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Ancient corals point to a resilient reef



Huon Peninsula raised reef terraces (Photo: John Pandolfi).

Fossil corals, up to half a million years old, are providing fresh hope that coral reefs may be able to withstand the huge stresses imposed on them by today's human activity.

Reef ecosystems were able to persist through massive environmental changes imposed by sharply falling sea levels during previous ice ages, an international scientific team has found. This provides new hope for their capacity to endure the increasing human impacts forecast for the 21st century.

In the world's first study of what happened to coral reefs when ocean levels sank to their lowest recorded level – over 120 metres below today's levels – a study carried out on eight fossil reefs in Papua New Guinea's Huon Gulf region has concluded that a rich diversity of corals managed to survive, although they were different in composition to the corals under more benign conditions.

"Of course, sea levels then were falling – and today they are rising. But if we want to know how corals cope with

hostile conditions, then we have to study what happens under all circumstances," explains Professor John Pandolfi of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies and The University of Queensland. "We've seen what happens to corals in the past when sea levels rose and conditions were favourable to coral growth: we wanted to see what happened when they fell and conditions were adverse."

"When sea levels drop you get a catastrophic reduction in coral habitat and a loss of connectivity between reefs. Well, those circumstances are in some respects similar to what corals are experiencing today due to human impacts – so there are useful parallels."

"Although it is little asked, the question of where reef species go when faced with extreme environmental situations is highly relevant for understanding their prospects of survival in the future – and what we need to do to give them the best chance," Prof. Pandolfi suggests.

Cont. page 3

Reef regulations – reef protection plan progress

The Qld Government's Reef Protection Package has taken many months to hit the ground and ACFA has worked hard to ensure that outcomes are manageable for farmers.

Many farmers have completed chemical training qualifications with many more to go through in what have proven to be strongly booked sessions. I encourage all farmers to complete the training before the season is upon us.

Following the chemical certification training, the next training sessions will be on understanding the soil testing requirements and the nutrient calculation method. After that the focus will be on the Environmental Risk Management Plan (ERMP).

At the current rate of progress, the ERMP design process should also be completed sometime in April. Maps generated by DERM are also on track to be available to farmers some time in April.

Outstanding issues to be finalised are the definition of a watercourse, the debate around 'no spray zones' and what might constitute a voluntary Chemical Management Plan for cane farms less than 70 hectares in the wet tropics and for any farmers in the Burdekin & Mackay/Whitsunday catchments who wish to manage herbicides in a manner different to the strict requirements of the regulations.

At the time of writing, ACFA General Manager Stephen Ryan is to attend a herbicide workshop on 11 March, to discuss the strict requirements for chemical management and the options for dealing with them.

Land valuation

The issue of land valuation was recently ignited with representative groups protesting a absence of consultation. Certainly, the ACFA was not consulted on this. This is a contentious issue which has the potential to impose onerous costs on farmers. A media release from Agforce is printed in this edition.

Interest rates

At its meeting on 2 March 2010, the Reserve Bank Board decided to raise the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.0 per cent. Lenders have started to pass on the increase. This is noteworthy for local businesses (who will also suffer the increase), that when the sugar price comes good every now and then, there are usually other cost increases which dampen the good times. In the interest of recovering the farming sector, it is therefore better not to raise the price of farm inputs.



Ross Walker
Chairman

Director in focus

Land line recently did an interview on the NSW co-generation plants and ACFA NSW Director Robert Quirk was interviewed. This will go to air on the 14th of March.

DAFF recently appointed Robert as one of two climate champions for the Australian sugar cane industry. The first meeting is in Canberra late March.

AGM & conference

I encourage all members to invite a guest farmer and attend the ACFA Conference, entitled 'Sugarcane 2010: Innovation, Information and Ideas' on Wednesday 24th March 2010 at Hervey Bay Boat Club, Buccaneer Drive, Urangan QLD 4655.

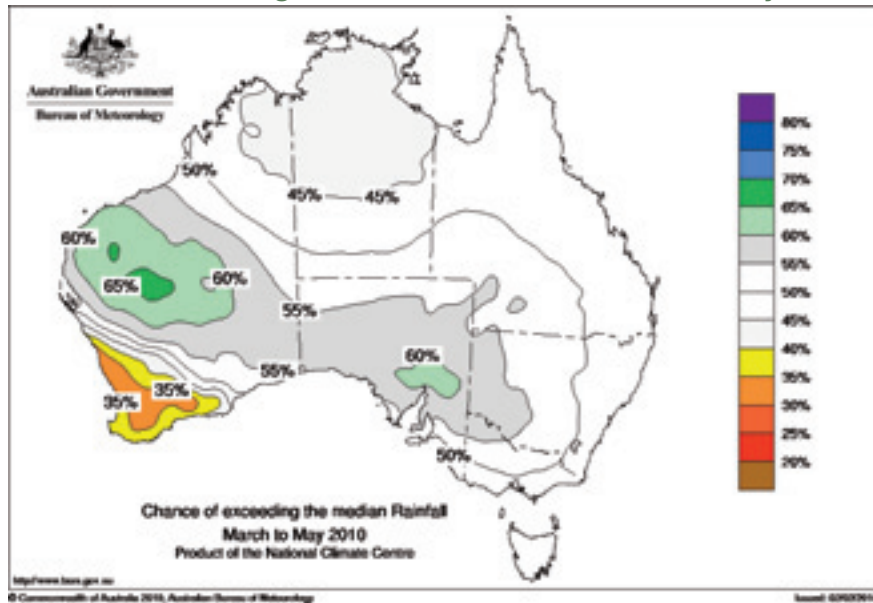
The conference will cover a range of topics including: Carbon Storage & Trading, Water Recycling for Agriculture and Water Pricing Trends.

I ask all members to attend the AGM for an 8.30am registration. Non-members can enjoy refreshments and a relaxing view of the boat harbour during the AGM and register for the conference from 10.00am

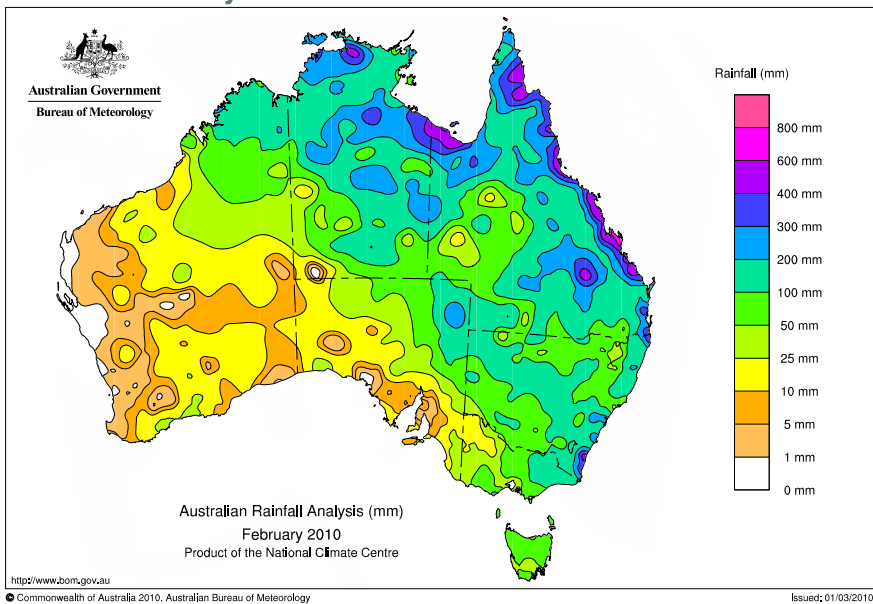
For more information including costs and an accommodation package, please note the advertisement in this newsletter on page 5.

