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## Special Taskforce on Competition in Raw Sugar Marketing

By Stephen Ryan

The Federal Coalition Government has agreed to establish a special taskforce to investigate potential regulations to address competition concerns caused by changed sugar marketing dynamics.

The taskforce is reported to involve direct input from Federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and Small Business Minister Bruce Billson.

Rural Press reports that Queensland LNP Senator Matthew Canavan said the taskforce would consider the most appropriate regulatory model for a sugar marketing code of conduct, similar to the recent wheat port access code regulations approved by Ministers Joyce and Billson.

In other sugar marketing news, concurrent enquiries continue: the Qld Agricultural Cabinet Committee to investigate competition concerns in the industry; the Australian Senate enquiry into the Current and future arrangements for the marketing of Australian sugar; and an ACCC enquiry into sugar marketing all continue at present.

It has taken the practical fallout of deregulation — a real-time run of policy, to demonstrate that unless adequate countervailing provisions are available, in monopoly situations, the smaller and

more numerous stakeholders are at a disadvantage to singular, powerful processors. It is now up to Government to remedy matters as they are the last hope of redress for farmers.

It is important that this matter is settled quickly as farmers need confidence to invest in their businesses which in turn are exposed to the degree of opportunity to undertake futures pricing.

This opportunity turns on the cane supply agreements (CSAs). The provisions of CSAs, which are a legal requirement in Qld, are difficult for farmers to negotiate in the absence of a pro-competitive market environment.

At present mills have the advantage of being the gate keepers over the marketing and pricing options that are available to growers. The outcome that growers require in order to have the confidence to invest is a pro-competitive environment which addresses the market power of mills under the monopoly conditions which exist in most areas of cane supply.

With the latest possible date for the 2015 Qld Parliamentary election at 20 June, farmers assert that their most urgent needs must not take a back seat to politics.

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# Chairman's Comment

**The Federal Coalition's announcement of a special taskforce to investigate potential regulations to address competition concerns caused by changed sugar marketing dynamics, is a welcome development, which demonstrates the Government's appreciation of the seriousness of this issue.**



**Don Murdy**  
Chairman

Since the vesting of raw sugar for export was removed from Qld Sugar Limited (QSL) in 2006, the ability for farmers to price their Economic Interest (EI) sugar has been paramount. This has been done by QSL, under the Voluntary Marketing Arrangement and currently the Raw Sugar Supply Agreement (RSSA), which is the contract between mills and QSL. However the access to QSL and its pricing products has been controlled by the mills, as the farmers who own 50% of QSL have no contractual relationship with it. This has been a deliberate move on the part of milling companies in order to control the physical sugar.

This aspect has never been clearer than at present where some mills have withdrawn from QSL and the physical sugar and the marketing of it has transferred directly into the hands of those millers, effective from the 2017 season. Farmers bear two thirds of the risk; they wait up to two years from the time of investing in each crop before their final payment and as such farmers want a say about who markets and prices the physical sugar that makes up their EI.

ACFA and Canegrowers have worked jointly on this issue at all levels of engagement and I urge Government to reach a decision which allows a practical means for farmers to exercise their formal say on sugar marketing.

ACFA General Manager Stephen Ryan & I attended the inaugural Sugar Research Australia (SRA) AGM. It is pleasing to note that after 18 months, SRA is reviewing its operations and refocusing its extension program under a more flexible use of specialists and a closer engagement with productivity services. ACFA has always maintained that the connection between farmer and researcher is a vital link which must be enhanced rather than diluted. Under the new structure, the productivity services must play a greater role which will be more important than ever. The challenge is to enable quality communication among these services and between these groups and SRA.

Another example of industry collaboration is the Wet Tropics Partnership, a two-year contract for the supply & delivery of farm practice training & extension as a professional, targeted & coordinated support to 700 growers in the Wet Tropics.

The project aims to bring practise change online sooner; ensure practises are affordable & economical; and maximise the reduction of sediment, nutrient & pesticide loads.

The Herbert region has launched first and the partners are: ACFA, Canegrowers, milling companies, extension & training providers (SRA PEC unit), local productivity services groups, and the QLD Department of Agricultural Fisheries and Forestry. Private providers i.e. Farmacist Pty Ltd have also joined the project. Don Pollock is leading the program, which is funded through the Australian Government Reef Programme.

I'd like to commend ACFA Senior Deputy Chairman and NSW Director Robert Quirk for his international humanitarian work with the Worker Health and Efficiency (WE) Program.

Robert, has joined a global team of experts to help investigate the causes of, and to help implement measures to prevent the spread of a form of chronic kidney disease (CKDnT) that is devastating the Central American hand cane cutting community. The full story features in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continuing support for our work of representing your interests.

*Best wishes to all for a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2015.*

**Don Murday**  
Chairman



## Natural Disaster Funding Enquiry

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a public inquiry into the efficacy of current national natural disaster funding arrangements, taking into account the priority of effective natural disaster mitigation and the reduction in the impact of disasters on communities. A draft report was published in 25 September and the final report is due December 2014.

The Commission has been asked to specifically report and make findings on:

- The effectiveness and sustainability of current arrangements for funding natural disaster mitigation, resilience and recovery initiatives;
- Risk management measures available to and being taken by asset owners – including the purchase of insurance as well as self-insurance options;
- The interaction between Commonwealth natural disaster funding arrangements and relevant Commonwealth/State financial arrangements;
- Options to achieve an effective and sustainable balance of natural disaster recovery and mitigation to build the resilience of communities;
- Projected medium and long term impacts of identified options on the Australian economy and costs for governments.

## Climate: BOM Says Approaching El Niño

In early December 2014, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) commented that, 'Many climate indicators remain close to El Niño thresholds, with climate model outlooks suggesting further intensification of conditions remains likely. The Bureau's ENSO Tracker status is currently at ALERT, indicating at least a 70% chance that El Niño will be declared in the coming months. Whether or not an El Niño fully develops, a number of El Niño-like impacts have already emerged.'

