-art. It's much more modern ergonomically," Mr Norton said.

The numbers

- 2013: 116 growers, 560,000 tonnes crush estimate
- 2012: 118 growers, 665,200 tonnes crushed
- 2011: 119 growers, 669,600 tonnes crushed
- 2010: 118 growers, 575,000 tonnes crushed
- 2009: 120 growers, 687,400 tonnes crushed

Article taken from <http://www.frasercoastchronicle.com.au/news/crush-likely-to-be-less/1889450/>

31 May 2013, Averyll Loft.

Bonsucro Update

An important announcement from CEO Nick Goodall

Building on the success of the Case IH Step UP! Conference, Bonsucro has announced an outstanding invitation for farmers to join Bonsucro, the global standard for sugarcane.

Call for Experts

Certification Growth Taskforce

Certified members are encouraged to participate in this taskforce. The objective is to develop a strategy to increase certified product onto the market, create alignment and build the business case to communicate the benefits and impact of certification. The teleconference is scheduled for 23 May at 1pm (UK) time. Please confirm by 21 May if you wish to participate natasha@bonsucro.com

Claims & Labelling Working Group

The Bonsucro sustainability label is being sought, however it's "not yet on product". Bonsucro is calling for communications and marketing experts to form a working group. If you have expertise in this area and would like to join please contact natasha@bonsucro.com



Hello!

It was great being with so many of you last month at StepUp!

I've an idea I'd like to run by you:

- Do you still want to show the world you're the best cane farmers?
- Do you want to make sure that when Bonsucro talks, it is listening to you?
- Do you want to be first 'in the know' with the latest in trends worldwide?
- Do you want all this for free?*

Then come and join us in Bonsucro!

We've created a special membership category for people like you: Farmers.

Look, it's really simple - fill this in <http://bonsucro.com/site/application/> and send it to us.

That's it.

As soon as you're in, we'll start asking your views and sharing news from others.

There's even a dedicated member of staff just for Farmers - Daniel Lobo, based in Brazil.

What are you waiting for?



Nick Goodall
Chief Executive

*Farms less than 100Ha are free to join. Less than 1000Ha are £50 and so on up a sliding scale to 50,001Ha+ £700.

Better Sugar Cane Initiative
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W: www.bonsucro.com
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Welcome to New Members

Puglisi Farming (Australia) An Australian cane farmer who uses modern farming practices and is also a pioneer cocoa grower.

JG Buchbach (Australia) An Australian sugarcane farmer who grows sugarcane on 85ha.

Usina Santa Cruz S/A – (Brazil) is among one of the 25th largest mills in the country. The goal is to increase productivity along with better efficiency levels and investment in the improvement of its process and constant use of new technologies.

7 Candidate Members

Usina Serra Grande (North East Brazil) Led today by Luis Antonio Andrade Bezerra, Usina Serra Grande is in the municipality of São José da slab and is one of the oldest mills in Alagoas.

Usina Trapiche (North East Brazil) Founded in 1887, Usina Trapiche is located in the municipality of São José da slab and produces sugar and alcohol

C&W Hunn Enterprises (Australia) Farm is located in Mackay, Australia and they grow sugarcane on 147ha.

Ramzan Sugar Mills (Pakistan) Ramzan Sugar Mills manufacture refined sugar from sugarcane with a capacity of 12000ton/day.

Assobari: Associação dos Fornecedores de Cana de Bariri (Brazil) Grow sugarcane on 5,000 ha. Assobari measures the area using GPS, conducts soil analysis, and provides recommendation on biological control.

Netafim (Israel) is the global leader in drip and micro-irrigation solutions for sustainable productivity. With 27 subsidiaries, 16 manufacturing plants and over 3,000 employees worldwide, Netafim delivers innovative solutions in over 110 countries across the globe.

Manuelita S.A. Group (Colombia) has been dedicated since 1864 to the production of high quality refined sugar, raw sugar and its derivatives. It was the first mill in Colombia powered by steam in 1901. Manuelita's products are used by food, chemical and pharmaceutical industries.

Bonsucro achieves full ISEAL Membership

Bonsucro was independently audited and achieved full compliance with the ISEAL Standard-Setting Code and awarded Full Member Status. ISEAL is the global membership association for sustainability standards, whose mission is to strengthen standards systems for the benefit of people and the environment by defining credibility and bringing organisations together to strengthen their effectiveness. ISEAL Executive Director, Karin Kreider, said the decision "reflects the impressive steps that Bonsucro has taken to ensure that its standards system is credible and structured to meet its sustainability goals." To read the full article visit the ISEAL website.

Bonsucro in Brazil in June speaking at 3 different events

EXPOSUSTENTAT

Vice Chairman, Michel Santos will give a presentation about Bonsucro at the EXPOSUSTENTAT – Sustainable Solutions for Economic Development on 13 June.

ISSCT XXVIII Congress 2013

Nicolas Viart will present a paper that was written in collaboration with Dr Peter Rein: "The Development and Implementation of the Bonsucro Standards for Promoting the Sustainability of Sugarcane Products" on 26 June.

Ethanol Summit

Nick Goodall will address delegates at the Ethanol Summit on "Certification: The Challenge of Increasing Demand" on 28 June.

Mexico 9 -11 July

50 delegates are confirmed for the Sugarcane Sustainability Summit in Mexico City and 20 delegates confirmed for the training. The training is offered free of charge so if you have operations in Mexico please encourage your partners to register for the Summit and Training without delay! Please note we may have to limit the number of participants per company to ensure we can accommodate all companies expected at the event.

www.bonsucro.com/seminar

New South Wales Sugar Milling Cooperative Manildra Harwood Sugars

New South Wales' own Sunshine Sugar is again leading the way in the world of sustainability being the first company in Australasia to sell Bonsucro Credits.



Recently the New South Wales Sugar Milling Cooperative Ltd and Manildra Harwood Sugar announced that they became the first in Australasia to become Bonsucro certified.

The certification of the Cooperative's growers, its sugar milling operations and the Sugar Refinery joint venture with Manildra which operates alongside the Harwood Mill is the first certification from producer to customer in the world. The Bonsucro certification is obtained by strict audit by an independent certification body as being in compliance with the Bonsucro Standard.

Customers who purchase Bonsucro Certified Sugar are assured that the product they receive has been ethically, environmentally and economically manufactured in a sustainable way by all involved within the supply chain from the farmer to the customer.

The Cooperative is now delighted to announce that a key customer, Ferrero, is supporting this important sustainable initiative through the purchase of 5,000 Bonsucro credits in what will be the first trade in Australasia.