RAINFALL

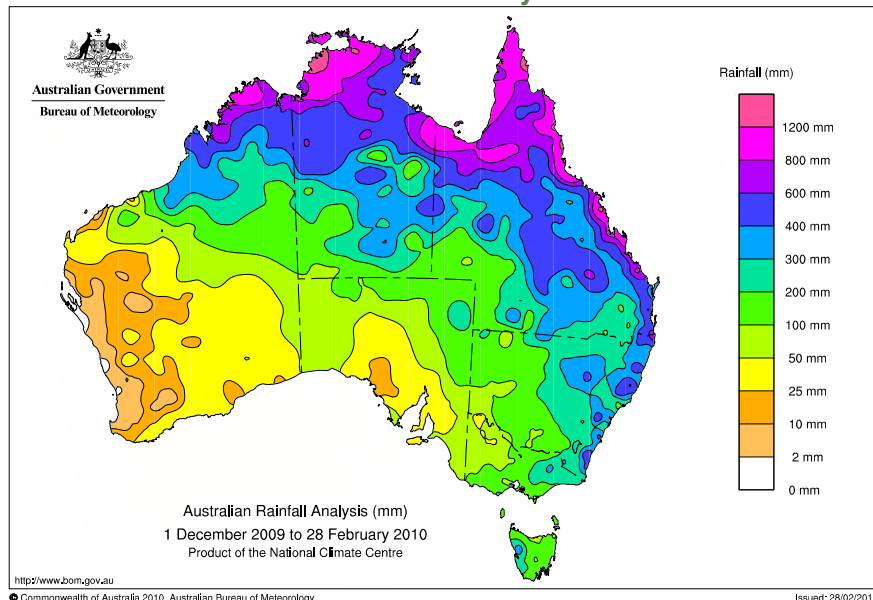
Chance of exceeding the median rainfall for March to May 2010



Rainfall February 2010



Rainfall 1 December 2009 - 28 February 2010



Cont. from page 1

In the Huon region, the team found, coral reefs survived the hard times low of sea levels with as much richness of species – but with a different composition to what they had during the good times. “As a rule the coral colonies during the period of low sea levels were closer to the sea floor and slower-growing in comparison with times of high sea levels.”

“What we have found suggests that reef systems are able to survive adverse conditions given suitable shallow rocky habitat. An interesting finding of this study is that complex coral ecosystems were maintained during the less optimal periods of low sea level. These may have been critical to the re-establishment of nearby reefs once environmental conditions began to improve.”

“The fossil record shows that reefs have been remarkably successful in surviving large environmental disturbances. However the combination of drastic environmental changes that we’re seeing today, such as degraded water quality, depleted fish stocks, coral bleaching, ocean acidification and loss of habitat are unprecedented in the history of coral reefs. Although this study clearly highlights the resilience of reef ecosystems, it is important not to underestimate the magnitude of the challenges that reefs are currently facing.”

Prof. Pandolfi says we somehow have to find ways of preventing or offsetting each of these impacts if we expect our reefs to ride out the major climatic changes of the 21st century in as good condition as they have in the past.

Their paper “Community dynamics of Pleistocene coral reefs during alternative climatic regimes”, by Danika Tager, Jody M. Webster, Don Potts, Willem Renema, Juan C. Braga and John M. Pandolfi appears in the latest issue of *Ecology* 91(1), 2010.

More information:

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www.coralcoe.org.au

Ministers tour the reef



www.rrrc.org.au

Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Kate Jones, Primary Industries and Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin and Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor visited an inshore reef south of Cairns along with Sheriden Morris, Managing Director of the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, and leading marine scientists Dr Katharina Fabricius and Dr Britta Schaeffelfe of the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

"We wanted to see the current state of the reef, where its condition is healthy and where it has been impacted by land-based activity such as cattle and cane production and urban development," Ms Jones said.

"We also want see what farmers and graziers are doing to improve their operations so as to reduce their impact on the reef."

"The area visited today is a part of the reef where the impacts of agriculture are believed to be particularly serious due to the proximity of the reef to farmland, the quantity of runoff pollution and the very high rainfall in the region – up to 12 metres annually."

Ms Jones said it was too early to tell if the reef protection legislation has had an effect, but she expected to see an increase in the area of catchment managed under best practice management systems, leading to reduced pesticide coming from properties, followed by reduced fertiliser nutrient runoff and finally reduced sediment over the next four years.

"We've funded 25 positions to provide extension and compliance support, and \$1.1 million has been provided to industry to ensure farmers and graziers can get help when and where they need it," she said.

"We are not taking a punitive approach, rather we are saying if you want to do the right thing we'll do everything we can to help you."

The new legislation, the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Bill 2009, amended the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

One more, reef researchers attempt to link agriculture as the main source of reef impact

Dr Katharina Fabricius and other researchers from the Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility had shown a number of lines of evidence for reef health decline associated with sediment, nutrient and pesticide from catchments that affect the reef, including:

- a four-fold increase in the amount of macroalgae found on inshore coral reefs in areas of high nutrients and turbidity compared with inshore reefs with low nutrients.
- a 50 per cent decline in coral biodiversity in the 400km south from Cooktown which is adjacent to the most intensive cane and cattle production zones.
- the reef ecosystem becomes healthier with increasing distance away from the catchments toward the ocean.
- a strong link between increasing nutrient pollution and a five-fold increase in the probability of crown of thorns starfish outbreaks to occur. Once these outbreaks have started, they don't remain confined to flood-plume affected areas, but the outbreak waves travel all the way down the Great Barrier Reef, severely reducing coral cover.
- impeded recovery of coral organisms after exposure to pesticides and organically enriched sediments at levels being found in the reef lagoon of the central Great Barrier Reef.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

Members of Australian Cane Farmers Association Limited (ACFA) are invited to attend the 2010 Annual General Meeting, which will be held at **Hervey Bay Boat Club, Urangan, Hervey Bay QLD** Commencing at 9:00am - Wednesday 24th March 2010 (Registration & Morning Tea - 8:30am)

AGM and Conference Accommodation Package

The Ramada Resort has put a special package together for members and guests attending the ACFA Annual General Meeting and Conference.

Stay in style in a fully appointed studio room equipped with in-house movie entertainment and high speed internet.

The Ramada Resort will give you \$99 back to spend on Food & Beverages at their upmarket Cafe and Bar 'Herveys'.

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Subject to availability and conditions apply.

Business

Items of business will include consideration of the financial statements; board remuneration, members' and contributor levy amounts.

Any other business that may be properly brought before an annual general meeting will be special business and will require written notification to the company 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Members of ACFA are advised that you must be a Member of the Company in order to be entitled to vote at the AGM.

Members of ACFA are advised that a member who is entitled to attend and cast a vote at this meeting may appoint a person as the member's proxy to attend and vote for the member at the meeting. Each member may appoint one proxy. A proxy must be a member of the company.

Conference

(Open to ACFA Members and Non-Members)

The AGM will be followed by ACFA's 2010 Conference which will include morning tea and a light lunch.