In its Climate Outlook Review, BOM further commented that, 'A drier than normal summer is more likely over northern, eastern and central Australia. For December, a drier than normal month is more likely over the northern half of Australia, with the chances of a wetter or drier December roughly equal over most of the south. The summer temperature outlooks indicate a warmer than normal season for both days and nights across most of the Australian mainland, except parts of the west and southeast. Climate influences include El Niño-like conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean, and average to cooler than average waters surrounding northern Australia.'

continued >

In various joint submissions, the ACFA and Canegrowers have pointed out that there is currently little opportunity for farmers to grow crops other than sugarcane. While alternatives exist, they are at best complementary crops for rotation with sugarcane and not yet viable on a scale that is significant to address the current co-dependency that farmers have with sugar mills. Relating to this is the recent purchase by Sunrice of the rice milling assets of Blue Ribbon Rice Group, located at Brandon, in the Burdekin.

Blue Ribbon, which commenced operations in 2008, operated a single rice milling and packaging plant that in 2013 produced 2,000 tonnes of processed rice. Sunrice says that although this volume represents less than one per cent of Australia's rice sales, with its climate and secure access to water, the Burdekin region is regarded as one of the most promising rice-growing areas outside of the Riverina. Irrigation at an economic price will play a key role here.

The current enquiries into the pricing of water and electricity in Qld dominate farmers minds as productivity is being crippled by unsustainably high pricing paths. The ACFA Board has resolved to support the work of Canegrowers in order to settle this urgent matter..

### **Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper**

The Australian Government has commissioned a White Paper to boost agriculture's productivity and profitability.

The Government says that ' The White Paper will drive the long-term agricultural policies of the government and... identify pathways and approaches for growing farm profitability and boosting agriculture's contribution to economic growth, trade, innovation and productivity.'

A green paper consisting of 25 policy points has been tabled and in December 2014, I represented the ACFA at a Brisbane consultation. The process will subsequently further prioritise the points of policy in the development of the white paper. The green paper is a farmer's dream list of just about everything that must be addressed in order to achieve the Australian Government's ambitions for agriculture.

There will be many hurdles to clear if there is to be a beneficial outcome from this initiative, however it is quite a precedent and is a formal stocktake of needs which will be difficult to ignore by any government. There will be some difficulties achieving outcomes which require state legislatures to act and there are numerous current enquiries which interrelate with the points of policy - some of which may conclude and fall short of the potential of the green paper.

This paper, in concert with the green paper on Developing Northern Australia, will highlight some powerful policy opportunities and challenges to refocus Australian agriculture.

With all of this political activity focused on Agriculture in one way or another, there is the potential to make some productive breakthroughs. Farmers look to policies which will reduce red & green tape and improve profitability. This is also the only practical way to enable future generations to enter a farming career in Agriculture, as owner operators.

*On behalf of the ACFA I wish everyone seasons greetings and a safe and prosperous 2015.*

**Stephen Ryan**  
General Manager



**Stephen Ryan**  
ACFA General Manager

## Commonwealth Biosecurity

The Biosecurity Bill 2014 and supporting bills were introduced by the Australian Government into Parliament on 27 November 2014. If passed, the new legislation would replace the Quarantine Act 1908 and provide a modern regulatory framework for the Australian Government to manage the risk of pests and diseases entering Australian territory.

If the new biosecurity legislation passes into law, it is expected that it would have a commencement date 12 months after royal assent. This is to ensure that clients, staff and stakeholders understand their rights and responsibilities under the new legislation and also to ensure a smooth transition to the new Act.

Key features of the Biosecurity Bill 2014 include:

- A strong legislative framework that clearly sets out the powers that can be exercised by officials as well as the requirements of those being regulated;
- New powers to manage risks onshore and in Australia's marine environment;
- The ability to impose a minimum regulatory impact whilst still achieving the best biosecurity outcomes, including flexible tools to target non-compliant activities, whilst reducing the burden on those who are compliant.

If the Biosecurity Bill 2014 and supporting Bills pass into law, the Department of Agriculture will be working with stakeholders, state and territory governments and clients to design and develop delegated legislation and policies that underpin the legislation in readiness for commencement—more information will be provided on the department's website as work progresses.

## Qld Biosecurity

The Biosecurity Act 2014 was passed by Parliament on 6 March 2014. It must come into effect no later than 1 July 2016. Planning is under way to have it commence by the end of 2015.

The Act delivers a single cohesive legislative framework for biosecurity in Queensland and will change the way that the State, industry, local governments and the community manage biosecurity threats.

Before the Act commences, the regulations and other subordinate legislation applying to previous biosecurity-related legislation must be revised.

During the development of the RIS, ACFA has been part of an Government/industry working group.

On 21 November 2014, industry bodies make a joint response regarding the Biosecurity Regulation—draft Regulatory Impact Statement for sugarcane pests and diseases.

## Competition Policy Review

**On 4 December 2013, the Abbott Government announced a review of competition policy, the first comprehensive review of Australia's competition laws and policy in over 20 years.**

The key areas of focus for the review are to:

- Identify regulations and other impediments across the economy that restrict competition and reduce productivity, which are not in the broader public interest;
- Examine the competition provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (CCA) to ensure that they are driving efficient, competitive and durable outcomes, particularly in light of changes to the Australian economy in recent decades and its increased integration into global markets;
- Examine the competition provisions and the special protections for small business in the CCA to ensure that efficient businesses, both big and small, can compete effectively and have incentives to invest and innovate for the future;
- Consider whether the structure and powers of the competition institutions remain appropriate, in light of ongoing changes in the economy and the desire to reduce the regulatory impost on business; and
- Review government involvement in markets through government business enterprises, direct ownership of assets and the competitive neutrality policy, with a view to reducing government involvement where there is no longer a clear public interest need.