Being the fourth largest confectionery group in the world, Ferrero has a very clear practice of supporting the highest quality products and careful selection of the finest raw materials and through this purchase is supporting and rewarding

the local industry through their commitment to the certification process. By supporting those sugar cane producers who implement good agricultural practices and farm management, companies like Ferrero encourage better farming practices, increased yields, better quality, less impact on the environment, better social working circumstances and a more efficient way of production.

Chairman of Sunshine Sugar, Mr Ian Causley said "The certification and subsequent agreement with Ferrero is an important part of the Cooperative's continuous improvement program targeting social and environmental improvement. We congratulate Ferrero on being the first customer to participate in a process that is beneficial to all facets and levels of the community. We are proud that an Australian grower-owned enterprise in conjunction with our partners, Australian icon Manildra Group, has been able to lead the way in such a responsible manner. Personally, I think that having the makers of my favourite chocolate as our first Bonsucro partner is a very positive move."

Bonsucro CEO, Nick Goodall, welcomed the sale. "Congratulations to Sunshine Sugar and Ferrero for demonstrating their commitment and support for the sustainable production of sugarcane".

Pesticides authority open to reviewing diuron ban for Qld cane farmers

By Allyson Horn

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Management Authority (APVMA) says it would consider reviewing a ban on the use of the herbicide diuron.

The APVMA has told a federal budget estimates hearing it is no longer concerned about the herbicide's impact on the biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef off Queensland.

It said it would consider reviewing the ban if new evidence and research on the herbicide's use in cane farms was submitted.

North Queensland Senator Ian Macdonald says cane farmers desperately need the authority to lift the ban.

"They no longer think that it's a problem for the reef," he said.

"They do think it's a problem for primary and secondary waterways, but again I think the farmers, through Reef Rescue and other programs, have done all the work necessary to make sure these chemicals don't flow on unwantedly into streams and rivers."

Senator Macdonald says it is time for the ban to be lifted. "The authority said that they were no longer concerned about the impact of the chemical on the reef biodiversity," he said.

"They indicated they had discounted that some time ago. "What their concern was now was the impact on aquatic life in primary and secondary waterways and streams."

Article taken from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-29/pesticides-authority-open-to-reviewing-diuron-ban-for-qld-farmer/4719592?section=qld>

29 May 2013, Allyson Horn.

Asia will remain dependent on food imports from West

Asia will become increasingly dependent on food imports from the West to support rising living standards, London-based sugar merchant Czarnikow says.

Sugar prices are trading at close to the lowest levels in more than two and a half years as record cane output in top exporter Brazil and higher-than-expected production in Thailand and India are expected to increase surplus supplies.

A recent fall in sugar prices does not equate to falling demand, Czarnikow says, and global trade has been running at record levels. This is in contrast to the idea that the boom in demand for commodities is over.

"While the Asian economies have the greatest growth potential both in terms of industrialisation and the development of their own consumer markets, they will become increasingly in need of the agricultural production of the West," it says.

"We believe that it is these trade flows that are likely to become ever more critical to the global trade cycle."

Land availability in Asia, and the potential to expand agricultural production, is limited, Czarnikow says. The biggest markets for raw sugar today are Indonesia and China.

"The Americas, particularly Brazil, are where the potential for growth is coming from," it says.

"Sugar prices have been falling because of the production response to high prices, not because of falling demand," a reference to a period in late 2011 and early 2012 when sugar was much dearer because of a combination of adverse weather and ageing cane in Brazil.

"Affordability is rising, which is helping demand growth."

The growth in sugar demand is largely driven by low-income consumers.

"Consequently, rising affordability for sugar, and across the food sector, is positive for consumption growth," Czarnikow says.

Article taken from <http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/asia-will-remain-dependent-food-imports-west-dc-140381>

27 May 2013

Taking care of the engine room that drives growth

SOILS are an incredibly complex interwoven system of nutrients and micro organisms.

By Peter and Bevly Hughes.

Plants depend on the right balance of all these things to be able to grow and produce a profitable crop.

Growcom has been holding a series of soil health workshops funded by Burnett Mary Regional Group, throughout the Wide Bay region, the latest of which was held on the Buchanans' Sandowne farm.

Growers came from farms growing small crops, passionfruit, sugar cane, pineapples, citrus and macadamias.

Presenter Mike Harrison, who runs Wide Bay Compost, said that as people dealing with soil on a daily basis, participants tended to ignore the most important issues affecting crop production.

"We ignore the 'engine room' that drives growth," he said.

"What happens to the organisms in the soil is the crucial factor."

Mr Harrison said soil organisms varied from microscopic to visible, such as worms and insects.

"They form a symbiotic relationship, relying on each other," he said.

"Some soil organisms are pests but the vast majority are 'good guys'."

Mr Harrison said plants were as much a part of the system as anything else.

He said plant roots produced a sugary liquid that attracted both good and bad organisms but, he said, if there was a balance in the soil it evened out.

"As many farming practices diverged towards a reliance on harsh fertilisers, soil biology tended to be under stress," Mr Harrison said.

"Soils tended towards either fungal or bacterial dominated."

A healthy balanced soil food web could help to minimise the effects of many plant pathogens, he said, and by improving soil structure, maximise water absorption and retention and keep nutrients in the soil in a form available to plants.



Mike Harrison in front of a stand of cane grown in soil in which pineapples were grown previously.

"Good soil structure is vital to enable air, water and nutrients to move through," Mr Harrison said.

"This provides easy access to the soil micro organisms, including fungi."

As they moved through the soil, the fungi and other organisms opened up the soil, he said. Harsh farming systems could readily break down the micro organism content, especially the fungi.

Mr Harrison said the traditional rule of "if you have a few worms, then the soil is not too bad" still held pretty true.

"Worms are good indicators of soil condition," he said. "A good compost mix is probably as good as you need to apply, as it is beneficial to most soil organisms."

A good healthy soil allowed for quicker recovery from major events, such as flood, where a lot of the organisms would have been killed.

Article taken from <http://www.news-mail.com.au/news/soils-aint-soils/1878118/>

23 May 2013, Peter and Bevly Hughes.

Joe Ludwig launches national food plan to grow industry

Federal Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig has unveiled a new plan designed to grow the local food industry and put Australia on the world food map. By Samantha Hawley

First promised in the 2010 election campaign, the National Food Plan includes a multi-million-dollar research fund to help Australian producers capitalise on the so-called Asian "dining boom".

There is also funding to better brand Australian food exports.

"It's about helping domestic opportunities find connections in Asia," Mr Ludwig said.