The conference will provide farmers with information on Carbon Storage & Trading, Water Recycling for Agriculture and Water Pricing Trends.

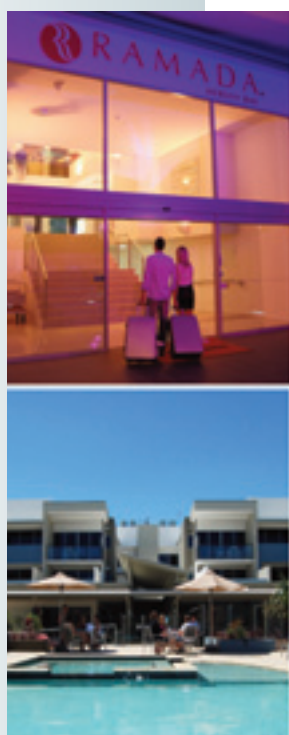
Tour

A tour through the innovative ideas being undertaken in Maryborough following lunch TBC.

Conference costs: ACFA Members: \$10.00 & Non-members: \$30.00

Please contact the ACFA offices by Friday 19th March on 1800 500 025 to register for the AGM /Conference.

Jade Mackey - Company Secretary



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Industry news

Trade deficit falls by a billion dollars

Australia recorded a trade deficit of \$1.2 billion in January 2010 down from a trade deficit of \$2.2 billion last December, according to figures released 4 March by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The monthly trade deficit has fallen by \$1 billion or 46 per cent from December 2009.

"A billion dollar fall in the trade deficit is another positive sign for the Australian economy after the worst global recession in 75 years," said Trade Minister Simon Crean.

"Exports are still below pre-crisis levels, but for first time since the onset of the global financial crisis we have seen exports increase in two consecutive months."

"The last time Australia had two months of consecutive export growth was in September and October 2008."

"This is also the smallest trade deficit since June 2009, although it is still the ninth consecutive monthly trade deficit."

The lower monthly trade deficit reflected a 1 per cent (\$278 million) increase in exports and a 3 per cent (\$719 million) fall in the value of imports.

Resource exports rose by 1.3 per cent to \$8.0 billion with a strong contribution from metal ores and minerals which were up 7 per cent (\$329 million) which was partially offset by a 3 per cent (\$94 million) fall in coal exports.

The increase in resource exports came despite a 21 per cent fall in exports to China which is Australia's largest goods export market.

This demonstrates the diversity of our trade relationship with exports to India up 7 per cent, to Thailand up 22 per cent, to Malaysia up 31 per cent and to the UK 17 per cent.

The fall in imports of 3 per cent reflected a 25 per cent fall in the value of imported fuel and lubricants after a large increase in the previous month.

Reserve Bank raises the cash rate

At its meeting on 2 March 2010, the Reserve Bank Board decided to raise the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.0 per cent. In his statement Governor Glenn Stevens said that the global economy is growing, and world GDP is expected to rise at close to trend pace in 2010 and 2011.

The expansion is still hesitant in the major countries, due to the continuing legacy of the financial crisis, resulting in ongoing excess capacity. In Asia, where financial sectors are not impaired, growth has continued to be quite strong. The authorities in some countries are now seeking to reduce the degree of stimulus to their economies.

Chinese fruit & veg import on the rise

The Australian reports that for the second half of last year, Australia imported fruit and vegetables worth \$826 million, and exported produce worth \$749m.

New Zealand remains Australia's top supplier of fruit and veg, accounting for about 20 per cent of imports, but its market share is shrinking.

Chinese imports have grown from \$46.3m in 2004-05 to \$110m in 2008-09. Imports from China include fresh garlic, fresh peas, frozen broccoli, cauliflower, beans, corn and spinach.

Asa Wahlquist and Jodie Minus
theaustralian.com.au

The ACCC investigates QSL over Tully Sugar acquisition

On 7th January 2010 Queensland Sugar Limited acquired a 9.75% interest in Tully Sugar Limited. On 12th February ACCC commenced a public review under the Merger Review Process Guidelines and market inquiries commenced.

The 12th March 2010 is the closing date for submissions from interested parties.

The ACCC's web site states that, "As this acquisition has already been completed, no expected decision date for the ACCC's review will be posted."

Meanwhile Maryborough Sugar Factory has extended the closing date of its offer to buy Tully Sugar.

MSF's share bid was due to close on the 26th of February, but the company has now extended that date until the 9th of April.

New CSR chief to oversee demerger

CSR will have a new managing director from the start of April. Director Jeremy Sutcliffe will take over to steer it through a structural separation, as well as fend off a potential takeover from Chinese suitor Bright Food Group.

The process of splitting the businesses began last year under Mr Maycock, when CSR's demerger plan was unveiled to the market.

Mr Maycock took the reins of CSR in early 2007 and greatly broadened the company's exposure to building products just before a housing slump, spending \$865 million for glass businesses Pilkington and DMS Glass.

Mr Sutcliffe, a former group CEO of Sims Metal Management, has been appointed managing director for up to 12 months.

ELI GREENBLAT
businessday.com.au
csr.com.au



Bright Food sweetens CSR bid

Business Spectator and Reuters reports that China's Bright Food Group will sweeten its offer to buy CSR Ltd's sugar business and hopes to complete the deal by the end of the year, the China Daily reported on Thursday, citing a top company official.

"Bright Food is in touch with CSR, and it is likely that the deal could be finalised this year, as our offer is still attractive," said Ge Junjie, deputy general manager of Bright Food Group, according to the paper.

In January, CSR rejected a \$1.5 billion offer from Bright Food for its 150-year-old sugar business, and said it would go ahead with a planned spin off of the business, to be called Sucrogen.

CSR said at the time that while Bright Food's interest highlighted the potential value of its sugar and renewable energy unit it was not convinced that any offer would be superior to its demerger plan.

"To avoid compromising the value creation potential of the demerger proposal and in light of the advanced state of the demerger process, the CSR Board is only willing to progress any transactions alternative to the demerger if such transactions have a sufficiently high degree of certainty as to value, timing and likelihood of completion," CSR said in January.

reuters.com
businessspectator.com.au
www.csr.com.au

Consider having your weeds tested for glyphosate resistance if:

- paddocks are at risk of glyphosate resistance there are survivors of a glyphosate application.

Testing is recommended if there is a moderate or high risk of glyphosate resistance.

Testing is also recommended if the other common causes of herbicide failure are not likely, such as:

- the glyphosate was applied in conditions and at a rate that should kill the target weed
- the suspect plants avoided herbicide contact or emerge after the spraying
- the pattern of surviving plants suggests a spray miss or other application problem

You can assess the risk for glyphosate resistance by completing the glyphosate resistance risk questionnaire.

DPI has a downloadable fact sheet, 'Testing for glyphosate resistance.' dpi.qld.gov.au

You may also be interested to visit the Australian Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group at www.glyphosateresistance.org.au

Chairman of Mackay Sugar Eddie Westcott retires

Well known former chairman of Mackay Sugar Eddie Westcott has retired.

The new chairman is Andrew Cappello. Andrew is an elected Director since 2001 and has been a cane producer for 28 years. He was appointed Chairman of Directors in February 2010. He is also the Chairman of the Pioneer Valley Water Board, Member of SunWater Customer Council and Mackay Sugar representative on the Board of Mackay Area Productivity Services Pty Limited. The ACFA wishes Eddie well in his retirement and welcomes Andrew in his new role.