A final report is expected in March 2015.

## Grower protection against monopolies fails, fix outlined in Senate submission tendered



L-R: ACFA General Manager Stephen Ryan, CANEGROWERS CEO Brendan Stewart, CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri, CANEGROWERS Head of Economics Warren Males, ACFA Chairman Don Murday and CANEGROWERS Vice Chairman Steve Guazzo



3 November 2014

**Peak grower groups CANEGROWERS and ACFA tendered a powerful joint submission into the Senate enquiry into Australia's sugar marketing systems, outlining robust and workable strategies to rectify the clear market imbalance in favour of the mill which has now been created.**

CANEGROWERS and ACFA have united strongly on this issue, saying a fix is needed as a matter of priority because of the far-reaching and serious consequences to which growers would now be exposed.

At the top of this list is a loss of rights to choose how their sugar is marketed and the loss of transparency into the operation of the company which markets their sugar – both issues have the potential to rob the State's growers of hundreds of thousands in profits, and those profits redirected from growers pockets straight into the mills coffers.

The imbalance was created when large millers Wilmar, MSF Sugar and Tully Sugar gave notice to QSL of their intention to withdraw from industry-owned and supported marketing arrangements at the conclusion of the 2016 season. The actions by the mills had the

unintended consequence of removing the long-standing protections which have been in place since 1915, which had prevented large corporate millers from taking advantage of the clear imbalance in economic strength.

“The mill decision overturns 100 years of industry practice that recognises growers and mills as interdependent partners that share equally in the risks and rewards from the market place,” says CANEGROWERS Chairman, Paul Schembri.

“The imbalance, characteristic of sugar industries around the world, has resulted in a suite of regulations governing the commercial relationship between millers and growers in each of those countries.”

## Pro-competition protection

CANEGROWERS and ACFA have hit back strongly what they describe as uninformed claims, saying theirs is not a call to restore a mandatory single desk, but a call for regulation to address market failure. They describe the changes needed as pro-competition – a way of putting in place for cane growers what other industries currently have access to through Australian legislation.

“A few vital differences in the set up of the sugarcane industry have left cane farmers additionally exposed to anti-competitive behaviour,” says ACFA Chairman, Don Murday. He explains that as sugarcane is perishable, proximity to the mill is critical. Growers in most sugarcane areas cannot choose to sign up with a nearby mill to try and secure better conditions.

“Without protection against anti-competitive behaviour, the mills have been able to effectively wrest control of the right to determine how sugarcane is priced and sold from growers. That means growers will no longer have control over the very mechanism which determines how they get paid,” says Mr Murday.

## Recognition of economic interest

CANEGROWERS and ACFA are quick to point out that this is not a question of sugar ownership but the regulation of regional mill monopolies who are exerting their market power. Mr Schembri says the long-standing arrangement by which the risks and rewards of producing sugar are shared between growers and millers (two thirds growers, one third millers) are being disregarded by the mills. “In the absence of this protection for growers being enshrined in legislation, the mills do not have to honour this long-standing arrangement. This is at the heart of what CANEGROWERS and ACFA say cannot be allowed to happen – the government can and must intervene to reinstate those basic protections for growers,” he says.

“The vast majority of growers have come out strongly and publically demanded that the mills be held to account and bought back in under basic pro-competition safeguards. These growers want to continue to be able to choose how to market the long-recognised two-thirds grower share in accordance with long-standing industry arrangements, which were put in place to share the risk and rewards of sugarcane producing fairly between the parties.”

CANEGROWERS and ACFA agree that this issue is the largest to face the sugarcane industry since the government first introduced legislation in 1915 to prevent this skewing of negotiation strength in favour the milling sector. They say the underlying objective of the State and now the Federal investigations now underway is to ensure Queensland sugarcane growers continue to have confidence in the marketing of the state’s sugar.

The growing sector says this issue must be addressed as a matter of priority, just as it has been in countries around the world.



## COCOA & SUGAR FARM TOUR

**Australia’s First cocoa and sugar cane experience can be found with Sweet Farm Tours.**

The Farm is nestled in the Wyhanbeel Valley on the edge of the World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest, about 20 minute’s drive north of Port Douglas. Sweet Farm Tour’s offer’s an educational journey covering everything you ever wanted to know about Australian origin cocoa and a working sugarcane farm.

Sweet Farm Tours Visitors Centre is open from 9.30 am to 4pm, 5 days a week (Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays).

Farm Tour bookings essential. Explore our gift shop, which has an extensive range of Australian Origin Chocolate and Local Products.

INFO

We are located at 333 Miallo Bamboo Creek Road  
Tel: 07 4098 8134  
[www.sweetfarmtours.com](http://www.sweetfarmtours.com)

**SWEET**  
FARM TOURS  
*Australia's first Cocoa & Sugarcane Experience*

## ACFA Director lends helping hand in Central America

**Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) Senior Deputy Chairman, Robert Quirk, has joined a global team of experts to help investigate the causes of, and to help implement measures to prevent the spread of a form of chronic kidney disease (CKDnT) that is devastating the Central American hand cane cutting community.**

The Worker Health and Efficiency (WE) Program, a workplace intervention study, will improve working conditions for local sugarcane cutters while investigating the causes of CKDnT.

Although experts cannot confirm the exact causes of CKDnT, they do know it is not related to traditional chronic kidney disease. However, there is a common belief that the causes of this horrific epidemic include extreme heat stress and recurrent dehydration.

“When last in El Salvador, I visited a hospital where many of the patients were cane cutters who were having treatment for CKDnT. There is no doubt that these people were chronically ill from this disease, most have no chance of recovery,” Robert said.