"It's about putting our Aussie mark on food and making sure that we all get a benefit out of it."

The largest contribution of \$30 million will go to an Asian food markets research fund to help farmers capitalise Asia growth.

Almost \$6 million will go to promoting Australian agriculture in overseas markets and \$2 million to develop a strong and unique Australian food brand.

A further \$5.6 million will be used to boost trade ties in Asia, with \$1.5 million will be spent on promoting careers in agriculture and food.

Mr Ludwig says the plan recognises that foreign investment is a significant player in Australia.

"Some reports already recognise that the level of capital investment that we will need over the next five, 10, 15 years to take some of these opportunities forward will require foreign investment," he said.

"Whether it increases or not is a matter for foreign investors, whether they see opportunities in Australia."



He says the plan also touches on Australia's supermarket duopoly. "One of the areas that the industry has already been dealing with is bringing together a round table to come up with outcomes from the supermarket chain right through from producers and deal with that," he said.

Mr Ludwig says there needs to be a Productivity Commission to review and reform food supply chain regulations and an Australian Council on Food to engage with industry and community leaders.

Article taken from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-25/government-unveils-first-ever-national-food-plan/4713074>

25 May 2013, Samantha Hawley.

Cost of biofuels no longer sky high

By Peter Hannam

Whether it's the use of organisms first found in the guts of rabbits in New Zealand or converting the mountains of rubbish disposed of by Londoners, airlines around the world are hunting for ways to power their planes without using fossil fuels.

In Australia, the focus has been on more prosaic biofuel feedstock, such as sugarcane, or experimental crops such as the oilseed-bearing pongamia tree and emerging sources such as microalgae.

Airlines, such as Qantas and Virgin Australia, aim to source 5 per cent of their aviation fuel from sustainable biofuels by 2020.

The problem has been to ensure aircraft safety, find viable alternatives and track how their prices might travel over time. Virgin spends about \$1.1 billion on fuel each year and Qantas about four times that.

The release on Wednesday of the results of a three-year study led by the University of Queensland reveal the nascent biofuels sector has the potential to become competitive with jet fuel sourced from oil – but only if targeted investments are made.

"It's within range," said Daniel Klein-Marcuschamer, manager of technoeconomic analysis at Queensland University's Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. "There are clear measures we can take to reduce the cost."

The research, published in the journal *Biofuels*, *Bioproducts* and *Biorefining*, found that using current proven technologies, the oil price would have to almost triple to be competitive with sugarcane, at \$301 per barrel.

Focusing research on developing higher fermentation yields in the sucrose processing, however, could lower the viability benchmark for sugarcane to \$168 a barrel. While more expensive than current oil prices of about \$100-110 a barrel, the cost is no longer as stratospheric, especially if the potential for future global carbon prices are added to the equation.

Article taken from <http://www.watoday.com.au/business/carbon-economy/cost-of-biofuels-no-longer-sky-high-20130522-2k0vv.html#ixzz2UYMJ5xI7>

22 May 2013, Peter Hannam.

Rising emissions

Carbon emissions from the aviation industry have risen 153 per cent between 1971-2009, far outstripping the 102 per cent rise in total emissions over that period, Susan Pond, chair of the Australian Initiative for Sustainable Aviation Fuels, told a conference in Sydney on Wednesday.

Nations and carriers continue to wrangle over rules to curb emissions. The European Union earlier this year suspended plans to impose emission permits for any flight arriving or leaving European airspace. The EU backed down after threats of non-compliance or retaliation from China, India and the US, although discussions continue for global restrictions to come into force from 2020.

Sugarcane remains the most promising of the three feedstocks studied by the University of Queensland team.

Pongamia seeds, which can have a content of 40 per cent oil, would need a crude oil price of \$374 per barrel to be competitive. This source has the potential to drop to \$255 if seed-oil content can be increased, the study found.

Microalgae remains a long shot, needing a \$1343 per barrel oil price to be competitive, although improved harvesting processes could reduce that by more than two-thirds, to \$385 per barrel, the study found.

Whether it's rabbit-gut microbes or the development of sugarcane, the progress on bringing down biofuel costs to competitive levels will hinge largely on how much governments and others spend on research and development, Dr Klein-Marcuschamer said: "If the government starts putting money into R&D and the right policies in place (for sugarcane development), it can happen in five years."



Applications open for SRDC funded TRAILblazers leadership course

The Sugar Research and Development Corporation is offering a scholarship for an established leader to attend the Training Rural Australians in Leadership (TRAIL) *Blazers* eight day residential course in Canberra from 11th - 19th October 2013.

Facilitated by the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, this course is designed for experienced leaders who currently hold a senior position in agriculture.

The program aims to build the capacity of rural leaders, expand their leadership frameworks, establish new relationships, and develop a fresh perspective on how to resolve complex issues for rural Australia.

2012 TRAIL*blazers* recipient, Graham Bonnett from CSIRO described the course as a life changing experience and an excellent opportunity to network with other people from rural industry groups.

SRDC Executive Director Annette Sugden, said we will award one scholarship placement on the next course for a senior leader currently employed by the sugarcane industry.

"It is important we continue to invest in the capacity of our sugarcane leaders, who are ultimately the ones responsible for shaping the future of our industry," Ms Sugden said.

The SRDC scholarship includes course registration fees, return airfares, and accommodation the night before and after the course in Canberra.

To apply, download the application form from the SRDC website www.srdc.gov.au and send your completed application to SRDC Program Manager, Bianca Cairns bcairns@srdc.gov.au by 16 August 2013.

For more information contact SRDC on ph: 07 3210 0495 or visit the ARLF website www.ruralleaders.com.au



Graduate of the 2012 TRAIL course Matthew Kealley from Canegrowers discusses aspects of the TRAILblazers course with Graham Bonnett from CSIRO.

Fertcare: What's It All About?



The Fertcare Brand provides a nationally recognized image for best practice fertilizer supply, advice and contract application. **Fertcare is about promoting productivity while protecting the environment** and is the key activity in meeting the fertilizer industries objectives to manage environment and food safety risks.

Why should a sugar cane farmer consider sourcing fertilizer products and services from an organisation with Fertcare credentials?

Community concern about the impacts farming and fertilizer use is having on the Great Barrier Reef continues to attract public attention.

As most canegrowers would be aware, there is a move toward documenting and implementing best management practices to minimize off-site impacts within the sugarcane sector in north Queensland.