Glyphosate resistance warning

Queensland Country life reports that a new form of glyphosate resistance has prompted a warning that the herbicide has "become as important for reliable global food production as penicillin is for battling disease".

A vigorous weed of cotton fields in the south-east United States, Palmer amaranth, has been found capable of resisting the effects of glyphosate through "gene amplification", the third type of resistance mechanism now discovered, and one that has rung alarm bells with researchers.

MATT CAWOOD qcl.farmonline.com.au

Possible fertiliser and chemical shortages

The stock and land reports that farmers are being confronted with a rising fertiliser market and the possibility of a struggle in gaining phosphorus fertiliser in time for planting this year, as tight global supplies hit home.

The price has risen in the key Gulf of Mexico origin for phosphorus fertiliser from \$US280/t before Christmas to \$US470/t this week.

That roughly translates into a retail rise of \$A250/t for Australian consumers, from around \$550/t to \$800/t, taking prices back to around the same level as for the same time last year.

While farmers are upset about the rising market, concerns surrounding stock availability is a bigger issue.

Prices for glyphosate have also risen over the previous two months, albeit from record lows. **GREGOR HEARD** stockandland.com



Chemcert Re-Accreditation Workshop - Innisfail/Babinda



For those growers seeking to gain ChemCert Accreditation or to have it renewed a ChemCert Accreditation Workshop will be conducted by BSES Limited.

As a part of its services to the sugarcane industry in the wet tropics BSES Limited is now offering ChemCert Workshops to BSES Members wanting to attain current ChemCert Accreditation and the following three competencies to use the restricted herbicides (Ametryn, Atrazine, Diuron and Hexazinone) after June 30, 2010.

ChemCert workshop will be conducted for Innisfail / Babinda district cane growers seeking accreditation during March/April 2010.

Venue: South Johnstone Research Station

Time: 8:15 am - 5:00 pm

Cost: \$270 per grower seeking reaccreditation, \$350 per grower for those not having prior ChemCert accreditation

(Cheques to be made out to BSES Limited prior to workshop)

Please register your nomination with ACFA Innisfail on 07 4061 2034 as they are kindly providing administrative support for this initiative for their members as only a maximum of 12 participants can attend each workshop.

Lunch and smoko will be provided.

March/April 2010. South Johnstone Research Station
Register with ACFA Innisfail on 07 4061 2034

**Innisfail/Babinda Chemcert
Re-Accreditation Workshop**



Productivity Commission inquiry into rural research and development

The Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, have announced the terms of reference for a Productivity Commission inquiry into rural research and development corporation arrangements.

The inquiry will consider the economic and policy rationale for Australian Government investment in rural research and development.

The inquiry will also examine the interactions and potential overlaps across governments and programs to ensure Australia gets the best value for its research and development spending.

The Commission will hold public hearings and release a draft report for public comment, before delivering a final report to the Government in February 2011.

Outline

Investment in agricultural research and development is undertaken primarily through the Rural Development Corporations (RDCs), State and Territory governments, CSIRO, the tertiary education sector, cooperative research centres and private sector businesses. Total expenditure by all sectors on rural research and development was of the order of \$1.6 billion in 2006-07.

The RDCs, who commission research and development from public and private providers, are funded by a co-investment model based on industry levies and matching Australian Government funding.

The Australian Government collects industry levies under legislation for the purpose of research and development and matches expenditure on research and development on a 1:1 basis, up to 0.5 per cent of industry gross value of production.

In 2008-09, expenditure by RDCs on R&D was about \$460 million, including \$207 million from the Australian Government. RDCs are accountable to both industry and government for their expenditure.

Terms of Reference

The review will:

- examine the economic and policy rationale for Commonwealth Government investment in rural R&D;
- examine the appropriate level of, and balance between public and private investment in rural R&D;
- consider the effectiveness of the current RDC model in improving competitiveness and productivity in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries through research and development;
- examine the appropriateness of current funding levels and

arrangements for agricultural research and development, particularly levy arrangements, and Commonwealth matching and other financial contributions to agriculture, fisheries and forestry RDCs;

- consider any impediments to the efficient and effective functioning of the RDC model and identify any scope for improvements, including in respect to governance, management and any administrative duplication;
- consider the extent to which the agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries differ from other sectors of the economy with regard to research and development; how the current RDC model compares and interacts with other research and development arrangements, including the university sector, cooperative research centres and other providers; and whether there are other models which could address policy objectives more effectively;
- examine the extent to which RDCs provide an appropriate balance between projects that provide benefits to specific industries versus broader public interests including examining interactions and potential overlaps across governments and programs, such as mitigating and adapting to climate change; managing the natural resource base; understanding and responding better to markets and consumers; food security, and managing biosecurity threats;
- examine whether the current levy arrangements address free rider concerns effectively and whether all industry participants are receiving appropriate benefits from their levy contributions.

The Commission is to hold hearings for the purpose of the inquiry and produce a draft and final report.

www.pc.gov.au

Valuation fight

Tuesday, 23 Feb 2010

Queensland farm group AgForce is disappointed by how proposed land valuation amendments were introduced to state parliament and the potential impacts on the farming sector.

AgForce CEO Robert Walker said the lack of notice or consultation by the government was unacceptable.

"The amending legislation fundamentally changes land owners rights with regards to unimproved valuations and in particular their rights to appeal those valuations," Mr Walker said.

"AgForce is treating this matter extremely seriously as it has a significant impact to our rural members, and we have joined forces with other industry groups to fight the government on these amendments.

"We have also written to the Premier and relevant Ministers to voice our opinion and ask the Government to withdraw the legislation immediately."

Mr Walker said the amendments seek three changes to the existing laws.

"The government is attempting to overturn a Court of Appeal decision by essentially changing the definition of unimproved values to valuing property in its improved state. Despite the Premier and the Minister asserting this will only apply to large commercial properties, the reality is this is not the case.

"The impact on any landholder is that all improvements on their land will now be included in the unimproved value, severely impacting the calculation of rates and leasehold rents.

"The government is also seeking to introduce changes that limit or unduly affect the right to appeal against a valuation. These new laws state that unless a 'properly formed objection' is lodged within 45 days of issuing the valuation then the property owner will lose any right to appeal the valuation.

"This means that within 45 days, people have to provide all the grounds on which they seek to appeal the valuation, including evidence of like valuations that they seek to rely on. Landowners who fail to lodge a proper objection may lose all their rights.

"The government is also seeking to limit the objection conference process, which is a necessary and fundamental part of resolving these matters."

Mr Walker said AgForce is also concerned that the government will now only issue valuations on a three or five yearly basis, depending on the shire.

"In the interim years the government has reserved the right to arbitrarily issue interim valuations by applying an indexing factor, which means the unimproved value could increase by 10 or 20 percent without any appeal

AgForce has joined the Property Council of Australia, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia in a media campaign to stop the higher land taxes and council rates.

agforceqld.org.au



Government proposes to protect key food producing land



The Queensland Government has moved to give greater protection to the state's most important food growing land from incompatible development such as mining, urban and other development.

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe announced on 10 February the release of a discussion paper designed to conserve and manage key food producing land for the long-term.

This discussion paper sets out a planning framework for the protection of important food growing land and invites comments from interested stakeholders to help develop the framework further.

"The proposed new framework will provide increased clarity for agricultural, mining and urban sectors regarding the government's expectations for strategic cropping land," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"This will reduce uncertainty for investors and support sustainable industry growth.