“The conditions that the cane cutters work in are unimaginable to most people. These guys work in the searing heat for hours at a time, their only source of water is what they bring with them to work, with the intervention project the mill will provide clean water on the headland as required”

Robert, along with the help of champion cane cutter from Ayr, Paul Donnelly, will travel to El Salvador in January to teach the cane cutters a technique which allows them to cut the same amount of cane while using far less energy.

“The idea is that if we can change the cutting technique to preserve energy as well as encourage regulations to ensure sufficient water intake and rest, then the rates of CKDnT will be significantly reduced”

Robert and ACFA are very proud to be partnering with the following organisations to help tackle CKDnT:

**La Isla Foundation-** La Isla Foundation aims to facilitate research to identify the cause of the CKDnT epidemic and implement necessary interventions to support affected workers and prevent future generations from becoming ill.

**Solidaridad-** Solidaridad is an international civil society organisation with more than 45 years of global experience in facilitating the development of socially responsible, ecologically sound, and profitable supply chains.

**Ingenio El Angel (IEA)-** IEA has provided a location for the WE Program’s pilot study at its sugar mill in El Salvador. IEA’s cane cutters have generously offered their participation, with mill management providing logistical support for the research. IEA is exemplifying industry leadership in the fight against CKDnT.

**AGDYSA-** The Agency for Development and Agricultural Health (AGDYSA) is coordinating implementation of the WE Program, providing technical assistance to all parties.

**CamelBak-** Hydration backpack manufacturer CamelBak provides steeply discounted packs to the WE Program. The packs ensure workers have constant access to water while they work, preventing chronic dehydration, a factor linked to CKDnT onset.

**Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)-** Run by the United States Department of Labor, the occupational safety and health agency is providing a trainer and training materials to help implement their ‘Water.Rest.Shade’ program in the cane fields.

**Sweden’s Karolinska Institute and Lund University,** along with Colorado University have helped design the program as well as implementing and evaluating it.

**For more information about the project, visit <https://laislafoundation.org/>**



Robert Quirk with La Isla Foundation Media Producer and Communications Manager Tom Laffay and other program partners in El Salvador (Photo courtesy of Tom Laffay)



La Isla Foundation CEO and Co-Founder Jason Glaser and ACFA Director Robert Quirk discuss OSHA'S recommendations with a sugarcane supervisor (photo courtesy of La Isla Foundation)



La Isla Foundation CEO and Co-Founder Jason Glaser pauses to speak with a hemodialysis patient at Hospital Rosales in San Salvador (photo courtesy of La Isla Foundation)

Right: Graphic courtesy of La Isla Foundation

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

**CKD**  
COMMON CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

ALSO KNOWN AS CHRONIC RENAL DISEASE OR CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE, IS A DEGENERATIVE, PROGRESSIVE CONDITION MARKED BY THE GRADUAL LOSS OF KIDNEY FUNCTION.

**CKD<sub>nT</sub>**  
CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE FROM NON-TRADITIONAL CAUSES

ASSOCIATED WITH HEAVY LABOR IN HOT TEMPERATURES, ESPECIALLY AMONG INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT WORK IN SUGARCANE PRODUCTION.

WHO GETS IT?

OLDER AGE

FEMALES+MALES

WORKING AGE

MALES

PARTS OF THE KIDNEY AFFECTED

**GLOMERULUS** CONSISTENT WITH HIGH BLOOD SUGAR, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

**TUBES + INTERSTITIAL TISSUES** CONSISTENT WITH DEHYDRATION, TOXIC POISONING

RISK FACTORS

OBESITY

DIABETES

STRENUOUS LABOR

FARM WORKER

HYPERTENSION

RESIDENCE IN HOT/LOWLAND CLIMATES

PROTEINS IN URINE

HIGH PROTEINS

LOW PROTEINS

WHERE IN THE WORLD

WORLDWIDE, HIGHEST IN RICH COUNTRIES

CENTRAL AMERICA, SRI LANKA + INDIA

46% OF ALL MALE DEATHS IN GUANACASTAL SUR, NICARAGUA FROM 2002-2012 WERE CAUSED BY CKD<sub>nT</sub>  
(GUANACASTAL SUR: SUGARCANE COMMUNITIES)

CKD (INCLUDING CKD<sub>nT</sub>) PREVALENCE IN MEN IN 2012

WORLD

USA

NICARAGUA  
INDUSTRIAL/AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

LA ISLA

CURRENT THEORIES OF CKD<sub>nT</sub>

WE ARE INVESTIGATING

THE LINK BETWEEN CHRONIC AND ACUTE DEHYDRATION

ENVIRONMENTAL TOXIN EXPOSURE

CHRONIC ACUTE DEHYDRATION CAUSES KIDNEY DAMAGE AND CAN INCREASE DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES.

THE SOLUTION IS NOT AS SIMPLE PROVIDING SUFFICIENT WATER. IT IS DOUBTFUL THE BODY CAN ABSORB THE WATER NECESSARY FOR THE WATER TO HYDRATE THE BODY PROPERLY.

**WORK CONDITIONS MUST BE ADDRESSED.**



ACFA Southern Director, Michael Hetherington and ACFA General Manager Stephen Ryan

## Cane farmer laid down Movember challenge to sugar industry

Long-time cane farmer and moustache enthusiast, Michael Hetherington, laid down a challenge to fellow farmers this November; to grow a moustache in support of the Movember Foundation.

Over 4 million people in 21 countries support Movember which sees men grow a moustache for the entire month of November to help raise funds and awareness for prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health problems.

“We started a Movember team called the Stubble Shavers and encouraged farmers to get involved,” says Michael.

“I challenged farmers from all over to start the 1st November clean shaven and to continue to grow the best Mo they can for the entire month of November.”

Michael says the goal of Movember is to spark conversation about important men’s health issues.