Sugarcane farmers can be confident that when they source fertilizer products and services from a business with Fertcare credentials, they will be provided with sound advice, from competent people. Professional fertilizer application contractors displaying the Accu-Spread logo have equipment which is independently tested so you can be assured the machinery is applying the correct rate where it is required.

Three Fertcare logos are used to signify compliance with various components of the program. Farmers should lookout for:



Fertcare Accredited Advisor (FAA): The FAA logo provides farmers with confidence they are receiving fertilizer advice based on soil and or plant testing of a high standard and that matters such as the process of making recommendations, the underlying supporting data, sampling methodology and laboratory competence are based on good practice and accepted science in Australia. Every two years FAA undergo a third party audit to ensure standards. FAA will calculate optimum fertilizer rates for cane based on the "Six Easy Steps" developed by BSES. When seeking professional soil and plant testing advice and fertilizer recommendations, compliant with reef regulations from a FAA, go to http://www.fifa.asn.au/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=1155 for a list of current advisors.



Accu-Spread: The Accu-Spread logo provides farmer customers with peace of mind; knowing they are using professional contractors who are applying the correct rate of fertilizer exactly where they want it. The Fertcare Accu-Spread program assesses and certifies the spreading width and uniformity of fertilizer application machinery (both broadcast dry applied and boom applied liquid fertilizer) and must be completed every three years. When seeking professional fertilizer application service from an Accu-Spread accredited contractor, go to http://www.fifa.asn.au/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=1131 for a list of accredited application equipment. At the time of writing there were no Accu-Spread contractors operating in North Queensland, however a number of professional liquid fertilizer application contractors have indicated their intent to have their equipment accredited and undertake the relevant Fertcare training.



Fertcare Organisation: The Fertcare Organisation logo signifies a business has attained full compliance with the fertilizer industry targets for training of staff and contract application equipment (if appropriate). Go to http://www.fifa.asn.au/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=1136 for a list of Fertcare accredited organisations when sourcing fertilizer products and services.

Fertcare is a joint initiative of Fertilizer Australia and the Australian Fertiliser Services Association (AFSA).

For more information on the Fertcare program, go to

www.fertcare.com.au or contact the Program Manager,

Jeff Kraak E: jeff.kraak@fertilizer.org.au M: 0407 663535.

McKays Solicitors

> How safe are your assets?

Recently a few cases have gone through the courts that have seen individuals lose their personal wealth under personal guarantees they provide for their companies.

These cases highlight the need to obtain appropriate advice before entering into personal guarantees, whether it be in relation to your business, your commercial lease or even your mortgage. To better protect your assets, you should endeavour to limit your personal liability.

A common mistake we see is that a couple who run a small family business through a company both want to be directors of the company. This is because they both want to have equal control over the running of their business, which is understandable.

However, having both of them as directors exposes both to unnecessary personal liability.

For example, if your business or company needs to borrow money to operate, then the loan will usually require personal guarantees from all directors of that company.

If your company doesn't perform as well as expected and is placed into liquidation down the track, the bank is able to recover the full amount of the debt (plus damages, etc) from all guarantors by selling off their personal assets.

In addition to this, directors may become personally liable for breaches of work health and safety laws and for some unpaid company taxes. So in a nutshell, being a director is risky, exposes your personal assets and should be avoided where possible.

Instead of having both of you as directors of your family company, an alternative is to have one of you as sole director and the other to hold the assets (ie. your wealth, including your home, cars, shares, investment properties, etc).

This strategy can help protect the nest egg you have worked hard to build up.

While the above strategy is not fool proof and may not be appropriate in all cases, it can offer you better protection if things don't work out.

This approach is one of a range of strategies that we raise with our clients to protect their wealth when they look at buying or establishing a business.

If you would like advice about being a personal guarantor, you are about to buy a business or you are going into business for yourself, please contact our Business team for assistance.

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Farming for the future

Whilst on holiday recently, a cane farmer unexpectedly came across a box of facial tissues sitting in his hotel room making reference to sugar cane.

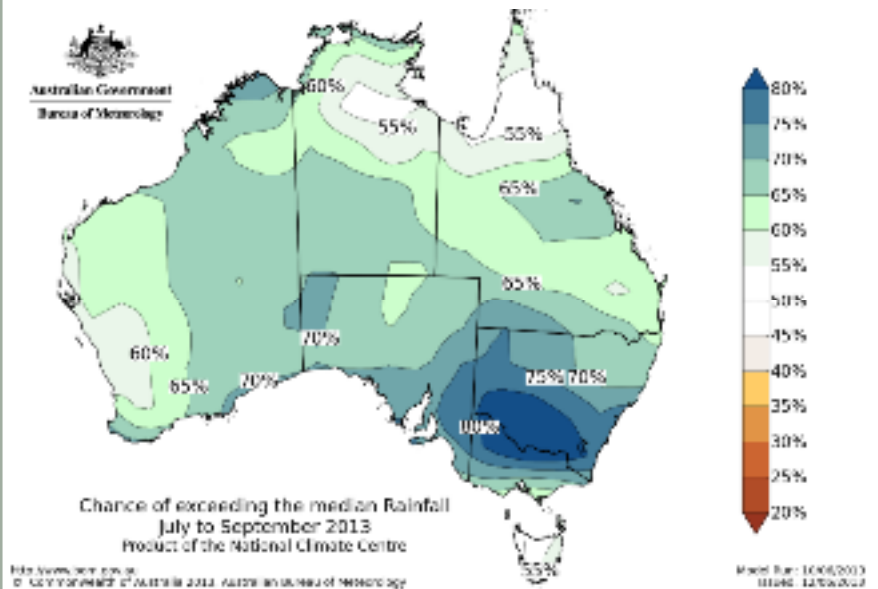
Naturally curious, he made further enquiries and discovered that the tissues were manufactured from a sugar cane by-product called bagasse.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, bagasse is 'the dry pulpy residue left after the extraction of juice from sugar cane.' It is currently used as a biofuel as well as in the manufacture of pulp and paper products and building materials.