"The proposed framework ensures mining, urban or other development that permanently alienates the land, or reduces its productivity, cannot occur unless it is overwhelmingly in the public interest.

"If a development cannot pass this public-interest test, it will not be approved and the proponents will have to investigate alternative locations.

"Alternately, mining development proponents will need to demonstrate that they can comply with the policy by fully restoring the land back to its previous crop production capacity."

Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries, Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin said a key component of the framework would be the identification of strategic cropping land.

Mr Mulherin said the discussion paper and resulting feedback would help identify land areas with the best soil, climate, water supply (rainfall and/or irrigation) and infrastructure that supports cropping well into the future.

"Clear identification of these areas will signal to potential developers that there will be a higher set of expectations from the Queensland Government for avoiding impacts on the agricultural land resources in these areas," Mr Mulherin said.

"While Queensland has a large area of agricultural land, due to poor soils and climatic conditions, most of it is suitable only for grazing.

"Only 3.8 million hectares, or 2.2 per cent, of the state is currently used for growing crops for domestic consumption and export.

"Not only is cropping land scarce, the soils that make it productive are a finite resource that have taken millions of years to develop.

"If we allow these soils to be destroyed by urban development and open-cut mines, for example, we will effectively be reducing our capacity to grow crops into the future to support Queensland's long-term agriculture and food production."

Mr Mulherin said the protection of Queensland's cropping lands was vital to the state's economy and positions Queensland for a future when there may be increasing global concerns about food security.

"Cropping land and the industries it supports are a key component of the Queensland agriculture and agri-food system, which in 2006-07 generated \$22.7 billion dollars (about 12 per cent of the Gross State Product), and supported one in eight Queensland jobs," he said.

"The United Nations estimates global food production will need to increase by 50 per cent by 2030 and double by 2050 to meet demand.

"And yet the UN estimates up to 25 per cent of global food production could be lost by 2050 due to climate change, loss of agricultural land and water scarcity.

"It is therefore critical that our strategic cropping lands are safeguarded from incompatible development."

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Trade Stephen Robertson said it was important mining and agriculture were able to co-exist.

"The resources sector generates significant economic benefits in rural and regional Queensland," Mr Robertson said.

"In order for these sectors to achieve co-existence we must have policy and planning tools in place that manage potential land use conflict and provide mutually beneficial outcomes to both sectors.

"An important part of the proposal includes examining opportunities to change the resources legislative framework, particularly the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 1994 to enable consideration of strategic cropping land in the tenure assessment and grant process."

Importantly, this new framework is not just about addressing land-use competition between mining and agriculture on the Darling Downs.

The new framework represents a comprehensive, state-wide approach that will ensure Queensland's best cropping land resources are given the same consideration against all types of development that may permanently alienate the land resource.

The framework will guide future planning and development assessment by state agencies and local governments.

The new policy and planning framework will be further developed in coming months in consultation with stakeholders. Through this process the State Government will seek community input on the definition of strategic cropping land and the processes for assessing applications on this land.

Discussion paper www.dip.qld.gov.au/croppingland and will be open to public submissions until March 12.
statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au

Sugar's Renewable Future

The outlook for sugar is not just underpinned by sugar prices but also ethanol production and electricity cogeneration.



Max Foster, ABARE economist, told the ABARE conference in Canberra today that high sugar prices are projected to lead to an increase in world

sugar production over the medium term, which will stem principally from Brazilian cane sugar production for both sugar and ethanol.

"Australian cane growers are also expected to respond to high world prices by increasing cane area to 420 000 hectares by the end of the projection period. This is significant because it will be the first expansion since 2002-03," Mr Foster said.

"However, the increase in world sugar production is projected to lead to declining world sugar prices over the period to 2014-15, even though in real terms it will remain above the low levels experienced in the early 2000s."



Eduardo Leão de Sousa, Executive Director of the Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA), told delegates the evolution of sugarcane production in Brazil has been highly

correlated to the increase in ethanol demand. This demand has been driven by the boom of the Flex Fuel Vehicle in the Brazilian market and by the development of important biofuel policies in international markets.

"The strong demand for ethanol has led to important modifications to the development and structure of the Brazilian sugarcane industry, which has increased the supply of both sugar and ethanol. As a major exporter, any changes in Brazilian sugar and ethanol production affect the whole international market," he said.



Ian Glasson, Chief Executive Officer of Sucrogen (formerly CSR Sugar), said the Australian sugar industry is competitive with the world's largest sugar

producer, Brazil, and has an attractive future.

"While sugar will remain the economic driver of the Australian sugar cane industry, there are substantial opportunities in Australia for electricity generation from cane fibre and production of ethanol as a renewable fuel from molasses," Mr Glasson said.

Mr Glasson said the Australian sugar industry can make a significant contribution to a greener future for Australia through these renewable fuels derived from sugar cane.

http://www.abare.gov.au/corporate/media/2010_releases/ol_3mar_5_10.html

Productivity revolution needed for global food security

The ABARE Outlook conference in Canberra has today heard Dr Nick Austin of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research outline the need for a revolution in productivity to deal with global food security.



Dr Nick Austin said, "Population growth and constraints on food production, including from the anticipated affects of climate change and shifting supply and demand patterns, must be balanced by improved agricultural yields,".

"What is necessary is not one revolution in agricultural productivity, but a series of country specific responses to spark a range of mini-revolutions in productivity that leverages off intellectual capital and an understanding of the environment.

"ACIAR seeks to promote Australia's leadership in research to enhance global agricultural productivity."



Dr Kym Anderson, Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide, told delegates that climate change and an anti-trade bias of some governments' agricultural policies raised concerns for food security in developing countries.

"Government assistance to the farm sector insulates producers from price signals, while protectionist trade policies have resulted in slower growth in trade and thinner world food markets, together with increased price volatility," Dr Anderson said.

"This global problem requires a global solution, namely more World Trade Organization discipline against policies such as import tariffs and quotas, and export restrictions that limit growth in agricultural trade.

"This is especially important in the context of long-term threats to global food security such as climate change and the biofuel policies pursued by developed nations."



Dr Brian Fisher, Principle of BAE-conomics, noted that farmers' terms of trade have been in a long-term decline. "However, with an increasing world population driving a substantial increase in food consumption, farmers' terms of trade may start to rise in the decades ahead," Dr Fisher said.

"The reduction of trade barriers and increased agricultural research and development are the central issues that need to be addressed in order to promote global food security going out."

Enhancing biosecurity through risk-based intervention

Shared responsibility and a risk-based intervention approach to the whole biosecurity system is the way forward for biosecurity management, delegates at the ABARE Outlook conference in Canberra have been told today.



Rona Mellor, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Executive Director of the Biosecurity Services Group, said the level of risk

Australia is prepared to accept will not alter but we are improving the way we manage risk.

"Australia's biosecurity status is the responsibility of all Australians," Ms Mellor said.

"Each member of the community has a role to play—before the border, at the border and within Australia—to prevent, prepare for, detect and mitigate biosecurity risks, and respond to, manage and recover from biosecurity incidents should they occur.

"We're no longer just focussing on quarantine. We will consider the comparative risks along the biosecurity continuum and apply risk measures where they give the greatest return or benefit to Australia's biosecurity status.

"An effective biosecurity system minimises risks to the health of our plants and animals and provides invaluable support to Australian agricultural production and to our place as an important exporter of food and fibre to the world," Ms Mellor said.