“Us farmers sometimes avoid talking about stuff like this, but we need to look out for each other and we need to speak up if we think something’s not quite right.”



ABOVE: Cane farmer Michael Hetherington at the beginning of the Movember challenge on 1st November

BELOW: Michael with his MO and beloved dog, Guinness

“Farmers are especially vulnerable to stress, anxiety and depression in tough times like these. We need to encourage the people around us to talk more openly about health issues and encourage them to take action,” Michael says.

And what about the ladies you may ask? Women supporting Movember (also known as Mo Sistas) play a key supporting role in signing up to teams, recruiting Mo Bros, helping raise funds and encouraging the men around them to take action when it comes to their health.



## Cane farmers to put a price on improving nitrogen use efficiency

The Australian Government and Terrain NRM are offering Wet Tropics' sugar cane farmers a unique opportunity to build on existing efforts to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef.

The \$5 million Reef Trust Tender - Wet Tropics is a new Australian Government initiative that offers financial incentives to sugar cane farmers to improve their nitrogen use efficiency and help reduce nitrogen discharge from the Wet Tropics - one of the biggest known risks to the Great Barrier Reef.

Terrain NRM's CEO Carole Sweatman said "We are excited to be working with the Australian Government to support cane farmers in their endeavours to help preserve the Reef whilst maintaining or improving farm sustainability."

The Reef Trust Tender – Wet Tropics is a four year programme where farmers apply through a market-based competitive tender. Successful tenders are awarded based on the best value for money in improving nitrogen use efficiency on farm.

Carole said, "It is a great opportunity for cane farmers across the Wet Tropics region".

"Terrain NRM will be holding five workshops throughout the region from 1 to 5 December 2014. I strongly encourage cane farmers to attend to find out about the programme and learn how to calculate nitrogen use efficiency for their property."

To be eligible to make an application, sugar cane farmers need to register their expression of interest online at [www.environment.gov.au/reef-trust-tender](http://www.environment.gov.au/reef-trust-tender) by 18th Dec 2014. Only applicants who register their expression of interest will be eligible to lodge a tender from 19 Jan to 19 Feb 2015.

Terrain NRM is one of 54 regional bodies across Australia working to protect our natural resources. To find out more about Reef Trust – Wet Tropics, go to [www.terrain.org.au](http://www.terrain.org.au), contact Terrain NRM at [reeftrust@terrain.org.au](mailto:reeftrust@terrain.org.au), or call 1800 357 755. For information about Reef Trust, go to the Department of Environment's website [www.environment.gov.au/reef-trust](http://www.environment.gov.au/reef-trust).

## Smart cane farmers helping to protect the Great Barrier Reef

A Brisbane-based video production crew recently dropped into Terese and Gerard Puglisi's cane farm near Mossman to record a 30-second 'Reef Facts' television commercial.

The crew spent five hours filming Gerard's cane operation, to showcase how reduction in fertiliser and pesticide use, and direct sub surface injection, has been beneficial in preventing run-off without affecting farm profitability. Gerard kindly donated his time for this commercial to highlight the extensive work the cane industry is undertaking to implement best management practices.

The commercial is one of a series promoting positive work underway with farmers, the tourism industry, small business operators and the Queensland Government to help manage and protect the reef. The commercials are being televised across the state from mid November 2014.

Long term monitoring by the Australian Institute of Marine Science shows crown-of-thorns starfish are responsible for 42 per cent of coral loss since 1985. Fertiliser run off has been linked to more frequent outbreaks of the star fish. The Queensland Government is working with cane growers to reduce run-off and improve water quality through the \$5.4 million best management practice programs.

For more Reef Facts check out [www.reeffacts.qld.gov.au](http://www.reeffacts.qld.gov.au), or join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/ReefFacts](http://www.facebook.com/ReefFacts) or [www.twitter.com/reeffacts](http://www.twitter.com/reeffacts)

## Industry News

**7 October 2014**

### **Manildra Harwood Sugars celebrates 25th anniversary**

Manildra Harwood Sugars (MHS) celebrates a major milestone with the achievement of supplying the Australian market for 25 years with a range of high quality refined sugar products.

**9 October 2014**

### **Global sugar mills retrench as depressed prices take toll**

Squeezed margins in sugar mills, caused by depressed prices after years of global over-supply, are hastening closures and consolidation in the sector, potentially eroding global output and supporting prices reported Reuters.

**10 October 2014**

### **Ergon gaming regional Queensland for record profits**

A new report examining the out of control electricity price increases in regional Queensland identifies Ergon's extraordinary profit model as the leading cause stated Australian Sugar Milling Council.

**12 October 2014**

### **Australian tropical cyclone season outlook**

The Bureau of Meteorology released their 2014-15 Australian Tropical Cyclone Outlook which shows an average to below-average cyclone season most likely for Australia.

**13 October 2014**

### **Bundaberg grower's nutty venture**

A rotational crop of peanuts every five years has played a crucial role in keeping Bundaberg cane farmer Jason Loeskow's business viable reported Queensland Country Life.

**14 October 2014**

### **Cane comp cuts back in time**

The inaugural Cunic Steel Men of Steel Hand Cane Cutting Championships at Castor Park in Mourilyan were created to bring a slice of North Queensland history back to life reported North Queensland Register.

**17 October 2014**

### **Katter's Mackay Sugar plan**

Bob Katter wants Mackay Sugar to lead a major project opening up tens of thousands of hectares of land for cane production for ethanol reported the Daily Mercury.

**21 October 2014**

### **Brazilian mills tinker with sugar to make it less flammable**

Brazilian cane mills are adjusting the way they produce and store sugar to make it less flammable, industry executives said, after four major warehouse fires over the past year did millions of dollars of damage at the world's largest exporter reported Reuters.