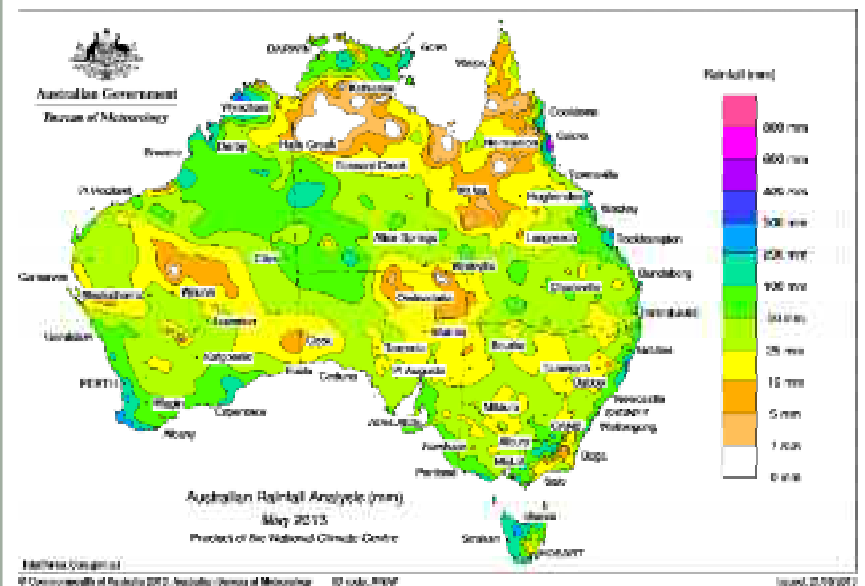
Distributed by Bunzel, these tissues are manufactured by Pristine Hygiene Solutions, this clearly demonstrate the potential sugarcane by-products have. For every 10 tonnes of sugarcane crushed, almost 3 tonnes of wet bagasse is produced [Wikipedia].



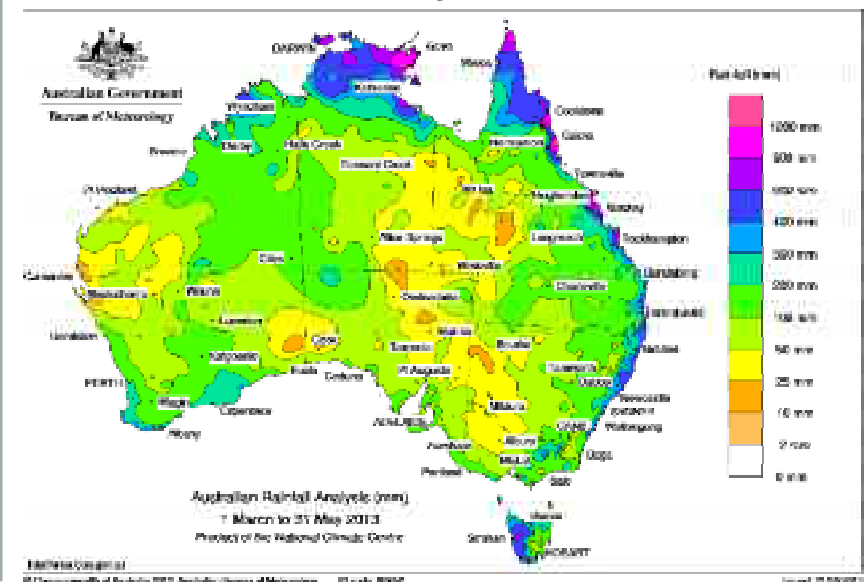
Chance of exceeding the median Rainfall July to September 2013



Rainfall May 2013



Rainfall 1 March 2013 to 30 May 2013



Mossman region



Gerard Puglisi
Northern Region Director

The Cyclone season has drawn to an end for another year, but not without a last minute effort from cyclone Zane which crossed over the tip of Cape York in early May. The northern cane farming regions were relatively untouched; however we did receive a few days of wet weather which is unlikely to affect the crop in the northern areas. It may postpone a few planting programs for a week or two.

The Mossman region's chances of a reasonable crop appears very likely and I feel that a crop estimate of around 560 000 is very achievable. A reminder to all farmers that their estimates along with any map correction must now be sent back to Mossman Agricultural Services.

Local farmers are also eager for some good weather so they can start their planting programs. To date there has not been any early planting carried out but most of our fallow blocks have been sprayed out and are awaiting cultivation. Growers are reminded that before they intend to plant, to please contact their local Productivity Board for a plant source inspection. For an accurate reading it can take a few weeks for the results, so please give your field officer plenty of notice before you intend to plant.

The biggest news that I can report on in this issue, is the News that Mackay Sugar has entered into an agreement with the Tableland growers to crush around 700 000t through the Mossman Mill in 2014. This news is still relatively new and not all the details have been finalised. Local growers were updated on the news just after the announcement and we are awaiting more details as they come to hand.

The news has been welcomed by Mossman Farmers and this arrangement will only make the Mossman Mill more viable long term. It will have benefits of reducing the daily quotas of all coastal harvesters and increase employment in the local area. The mill will also receive some much-needed capital and repairs, to be in a position to handle the extra cane to be processed. The one drawback that I can see is that our season length will now increase, with the potential for the crush running into the start of the wet season in Late November. Only time will tell if this will affect the regions productivity.

On the 2nd of May Sugarcane industry stakeholders were invited to an interactive demonstration of some of the Sugar Research and Development Corporation's (SRDC) project highlights at their regional expo held in Mossman.

This year's expo theme for the Northern Region was ***your farm... a new perspective***. The expo was well attended and it was a great opportunity to find out how SRDC has invested our levies and to network with other industry members. During the expo, top researchers highlight some of the work that is being carried out across the industry to collect important information and enable industry to use that information for smarter on-farm decision-making.

Industry identities and researchers that presented at the expo included:

- **Andrew Robson from QDAFF** who talked to us about using remote sensing technologies with imagery that will accurately depict mid-season crop information to assist farmers with mid-season management decisions.
- **Norris Energy Crop Technology** discussed how supplementary cleaning after the harvesting operation, in conjunction with “low loss” harvesting settings can result in a win: win situation for all industry sectors.
- **Richard Brackin from University of Queensland** highlighted new developments in understanding the microbiology of sugarcane soils and how management strategies can be used to promote healthy soils.
- **Lawrence Di Bella from HCPSL** outlined an integrated monitoring program that will inform landholders and extension staff involved in improving land management practices associated with water quality.

I would like to thank SRDC for running this expo and after talking to farmers who attend the expo, they reported to me that it was a very worthwhile event and they hoped that it would continue in the future.

July Report

The 2013 crush has now commenced in all districts and it hasn't been without a few hurdles that have had to be overcome.

In Mossman the crushing started on the 17th of June as scheduled. The mill has had a reasonable start with close to 59 000t of cane pashing through the rollers for the two weeks. The mill average CCS is around 11.7 and the estimate seems to be holding. If the weather can hold off long enough for us to plant and get the crop off the 2013 season should be the best we have had in recent memory.