Global economic recovery to support higher commodity exports

A projected increase in farm export earnings over the next few years will be supported by recovering world economic growth and is under the assumption of favourable seasonal conditions in Australia.

The value of Australia's farm exports is forecast to be around \$29 billion in both 2009-10 and 2010-11, before increasing to \$32.2 billion (in 2009-10 dollars) in 2014-15, delegates heard at the opening of the ABARE Outlook conference in Canberra today.



Mr Phillip Glyde, Executive Director of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE), outlined the situation surrounding Australia's

commodity exports, telling the conference that total earnings are forecast to rise by 15 per cent to \$187 billion in 2010-11.

"This forecast increase mainly reflects an expected rise in mineral resources exports by 19 per cent to \$154 billion in 2010-11," Mr Glyde said.

"By 2014-15, the value of Australian commodity exports is projected to increase by 30 per cent to \$211 billion in 2009-10 dollars, with earnings from mineral resources exports reaching \$175 billion in real terms."

http://www.abareconomics.com/corporate/media/2010_releases/2mar_10.html

Water - key to food potential of northern Australia

Access to water resources is the key to realising the potential of northern Australia to sustainably increase its current area of crop and significantly increase beef production, delegates at the ABARE Outlook conference in Canberra were told today.



Dr Peter Stone, CSIRO Deputy Chief of Sustainable Eco-systems, presented his analysis of sustainable agri-cultural development in northern Australia.

"Northern Australia is already a significant food producer on a global scale, yet it can produce more. Currently, it produces more than \$1 billion worth of cattle and about \$200 million worth of crops each year," Dr Stone said.

"Water, despite its large volume in the area, is limiting some agricultural development. However, water planning will be required to ensure that new water consumption is sustainable."



Joe Ross, Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce Chair, said the development of groundwater resources provides the best prospect to support new consumptive uses of water.

Mr Ross said that smaller scale and more widely distributed irrigation systems offer significant potential and the taskforce supports these as an achievable and sustainable development option for northern agriculture.



Noeline Gross, General Manager of Northern Gulf Resource Management Group, said work is being undertaken to ensure that northern Australia's untapped natural wealth is managed and developed in a way that secures resources, lifestyles, culture and natural capital for future generations.

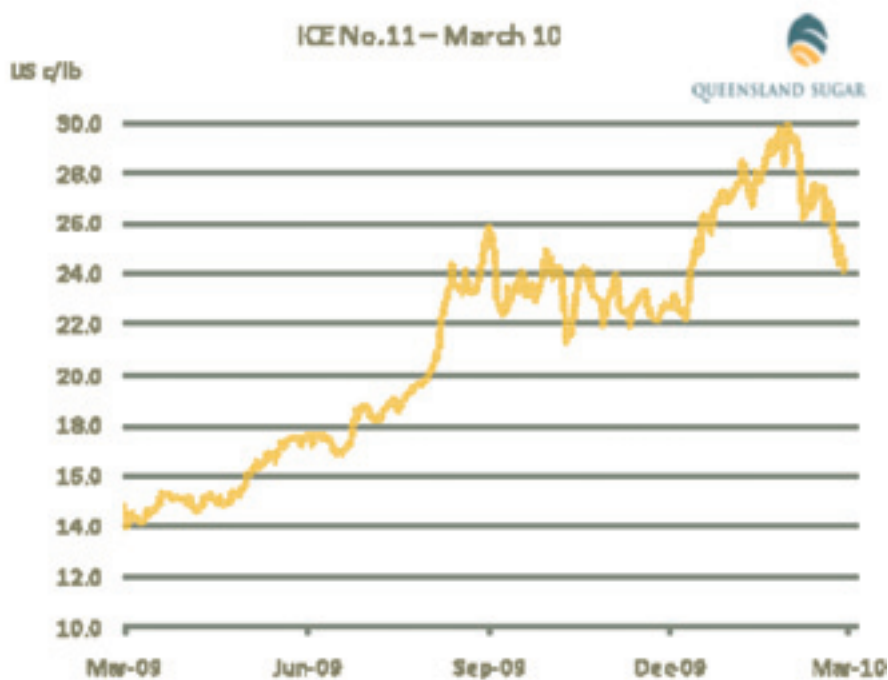


Ned McCord from Banuba Pastoral Company talked about constraints and the way forward for independent cattle businesses in northern Australia.

http://www.abare.gov.au/corporate/media/2010_releases/ol_3mar_9_10.html

Sugar retreats from record highs

The March 2010 contract opened the review period (1 February - 26 February 2010) at US 30.49 c/lb and weakened over the period, declining over 600 points (AUD 150).



The Australian dollar (AUD) traded between AUD/USD 0.8579 - 0.9071 during the review period (1 February - 26 February 2010) and closed at AUD/USD 0.9041, strengthening during the fortnight on improved sentiment of the global economy and resilient domestic economic data.



The March 2010 contract expired over the review period at US 24.13 c/lb on the back of a 0.6mIn tonne delivery of predominantly Central American sugars.

The market viewed the delivery as bearish given the immediate availability of sugar despite suggestions of extremely tight physical supplies.

The immediate availability of sugars has had a sizeable impact upon speculative positioning in the sugar market. Non-commercial participants which make up approximately 25% of total open interest, have scaled back their positioning as the forecast deficit for quarter 1 2010 did not materialise.

Technically, the May 2010 contract (now prompt futures position) has broken through both the 100-Day and 200-Day moving averages. With the prospect of further technical selling by the speculative community, the May 2010 contract may test underlying support down at US 20.78 c/lb. Overhead resistance has now been lowered to US 24.00 c/lb.

India's 2009/10 crop is progressing well with approximately 13.25 mln tonnes of sugar produced at the end of February 2010. This suggests that their total crop will be closer to 16.5 mln tonnes versus initial estimates of 15.0 mln tonnes. India will face stock shortages between August and October 2010 which should continue to provide underlying support to the sugar market during this period.

World sugar production for 2009/10 is still likely to fall short of demand by approximately 9.4 mln tonnes according to the International Sugar Organisation (ISO).

This has been revised higher recently versus initial estimates of 7.3 mln tonnes.



Don Murday
Northern Region Director

Mossman Ideal weather

With ideal weather conditions, the crop is looking good and if growing conditions continue we hope to crush 100,000 tonnes more than the 2009.

season. Due to our planting incentive and the positive medium term outlook, planting during 2009 increased by more than 100%.

Don Murday
Northern Director



John Banckensee
Northern Region Director

Innisfail Chemical accreditation is full on in the North.

Farmers are taking advantage of the slack season and are busy training to comply.

Courses progressing well and it is a busy time for the presenters. **See p. 9.**

Farmers are concerned about the recent water moratorium and are seeking clarification.

The uncertainty is holding up farm sales and affecting the operational plans of farmers in all rural and related industries, such as rural and pump suppliers and drilling contractors.

The Crop is looking 'bonza', giving a smile to farmers. High humidity and less than average rain in what are usually wet months are providing ideal growing conditions. Afternoon and overnight rain with mostly fine days is giving us much needed sunshine hours.

There have been noted flights of beetles in the El Arish & Silkwood areas. Farmers might wish to monitor cane beetle populations in cane stools.

Farmers have embraced smut resistant varieties and are asked to plant sufficient varieties in 2010 and to be meticulous

with plant and machinery hygiene.