**21 October 2014**

### **Milling expert appointed to sugar research body's funding panel**

Sugar Research Australia Limited (SRA) appointed Mr Michael O'Halloran to its Research Funding Panel (RFP) to provide milling and supply chain expertise in the evaluation of contestable research projects.

**22 October 2014**

### **Cane farmers to put a price on improving nitrogen use efficiency**

The Australian Government and Terrain NRM are offering Wet Tropics' sugar cane farmers a unique opportunity to build on existing efforts to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef.

**23 October 2014**

### **QSL calls for true sugar industry competition**

Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) Chairman Mike Carroll called for the Queensland sugar industry's marketing arrangements to be opened to competition, stating the purpose of deregulation was to dismantle artificial monopolies and create a market dynamic, not to replace statutory marketing authorities with private monopolies.

**24 October 2014**

### **Joyce defends FDI register delay**

Release of the foreign direct investment (FDI) register for agriculture was announced by the former Labor government two years ago, but continues to be delayed as free trade negotiations unfold with China reported Queensland Country Life.

**30 October 2014**

### **Export marketer Queensland Sugar Limited calls for legislation to formalise 'growers economic interest'**

Queensland Sugar Limited is calling for legislation to formally recognise 'growers economic interest' in sugar.

**30 October 2014**

## **Weather Bureau seasonal outlook predicts less rain and more heat over next three months**

The latest weather bureau forecast confirms the trend for a dry and warm summer in eastern and northern Australia.

**4 November 2014**

## **Grower protection against monopolies fails, fix outlined in Senate submission tendered today**

Peak grower groups ACFA and CANEGROWERS tendered a powerful joint submission into the Senate enquiry into Australia's sugar marketing systems, outlining robust and workable strategies to rectify the clear market imbalance in favour of the mill which has now been created.

**4 November 2014**

## **Christensen supports QSL's call for intervention**

Federal Member for Dawson George Christensen is throwing his support behind Queensland Sugar Limited's call for government intervention to end Wilmar Sugar's plans to change the way they market raw sugar reported the Daily Mercury.

**6 November 2014**

## **Far northern cane growers suffer short-term standover pain for long-term sugar marketing gain**

Some far north Queensland cane growers in the Mossman Mill area are facing the harsh economic reality of cane being left in the paddock at the end of this season's sugar harvest reported ABC Rural.

**13 November 2014**

## **Lack of scale crushing the Ord Irrigation Scheme's sugar dream**

The Chinese company willing to invest \$700 million in Australia's far north is still waiting to access land in the Northern Territory so it can develop a sugar industry in the Ord Irrigation Scheme reported ABC Rural.

**17 November 2014**

## **Australian sugar given raw deal in China Free Trade Agreement**

The head of Australia's leading raw sugar marketer, Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL), expressed disappointment at the decision to exclude Australian raw sugar from the latest China Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

**17 November 2014**

## **Canegrowers warned 'alternative' chemicals a threat to reef health**

A researcher is warning new herbicides used within the Queensland sugarcane industry could be just as damaging to the environment as the ones they're replacing reported ABC Rural.

**18 November 2014**

## **NSW's sugar crop outlook sweeter**

Floods and aggressive pricing strategy by competitor Wilmar have contributed to a 30 to 40% decrease in sugar production over the past two years, however Sunshine Sugar CEO, Chris Connors, said things were looking good for next year with more than two million tonnes of cane projected for processing reported the Daily Examiner.

**19 November 2014**

## **Law shake-up moves quarantine boundaries**

There's a major shake-up ahead for Mackay sugar cane growers. A raft of changes is proposed for Queensland's new look Biosecurity Act reported The Morning Bulletin.

**3 December 2014**

## **Sugar miller moves to boost production at its Queensland mills**

Australia's third largest sugar miller, MSF, has wasted no time signalling its intentions about its future in the sugar industry, with plans to boost processing at its mills in all corners of Queensland reported ABC Rural.

**4 December 2014**

## **Rural debt stoush heads north**

Amid calls for a moratorium on banks foreclosing on struggling farms, Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and outspoken radio host Alan Jones will attend a rural debt crisis meeting in Queensland reported Stock & Land.

**5 December 2014**

## **2014 sugarcane crush exceeds 32 million tonnes**

Australia's sugarcane crush for the 2014 season is drawing to a close with only four mills still to complete the processing of this year's crop stated Australian Sugar Milling Council.

**6 December 2014**

## **Sugar taskforce in motion**

A taskforce will be set up to investigate a sugar marketing code in response to increasing concerns about changed sugar marketing dynamics in the Australian industry as reported The Land.



Jeff Sabburg with ACFA Board of Directors

## ACFA discovers handy tools to monitor regional climate

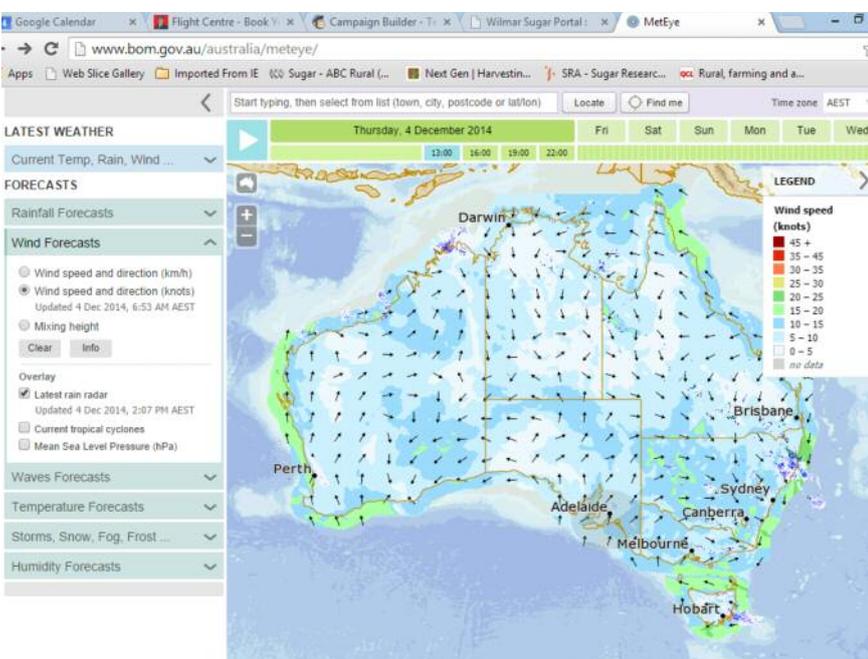
Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) Board of Directors recently met with Jeff Sabburg, a Senior Climate Liaison Officer with the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), to receive a regional climate update.