The Tableland Mill also started in mid June after a few delays. The mill lost around a week of crushing due to technical issues and mill performance issues

Mulgrave Mill started the same day as Mossman on the 17th of June. Mulgrave Mill has also had its share of issues this year with delays to the crush through mill stoppages and industrial action. The CCS is averaging around 11 for the first few weeks. After talking to a few Mulgrave growers it seems that they are a fair way down the track with their planting for this year.

South Johnstone started on the 18th of June, a week later than originally planned due to wet weather. The mill has also had a reasonable start with few stoppages and a good crush rate. The only down side is that the CCS is a bit low with the district averaging around 10.7.

Early July delivered a few persistent showers which hovered over the north. This tail end of the wet season could push some planting programs back a few weeks. When this year's planting programs get underway, Q208 is again shaping to be the dominant variety that will be planted by most growers. Growers are also encouraged to have their planting material checked for RSD. Please ask your local Productivity Board for an appointment where they can come and check your plants with your assistance. Please remember that results take at least two weeks to come back.

I would like to remind and encourage Mossman growers to participate in this year's Mossman Next Generation Cane display to be held at the Mossman Show. Growers are invited to deliver cane to be judged on the Saturday morning of the show. With significant money on offer, it is well worth the effort. For more information please give me a call on 0428 988 136.

Let's hope that the worst of the weather is behind us and we all have a safe crush.

Gerard Puglisi

Northern Director

Herbert region



Carol Mackee
Herbet Region Director

Crushing starts on or about the second week in June this year. Estimation is a little over 4 million tonnes, similar to last year – a conservative estimate.

Yellow Cane is of enormous concern in the district. It is still not known what the cause is or what the solution will be, only time will tell. It is an extremely worrying time for farmers whose very livelihood depends on finding a quick solution but it looks like it will not happen for some time.

A few farmers have started to plant and some are only going to plant half the amount that they would normally plant until the problem is solved.

There are still feral pig issues around the district and as always farmers are ever vigilant when it comes to the damage that pigs cause by eating cane and wallowing in drills.

Grub treatment with Confidor seems to be able to control grubs to a certain extent. Where Confidor has not been used, there is a grub problem in some areas.

ACFA held a forum on improving soil after the AGM held in Townsville just recently. There were some excellent presentations. It was encouraging to see other growers from outside our own areas doing different things to improve their soil and productivity.

We intend to carry the soil improving information forum to the next level with areas north and south of the Burdekin meeting in Ayr, so that we can hear firsthand what others are doing in their districts, and perhaps trying these methods on our farms.

I was present at a SRDC meeting held in April where presentations were given on microbes in the soil, water monitoring, cost saving on removal of trash before the cane goes through the mill re ccs, our carbon footprint etc. The presentations were excellent and our thanks go to SRDC. We look forward to ongoing results as these trials continue.

Carol Mackee

Herbert Region Director

Burdekin region



Margaret Menzel
Burdekin Director

With almost no rainfall during the early wet season, the Burdekin district has had intermittent and patchy rainfall since, interrupting planting by varying degrees. Predictions are for above average rainfall for the first months of the season.

Grower representatives met with Sucrogen staff to determine the start of crush at each of the Burdekin mills and estimates for the 2013 season.

Due to the late season finishes and the “yellow canopy syndrome” having severely affected cane in the district, these estimates may fall still further. The district crushed 7.48 million tonnes of cane overall in 2012, a huge drop in production for the district and 2013 looks to further reduce any relief for the growers and the district. BPS continue to coordinate with BSES and other growers involved in seeking solutions and causes of the Yellow Canopy Syndrome, affected cane across the district.

Second year GPS data will be collected again in the same Invicta and Kalamia harvesting groups as last year. Wet weather trials will commence in Inkerman and regular meetings will be held to report on activities and results.

All blocks that in any way could affect visibility for contractors or traffic, should be harvested early, to ensure safety of all traffic.

Capital works and maintenance in the mills is said to be on target and preparations for the season should be ready for the proposed start date.

Workplace Safety siding Inductions:

It is **COMPULSORY** for all harvester/haul-out operators and anyone working at sidings during the course of the season, to attend a siding induction course before commencing work for the season. Please take advantage of the siding induction courses available by phoning: 07 - 47 821 922 to register.

A member of the grower pricing team will be at Pioneer Mill every Thursday, for any grower who has any queries or concerns relating to their forward pricing or for any growers needing help with setting up their forward pricing profiles and creating orders for future seasons.

Pre-season meetings discussed mill performance and maintenance; crop estimate and start date; daily cane supply requirements and potential issues with yellow cane and consequences of poor quality cane or supply gaps.

SRDC held a regional expo in April, which demonstrated the Research and development being funded in the industry. During the expo, researchers highlighted some of the work being carried out in collecting data and utilising it to assist better farm management decisions.

The ASSCT conference was held at the Townsville entertainment centre in April and was well attended and informative. SRDC held a presentation dinner for scholarship recipients prior to ASSCT and it gave an excellent overview of the research grants being funded and their purpose for the industry.

The ACFA AGM and Soil Health conference was also held, immediately prior to the conference and proved to be an excellent forum for discussion on alternative nutrition products available to the industry.

A significant challenge to the industry has presented in the form of the dismantling of BSES and morphing both it and SRDC into an organisation that displays a serious conflict of interest – one organisation in control of both the funding source and the funding recipient. It was of serious concern to me to hear that CSIRO have already been advised that they will not have access to the facilities at BSES, in order to engage in industry research. The legislation has not even been passed into law and these directives are being issued...how does this exclusion of research bodies present as anything but 'uncompetitive' and favouring the 'in house' researchers. The appalling lack of attention to these concerns is something that the government and industry bodies involved, must be held accountable for. These issues have serious implications for the industry.

Additionally, the issue of 'yellow canopy syndrome' is one that is not receiving the attention it requires. Suggestions that lack of irrigation or fertiliser appear unsubstantiated, considering the previously high producing farmers that are affected along the coast. It seems the problem has affected crops along the far north coast for at least a year or two, according to anecdotal advice in the industry. That appears to be backed up by evidence of high dirt and stools being transferred to bins during those seasons, which may be attributed to the damaged root systems that the syndrome causes.

I would like to commend the local BPS staff, who have involved themselves thoroughly in examination of root systems affected, leaf and soil analysis and consultation with growers involved. It is unfortunate that the effects of the uncertainty with BSES's future has been apparent in the lack of cohesion along the coast in addressing or even providing an accurate picture, of how significant or widespread the problem is.