Machinery sales to date are promising with several new harvesters and quite a few tractors in the region as farmers update to modern, fuel efficient tractors.

Vine population is rampant so before spraying, farmers should be mindful of the reef regulations in place since 1 January 2010. See pages 3 & 4 of the February edition of the Australian Canefarmer for details.

John Banckensee
Northern Director

Herbert

The Herbert Region is experiencing ongoing showers and storms with rainfall variation over the whole district. Some areas receiving 50mm while other areas are experiencing falls of 150mm or more.

The extreme humidity is providing ideal growing conditions for the 2010 crop. Grass, weeds and vines are growing just as fast and some form of control is needed to keep them under control.

The BSES is holding courses on chemical application and weed control as part of the Governments strategy for reef protection. These courses are accredited. If you haven't put your name down for these courses it is advisable that you do so as there is a waiting list.

It is important that farmers attend meetings with DERM over issues associated with the reef so that they can comply with the government legislation which started on the 1st January this year. If you haven't been to a meeting let me know and I will arrange a meeting. DERM is happy to address small groups of growers. If there are growers who cannot come to a meeting during the day it may be possible to attend an after hours session.

Carol Mackee
Herbert Region Director



Carol Mackee
Herbet Region Director



Margaret Menzel
Burdekin Director

Burdekin

Good rainfall

Good rainfall continues across the district, interspersed with ample sunshine and high humidity...the cane is loving it and the crop estimate for 2010 looks increasingly more promising.

Applications for Grouping changes have now closed and will shortly be advised via the Grower Website. Any objections to the proposed changes will need to be lodged within 10 working days of date of 'notice of change' lodgement. The CSR Grower Website problems (and their other computer

functions) have caused some headaches and is expected to be resolved shortly. It raises serious concerns as to the impact of such a disruption during the crushing and also the potential negative impact on grower pricing activities. Serious consideration must be given to some form of back up system to ensure this scenario is not repeated down the track.

CSR have advised that 15 apprentices have commenced work within the Burdekin CSR Mills during February and almost 30 apprentices across the seven CSR mills this year. This intake includes four indigenous apprentices who will participate in a pilot program at the Victoria Mill in the Herbert region. I am assured that CSR's capital and maintenance programs are progressing well at all mills in the region.

CSR has announced that it's new branding and identity, Sucrogen, will commence adoption from 1st March across the raw sugar milling and ethanol operations in Australia in line with the intention to operate its two main businesses as more autonomous entities. 'The logo and branding will be introduced at the Clipsal 500 V8 Supercar Championship series event in Adelaide from 11th March. Sucrogen is the official fuel supplier to the V8 Supercar Championship series in Australia, helping the sport to lower their carbon emissions by using renewable fuel ethanol (E85 – a blend of 85% ethanol and 15% unleaded petrol).

As expected, Managing Director, Jerry Maycock will retire as at 31st March (despite the failure of the proposed demerger to proceed as expected), with Jeremy Sutcliffe taking on the role as interim MD for up to 12 months. Current CEO's for both the Building Products and Sugar (Sucrogen) divisions, will remain the same. An appeal on the Federal Court decision is in progress.

BSES advise that seed cane orders for early and late plant need to be submitted by the end of March. New Variety QA97-3298, will be planted out in 2010 on BPS plots and, subject to approval for general distribution will be released to growers in 2011. BSES trial data on Variety, 6 Easy Steps trials, Water Quality, Harvesting (sugar) losses and automation of irrigation trials is available to growers in the current

BSES newsletter and by contacting the local BSES. Ph 47825455.

Farm Productivity Assessment Workshops will be held in the Burdekin, for those growers who will require a farm FPA, at BSES Brandon on March, 1, 16 and 29; April, 7, 15 and 26; May 3 and 12. Contact Dave for bookings on 47838619 (Bookings are essential).

I assisted with and participated in a series of free educational seminars which were held by Synergy Fertilisers over the past week in Mareeba, Mossman and Tully with further seminars to be held in Ayr (9th Mar) and Ingham (12th Mar) to discuss: "Soil Leaching and Reporting", "Liming, Leaching and Runoff", "Efficient fertiliser programmes", "Improving Yield through reduced inputs", "Effective water use" and "Understanding Soil Fertility & Microbiology".

These seminars were well received and outlined these six steps to more sustainable and profitable farming practices and will be repeated and introduced in other areas later in the year. To attend in your district ph: 4783 7000.

Speakers, including Dr Vladimir Matichenkov, world renowned soil scientist, plant physiologist and agro-chemist and his research assistant and Synergy director, John Campbell; Agronomists: Mark O'Sullivan and Terry Mather all spoke on these various aspects of more sustainable agriculture and introduced an organic 'activated' silica product to the market which will improve yield, ccs, control ph and aluminium and heavy metal toxicity in the plant root zone, unlock unavailable soil nutrients (e.g., phosphates) as well as promoting increased root growth. Results of trials conducted both in Australia and overseas were outlined and explained with growers actively participating in debate and question time.

Margaret Menzel
Burdekin Director



Ross Walker
Central Qld Director

Central Queensland

Eddie Westcott retires

Eddie Westcott retired as Chairman of Mackay Sugar on February 18th after 33 years as a mill director of initially Racecourse mill and then Mackay Sugar Co-operative and Mackay Sugar Limited.

Eddie was involved in a number of major changes including the formation of Mackay Sugar Co-operative and the refinery construction at Racecourse mill.

As chairman he was instrumental in the formation and introduction of the new cane payment system which is the first of its kind in Australia and has provided a increase in returns to farmers to date. The formation of the central region sugar group involving all farmer organizations (including ACFA and the millers) in the central region is again the only one in the Australia industry.

ACFA is now involved in cane supply contracts and Eddie has been fair and honest in all his dealings. He has stated that the transition from a co-operative to a company limited by shares was a difficult process as initially the Mackay Sugar board itself was divided.

However, a revised proposal did finally approve share holder approval. Finally the recent announcement to go ahead with the cogeneration project has been the result of a long termination to diversify the business.

On behalf of all ACFA members I would like to thank Eddie for his long and distinguished services and wish him well in his future endeavors.

To incoming chairman Andrew Cappello, I wish him well and look forward to working cooperatively with him and the board to deliver good outcomes for the region.

Mackay Sugar is now calling for nominations to fill the vacancy on the board following the retirement of Eddie.

Nominations must be lodged with Mackay Sugar Racecourse office by 4PM on Friday 19th March 2010.

General Manager Stephen Ryan and I attended a ACFA branch meeting in Proserpine. We gave an update on the sugar market, reef regulation and legislation and procedure in relation to local cane supply contracts.

The meeting was well attended with most wanting to be involved directly in their local cane supply contract negotiations.

Central Region Director
Chairman **Ross Walker**



Mike Hetherington
Southern Director

Southern Qld

Rain

In quantities not expected in a negative SOI phase, but there you have it. Rain enough to ruin soybean crops in low lying areas. Rain to make peanut growers tremble. Rain enough to keep ground spray rigs out of the paddocks. Rain enough to make almost all the airstrips to boggy for air Ag. operators to get out of. Enough to make the Paradise Dam on the Burnett over-spill. And that's cause for more complaint from conservation groups as the amount of water may be a problem to lungfish.

Burnett W.R.P. A recent email offering the newsletter resulting from a Community information meeting is 10.08 MB. Is this an indication how many issues were raised or is it just a lot of pretty pictures? I don't know yet! I am unable to download this and so have had to ring the free call and ask for a hardcopy. It's in the mail!

With the weather giving everyone a chance to clear out sheds , please keep an eye on anyone given the cleanup job.

Recently a very toxic chemical from generations ago was uncovered by a couple of ladies doing a bit of something useful on a wet day.

Never having had any experience with the stuff nearly had very serious consequences. Prosecution of the property owner ensued.

I have personally found that supervising cleanup work is a must as I can't expect employees to know what some of my 'things that might come in handy' are. And some of the leftovers from my old Dads' stuff too.

Water -again. From my daughter, Country girl scientist, as she calls herself, I have notice of a series of public lectures being delivered in Canberra. All are related to water management at a national level. As with all these events, the content of the speeches can be read, without having to sit anywhere near Canberra, by looking at a website.

The Australian Academy of Science address is

<http://www.science.org.au/events/publiclectures/index.htm>

Now with this wet weather we should all have time to read up on where Canberra is taking us as ordinary Australians, farmers and irrigators.

See you all at the AGM and Conference,

Cheers,

Mike Hetherington

Southern Region Director.



Robert Quirk
NSW Director

NSW 2010 season outlook

It appears that the 2010 New South Wales crop will be about the same as what was produced in the 2009 season with initial estimate being between 1.6 to 1.8 million tonnes. While the industry may be able to struggle through a couple of seasons with crops of this size it is definitely not sustainable in the long term even with the current sound world sugar prices.

Growers are experiencing prices reflective of a world sugar market at 30 year highs following a worldwide production slump and strong consumption growth. The improvement follows a number of years of unprofitable low prices and crop losses through drought, flood and frost.

As growers are aware the removal of the "cap and collar" arrangements in place for sales of sugar to Manildra Harwood Sugars enabled the industry to access the current reasonable prices indicated in the market place at least for the next few years.

It is hoped that the improvement in income from this peak in prices will enable many growers to make vital and expensive upgrades to machinery and farm practices and hopefully be the catalyst for increased plantings this year.

We can expect the market cycle to continue in its volatile cycles and growers need to shore themselves up for the times when the price again drops.

Whole of crop harvesting and processing

Given the problems that were experienced in the 2008 season with both the harvesting and milling of whole of crop product it was decided by the Milling Co-operative that for the 2009 season whole of crop harvesting and processing trials would be undertaken to assess a range of issues and most importantly that of sugar recovery.

Over the 2007 and 2008 seasons both Condong and Broadwater Mills suffered from low recoveries which in part were blamed on cane quality issues arising from the severe 2007 frost. While the frost did cause issues with sugar recovery it is now abundantly clear that whole of crop milling has such a significant effect on sugar recovery that the current method of processing whole of crop product at the mill is unviable.

The whole of crop trial was undertaken in the Broadwater Mill area in early August 2009 with the specific task of the trial being to establish just what impact it had on recovery when the incoming cane quality was normal. In terms of the trial there was a massive improvement in juice and sugar quality with the move from whole of crop back to burnt extracted cane.

The Milling co-operative advised that a 1% difference in recovery at present sugar prices and a crop size of that experienced in the 2009 season for Broadwater meant a difference of greater than \$430,000 to the mill in gross sugar revenue.

The original desktop study undertaken suggested that there would only be a 1 to 1.5% loss in recovery however the field trial indicated that the actual loss in recovery was between 7% and 9% which means a loss in yearly gross

sugar revenue of between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000.

It is now clear that whole of crop harvesting and milling cannot be undertaken without the implementation of a cane cleaning plant.

Members were informed at the recent Annual General Meeting of the New South Wales Sugar Milling Co-operative Limited that the future of the \$220 million co-generation plants at Broadwater and Condong were basically on a “knife-edge” given that the joint venture was in default with the project’s bankers.

The projects were delayed as a result of a number of issues meaning that apart from the delayed income the original capital increased significantly. Whilst the Co-op still views the projects as robust there are two major issues which are now putting them at significant risk.

The major issue is that as a result of the low cane crops there is a significant shortage of fuel to operate the plants with State Government regulations and their interpretations by government agencies making it extremely difficult to find alternative fuel sources.

While they have identified other good sources of fuel its use is deemed unacceptable.

The other major problem for the projects is the energy (Renewable Energy Certificates) prices which have been significantly impacted by the Federal government’s solar credit system. The project was banked on the basis that the government would introduce targets for renewable energy use that would result in strong REC prices.

The projects were to generate in excess of 400,000 REC’s yearly and with current REC prices the project is losing in excess of \$10 million per year from its revenue streams.

The Federal Government introduced other incentive schemes and bonuses as part of their economic support package that effectively subsidised Solar and photovoltaic pumps to almost 80% of their capital cost and made the schemes eligible for up to 5 times normal REC generation. The government in their new system have effectively replaced government subsidies with “bonus” RECs and transferred a cost back to other renewable energy generators.

The scheme saw a flood of RECs on to the market and REC prices dropped from over \$50 to less than \$24 during 2009. They currently sit at just below \$30. The Milling Co-op believes that without a major change quickly the government will have completely destroyed any chance of meeting its renewable energy targets and may have destroyed a number of projects already in place like wind farms and major bagasse generation projects like ours. The Milling co-op is attempting to address this at Federal level.

NSW 2009 SEASON PRODUCTION

	HARWOOD	BROADWATER	CONDONG	TOTAL or AVERAGE
Production Area Entitlement	11,485	14,965	7,568	34,018
Cultivated Area	11,108	14,384	7,322	32,814
Hectares Harvested	5,052	5,582	4,828	15,562
Tonnes Crop Harvested*	576,926	620,707	427,251	1,624,884
Av. Tonnes Cane/Ha*	114	109	88	104
Tonnes 2 Year Old Cane*	497,511	565,280	237,682	1,300,473
% of 2 Year Old Cane	86	91	56	80
Tonnes 94 NT Sugar	71,046	70,183	52,670	193,899
Av. Tonnes Sugar/Ha	14.06	12.35	10.91	12.46
Number of PAE's	229	295	151	675
Payment POL	13.13	12.67	13.10	12.95
Average % Fibre	16.3	17.4	17.5	17.0
Hours Lost Through				
- Cane Supply	283	380	11	674
- Manufacture/Ind.	441	600	533	1,574
Total	724	980	544	2,248
Av. Crush/Hr – Tonnes	207	240	178	208
Length of Season - Wks	21.6	21.2	19.9	20.9
Crop Estimate 2010	650,000	708,862	536,055	1,894,917

*Includes Trash

Importation of fertiliser

NSW canegrowers purchased just over 1,000 tonnes of fertiliser through New Zealand based fertiliser co-operative Ravensdown during the 2009 season. The majority of the product was straight urea and all fertiliser purchased by growers was delivered by STC Transport. Reports received indicate that the product was first class.

Robert Quirk

NSW Director

Robert and the ACFA thank Andrew Tickle of NSW Cane Growers Association for compiling this NSW report while Robert represents the Australian Sugar Industry in Colombia and at the 27th Congress of the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists, in Mexico.

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Insurance: General insurance - ACFA insurance is the market leader. It has the largest share of cane farm general insurance in Queensland and Australia:

- Crop insurance
- Life insurance and personal accident insurance - ACFA insurance provides life and personal accident insurance via AON and Australian Casualty and Life.
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Editor-in-chief: Stephen Ryan

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