Regards,

Margaret Menzel

Burdekin Director

Mob: 0407 779 700

Central region



Steve Fordyce
Central Region

Mackay mills are due to start harvesting in mid-June. The crop size at this stage is disappointing at an estimated 5 million tons. There is hope that the crop can grow out some more with some good favourable weather conditions. After the good rainfall during April, the crop has had good growing conditions and has improved somewhat.

Ag Trade Life Show two day event was held on the 8th and 9th May after been postponed due to very wet weather conditions in April. The event was well attended. This event has replaced the BSES field day which was traditionally held about the third week in May. The Ag Show was held on the revamped Mackay Show ground development. There is a covered area of about 4,000 sq. meters of which about half is indoors.

Mackay Sugar and the Tableland Canegrowers entered into a supply agreement on 17th April. Approximately 700,000 tonnes of cane being supplied from the Atherton Tablelands will end up at the Mossman Mill from 2014. In response to an approach by the Tablelands Canegrowers, Mackay Sugar has agreed to accept the cane for crushing at its Mossman Mill. As part of this agreement, the sugar produced from this cane will be marketed through the industry export marketing body, Queensland Sugar Limited.

The additional tonnage to be delivered to the Mossman Mill will require the mill to move from a 5-day week crushing program to a continuous crushing program over a longer season. Mackay Sugar will upgrade Mossman Mill as part of its overall milling operations capital and maintenance program in 2013 and 2014, delivering increased plant reliability and the capacity to handle the additional tonnage. This will require capital expenditure of approximately \$4 million on the mill and transport infrastructure.

The Mackay region's farming excellence was showcased on Friday night (12 April), when Mackay Sugar held its annual Productivity Awards at Mackay's St Patrick's Hall. About 400 people attended the event, with more than 30 awards presented to farmers from within the Mackay Sugar cane supply network. Landline's Pip Courtney gave an address on Farm Succession from her experiences visiting family farms while working for the Program.

For more than 25 years, Mackay Sugar has held the awards which, according to Mackay Sugar Chairman Andrew Cappello, remain a significant corporate activity for the company. "Mackay Sugar appreciates the importance of acknowledging those that have achieved outstanding results in farm productivity within our region, as it is people like these that assist us in growing a strong future for our local sugar industry. "This year's award recipients exemplify the innovation and dedication that sustains our local sugar industry," Mr Cappello said.

Weather has hindered farmers who plant early. Without having any big falls, the conditions have remained wet from persistent showers.

Steve Fordyce

Central Region

Southern region



Mike Hetherington
Southern Director

How long is a piece of ... pipe? And the shortest distance between two points is a straight line! The second one is well known, the first one is all about irrigation. Local Management of Irrigation systems would have to be one of the most under exposed issues in the State of Queensland. Even our family Doctor has a better handle on it than a few of our farmers. His question the other day when he was examining my tractor clutch knee was " Will they just give it to the farmers or do you have to buy it? " My reply was " Well, that is what due diligence is all about." We don't know what, in plain English it costs to run our systems. Well not from anything that was heard at the Queensland Competition Authority enquiry into price paths for the water.

Apparently Sunwater figures are too complicated for us ordinary folks. I would expect that local management would be lost in the recent vast debate on R&D , but it is equally important to our region.

As well as disease, we have drought. A 60% reduction in the cane crop in a drought year was always a possibility. Efficiency and better problem solving should be what is gained from Local Management. Productivity Services and in some areas milling is run by local Boards. We are being given the chance to do the same with irrigation water delivery systems. The fact that 'we' have to run the thing as well as do our own work is just the price we pay. And our family Doctor knows funding issues from his side and that competition for the State Government dollar is only going to get more competitive. Trust him, he's a doctor. Sseriously.

Roving

Roving Field Days have been the highlight of the cane farming community in the ISIS district. This year's was run under a new flag ISIS Productivity Limited. It went well. Surprising that on the day not so many turned up. Some didn't seem to get the message. All online communication may not be as successful as a lot of technophiles would believe. Farmers are mostly people who get out of bed and get to work. Only some of us get out of bed and fire up the PC and logon. After all, where did online variety selection end up? Who doesn't ask someone like the Prod Board Officers what might be best for their particular circumstances?

When did a website know if your particular farm has a bit of wet country or a patch of gravelly stuff along the flat? Still, we applaud the gains made. And that brings me to the worst surprise of our Field Tour. The BESE Station for our area. A tin shed! To go from the Ashfield Road establishment to a tin shed on a side road! At least now farmers realise what they voted for. No Southern breeding station; all leased premises; and plant breeders who have to admit to losing a whole year of breeding due to the 'necessary' upheaval in R&D. Full credit to the Prod Board team, but I feel they sure are struggling with the learning curve of going from Field techos to extension professionals.



At least there have been some better growing conditions in the Wide Bay. It appears the dry, wet, dry has delayed the maturity of the cane crop. It certainly has delayed the soybean harvest. ISIS Mill looks like a late June start.

The Tegege Field Days has been well attended in Bundy Sugar area . I was not able to attend and I missed it.

By the time you read this I may have some idea if I am looking at a Board position on the Interim Board for Local Management for Irrigation Water Supply. Don't necessarily need Another job, but this our big chance to make water work. Remember Whisky's fur drinking and water's for fight'in over.

Michael Hetherington

Southern Region Director

NSW region



Robert Quirk
NSW Director

The NSW sugar cane industry has once again suffered from January flooding. In some areas of the Tweed this was up to 8m in depth .

Our benchmark flood occurred in 1954. The January flood in 2013 was only marginally lower and in some areas, only 20cm lower than the 1954 flood.

The Richmond River flooding, while extremely bad in some areas, generally was not as severe as the Clarence and Tweed.

The Clarence industry suffered by far the worst flooding in NSW with two major floods and in some areas of the valley, three.

The losses in all districts were very heavy for many individual farms and districts. While not all growers have been declared for category C funding, the \$15,000 for infrastructure repairs will be welcomed by those who have been. Category C allows for the repair of infrastructure things like floodgates, levies and sand erosion.

The industry in NSW has adopted a holistic approach to ensuring all growers who have suffered damage can get the category C funding.

The positives that have come out of the floods are.

1. The NSW industry has an estimated crop of 1.42m tons of cane available for harvest and while we are still awaiting the last few grower estimates to come in, this estimate is looking achievable.
2. There are a few varieties that have survived the flooding much better than any others. Q208 is the standout variety along with Q183. Q240 in the month after the flood looked for all intents lost but now 4 months on it appears that its recovery may be as good as any other variety and while it is only just starting to make cane, it looks like every stool survived and will make a two year old of sorts. The other variety to show flood resistance is Q232.

There will be a major planting once again this year in NSW with the above varieties in demand. One of the major varieties in the Tweed (over 30%), Q211 was almost a total wipe out and while it may make a come back in the future, the planting of it will be limited this year.

The industry in NSW is surveying the growers to assess the ways in which the flood egress may be improved in each district. This will be a comprehensive assessment and will be used to encourage government at all levels to address this on-going problem.

All state members of Parliament in the cane growing areas of NSW, along with senior bureaucrats have already met with local farmer groups to assess how this may be facilitated.

NSW cane farmers have once again taken a hit but in true farmer fashion they are saying 'next year will be better'.

Robert Quirk
NSW Director

Robert Quirk Represents ACFA and Bonsucro in Columbia



The group photo at the farm Guido Lopez in the wheel chair is the farm owner and also the President of Procana.



Cane harvested by hand green and back stripped with the knife. There is no pre or post harvest burning on this farm, the farmer uses minute amounts of N and microbes to break down the residue, as it can be seen from the picture the tops are cut well back.

Please find below a short report on my representation for Bonsucro at the Sugar Cane Sustainability seminar in Cali Colombia.

During the first week of March 2013, I was asked to attend a Sustainability Conference, on the Sustainable Production of Sugar Cane. I joined a list of seven international speakers to address the conference: these included NGO's, Farmers, Traders and End users.

There is a lot of interest in Bonsucro certification in Colombia. The first mills readying themselves for certification have done two trial audits. Cali Colombia is an ideal place to grow sugar cane. Positioned just three degrees from the equator and 700m above sea level, the climate is ideal as the sugar cane grows and is harvested 360 days of the year. The crop has an average yield of 120 tonnes per hectare (thp), with individual farms reaching yields of 160 tph.

Climate variability is also hitting the Cali valley, with wet weather harvesting reducing their crop this year from a long-term average of 120 tph to this year at just 90 tph. While the crop grows well it does need a to be watered and this is an ever increasing expense around US\$5 per ton.

The international guests were hosted way and above any expectation. We visited farms, including the President of Procana Guido Lopez and his family farm. We visited mills and had a meeting hosted by Luiz Fernando Londono, the CEO of Asocana, the peak body for millers and growers in Colombia. At the seminar/lunch we

discussed some of the excellent work that the Colombian industry is doing with small scale growers and the poorer people of Cali to improve literacy and sustainability in the agricultural areas. Then the topic centered on Bonsucro and the engagement of the Colombian industry in joining.

I had two opportunities to address the conference of over 300 growers, millers, politicians, diplomats and community. The first was on the sustainable practices that have been developed by the Australian sugar cane industry and how they might transfer them to Colombia.

The second was in a forum with Kevin Ogorzalek, chair of Bonsucro, and Nicolas Viart, certification manager of Bonsucro. In this forum we all took the stage together and gave short addresses, before answering questions from the participants. This was an excellent way to draw out any questions that may have been troubling potential members of Bonsucro.

The other highlight of the conference was when the CEOs of Asocana, and Cenicana (the research body), along with the chair of Procana took the stage for a forum together – the first time that this had ever happened. I guess the Colombian industry is a lot more open and engaging than some other industries.

We also visited an organic growers farm. The farm uses no chemical fertilizer or sprays, and with weed control done by a herd of some hundreds of goats, the production of the farm continues to rise, while the costs decrease – a scenario we all seek.

The seminar/visit was not all work: on the last night in Cali we were invited to spend some time on the Chiva bus. This is an open bus with loud music. It has no windows so the music is shared with the city and there is white liquor that is shared in copious amounts as every one dances.

A trip to remember for all the right reasons, I must say thank you to our hosts Procana.

Robert Quirk



The cane loader very similar to the old Toft loader we used to load cane with in Australia.



The transport system in Cali each trailer carries about 20tons of cane, each trailer is taken into the field then the three are coupled together on the headlands and taken to the mill with a payload of 60 tons.



A crop of 20th ratoon on the President of Procan's family farm it is estimated that the crop will harvest 120tph pictured Daniel Lobo Farmer engagement officer from Bonsucro.

2013

NSW Floods

Robert Quirk

Australia Day 2013 will be remembered in Southern QLD and Northern NSW for all the wrong reasons.

Now, on four occasions (two of those in a row), Australia Day has seen heavy flood rain, in some areas giving us the biggest floods on record.

The floods in NSW delivered damage to varying degrees. The storm front stalled over the north western part of the Tweed catchment, delivering between 1100 and 1500 mm of rain in 4 days, before moving on to the upper catchment of the Richmond and the Clarence. These upstream cane growing areas sustained substantial damage, while other areas fared much better.

Some areas of the Tweed recorded the highest flood levels in living memory, with the area sustaining a lot of damage. One grower reported that he had never lost cane from flooding in his almost 60 years of growing, but this year he will plough out 40 acres as a total loss.

The Richmond River had pockets of complete loss while other higher areas came out relatively OK. The Richmond growers had some good two-year-old cane for this year, while the year-old cane struggled to make the crop we were expecting prior to 26th of January.

The Clarence area suffered too with some fields under water for up to a month. Some of the losses to



Left of the photo Q208, middle KQ228 on the right Q190



Left of the photo Q208 on the right KQ 228



Left of the photo Q240 in recovery mode on the right Q208



On the left of the photo starting from the extreme left Q235 Q190 Q208 Q211 middle of the photo, the rest of the block is KQ228 the field is 2nd ratoon seed cane.



KQ 228 on the right I may be able to get a few tons of seed from field as it was planted with seed from the mill clean seed plot On the left Q190 first ratoon .



On the left KQ228 on the right Q208

individuals on the Clarence have been devastating; one grower reported that out of 150 acres he had a house block sized area that was still green.

If there is an upside to events like these, then it is discovering the varieties that are able to survive this type of event in NSW.

Q208 & Q183; while these varieties sustained some minor damage, they have come through the flood remarkably well. Initially it was thought Q240 was lost, however it has made a remarkable recovery in the months since the flood, with Q232 also surviving well.

All of the above varieties will be in demand through the planting in NSW this year, however after almost being totally wiped out in the floods, Q211, a major variety in the Tweed (above 30%), will be planted in a limited capacity.

All of the NSW sugar cane areas were declared a Natural Disaster Area with the Clarence and Tweed been given category C. This enabled small business in those areas to claim for infrastructure damage up to \$15,000: it is not a lot but it will most certainly help.

The 26th of January, while it is a day to celebrate, has been the date now on four occasions when we have had major floods, and the date we will be looking for sunshine in the future.

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