Mr Sabburg spoke with the Directors about the technology and tools that are available for farmers to use in to discover what regional outlooks look like over the next few months.

The MetEye function of the BOM website offers a graphical forecast viewer which allows all Australians with access to localised seven day forecasts, satellite or radar imagery and near real-time weather data such as temperature, rainfall, cloud cover, humidity and wind speed. The Agriculture page features tools to aid Agriculture and Natural Resources Management and includes forecast maps for rainfall, wind and frost, as well as the latest radar and satellite images. Through the Climate and past weather page, you will be presented with links which includes a video with the latest climate and water outlook for the next few months. It will come as no surprise to most that a drier than normal summer is on it's way.

Farmers are encouraged to log on to the BOM website to familiarise themselves with the handy features and tools available to help them monitor the climate and forecast for their region.

Bureau of Meteorology website:  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/>



## INDUSTRY UPDATE

# MetEye offers a forecast service for all Australians

25 November 2014

The Bureau of Meteorology has completed the national rollout of its graphical forecast viewer 'MetEye', delivering all Australians with access to localised seven day forecasts, satellite or radar imagery and near real-time weather data such as temperature, rainfall, cloud cover, humidity and wind speed.

"With the addition of forecast information for the Northern Territory this milestone project has been completed, providing a consistent level of service for all Australians," said Senator Simon Birmingham, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment.

"MetEye combines real-time weather information in a one-stop-shop and offers a highquality forecast service at six kilometre intervals right across Australia.

"MetEye displays seven day forecasts, satellite and radar imagery and near real-time weather data such as temperature, rainfall, cloud cover, humidity and wind speed.

"Forecasts are presented in a graphical map-style interface in which the different weather elements can be 'played' as a seven-day animation for a specific location, state or territory or for the entire country."

The latest warning information will continue to be issued on the Bureau's official warning page at [www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings) or on the mobile website at [m.bom.gov.au](http://m.bom.gov.au).

"The Bureau's official warnings can be supplemented by viewing significant weather such as thunderstorms, tropical cyclones and rainfall on MetEye," he said, "with real-time river observations also updated at six to nine minute intervals."

Senator Birmingham said MetEye is part of the Next Generation Forecast and Warning System (NexGen) rolled out nationally over the past five years.

"This new forecasting system represents a major investment in improving the services the Bureau provides to the Australian public, with an additional 679 Northern Territory locations now receiving a 7-day forecast as a result of this final stage," Senator Birmingham said.

**To view MetEye visit**  
[www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye).



Gerard Puglisi  
cane farmer

## working to protect the Great Barrier Reef

There are thousands of everyday people playing their part in protecting the Great Barrier Reef, including cane farmer Gerard Puglisi from Mossman.

“As a fourth generation cane farmer, I want to make sure I manage my land sustainably and keep soil, fertiliser and pesticides on my paddock—and not in the Great Barrier Reef.

Thanks to government support, I've been able to do this.

And these efforts are starting to pay off, with evidence showing water quality is improving.

By reducing my fertilizer run-off, I'm helping to prevent more frequent outbreaks of crown of thorns starfish, one of the biggest impacts on the reef.

I am proud to be working to protect the Great Barrier Reef.”

Long term monitoring by the Australian Institute of Marine Science shows crown-of-thorns starfish are responsible for 42 per cent of coral loss since 1985. Fertiliser run off has been linked to more frequent outbreaks of the star fish. The Queensland Government is working with cane growers to reduce run-off and improve water quality through the \$5.4 million best management practice programs.

Find out what is being done to protect the reef and the health of its precious ecosystem at [www.reeffacts.qld.gov.au](http://www.reeffacts.qld.gov.au). Or join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/ReeEffects](https://www.facebook.com/ReeEffects) or [www.twitter.com/reeffects](https://www.twitter.com/reeffects)

Keep an eye out for next week's edition to find out more information about how the government is working to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

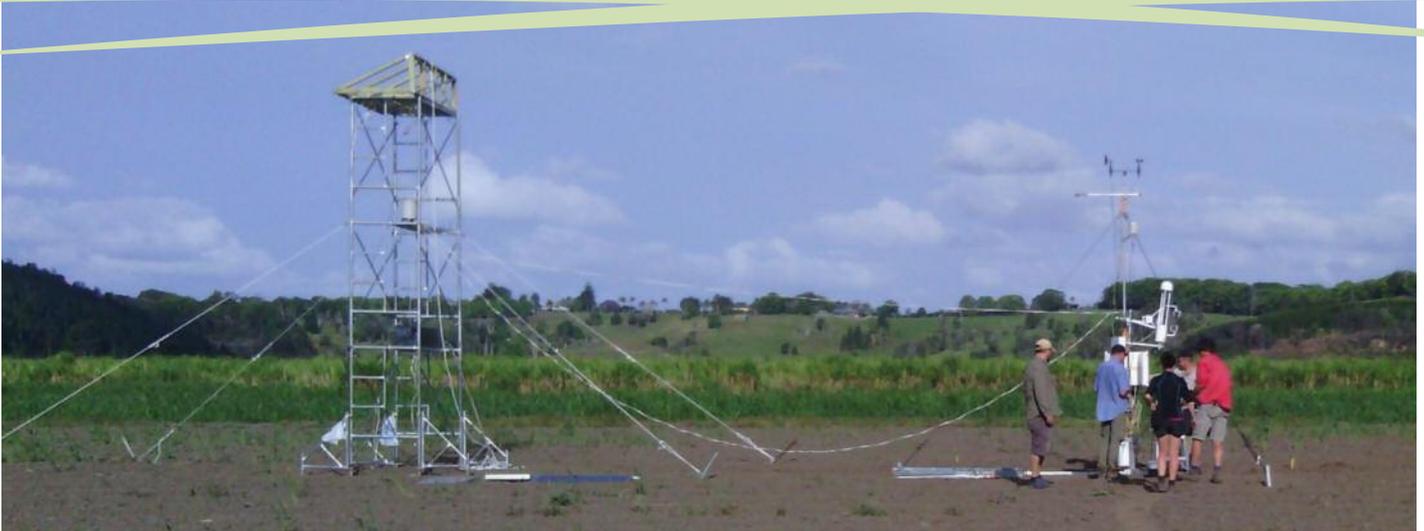
Image courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland



Great state. Great opportunity.  
And a plan for the future.



Authorised by the Queensland Government, George Street, Brisbane



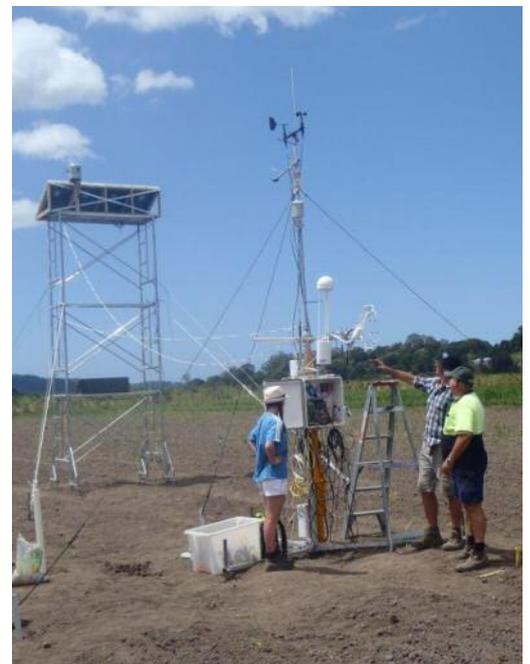
# Is sugarcane a sink or source of carbon?

**Jackie Gatland and Ben Macdonald** scientists from Southern Cross University (SCU) and CSIRO have deployed an eddy covariance flux tower in a sugarcane farm in the Tweed catchment.

The flux tower is essentially a sophisticated weather station that takes direct measurements of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), exchange between the land and atmosphere. The flux tower was stationed in the centre of a newly planted sugarcane paddock on cane grower Robert Quirk's property, and will remain there for one growing season. After one year, data from the flux tower will provide scientists with a good estimate of how much carbon went into the sugarcane ecosystem and how much was released. Data from this flux tower will supplement SCU student Jackie Gatland's PhD project, which aims to provide a complete carbon budget of the sugarcane system over a year.

The eddy covariance method is widely used by the scientific community to gain insight into the ability of an ecosystem to uptake (sink) or release (source) carbon, which is important to know in the face of climate change. Carbon dioxide and methane are particularly important gases to measure as these are the two most important greenhouse gases contributing to climate change. In order to measure the exchange of CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> over the total area of the sugarcane property, the tower is positioned at a calculated height above the canopy and has instruments that take extremely fast measurements of up to 20 times per second. All this is powered remotely via a solar panel setup adjacent to the flux tower. In addition to CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> measurements, the flux tower also measures the exchange of water, net solar radiation, weather parameters, and soil properties including heat flux, temperature, moisture content and electrical conductivity.

*Article and photos courtesy of Jackie Gatland*



Thursday 4 December 2014

## QSL welcomes Federal sugar marketing taskforce

Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) has welcomed the announcement that the Federal Government will establish a special taskforce to investigate a potential marketing Code of Conduct to address competition concerns in the Australian sugar industry.

QSL Chief Executive Officer Greg Beashel said it was heartening that the Federal Government had responded to the concerns of thousands of Queensland cane farmers opposed to plans by sugar millers Wilmar, Mitr Phol's MSF and COFCO's Tully Sugar to market grower economic interest sugar from July 2017.

Mr Beashel said it was clear that the market was in failure as a result of the proposed marketing changes, with growers already paying more for funding and many unable to forward price for the 2017 season.

"The fact is that the vast majority of cane growers in Queensland supply a monopoly miller and although many may oppose that miller marketing grower economic interest sugar and impacting grower returns, they have no say in the matter and no real alternative market for their crop. So we are hopeful that a Code of Conduct can help address these inherent monopolies within our industry and produce a competitive market dynamic," he said.

"QSL firmly believes that a Grower Choice model – where farming families have a say in how their grower economic interest sugar is marketed – is the best way forward for our industry and will provide true competition, encourage innovation and deliver the fairest outcome for both growers and millers."

For more information: Cathy Kelly  
Email: [cathy.kelly@qsl.com.au](mailto:cathy.kelly@qsl.com.au),  
Phone: 0409 285 074

17 November 2014

## Australian Sugar given raw deal in China Free Trade Agreement

The head of Australia's leading raw sugar marketer, Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL), has today expressed disappointment at the decision to exclude Australian raw sugar from the latest China Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

QSL CEO Greg Beashel said the decision is a missed opportunity for the Australian sugar industry.

"There is no good reason for raw sugar to be left out of this Free Trade Agreement with China, especially considering the country's increasing appetite for our product," said Mr. Beashel.

China currently imports around four million tonnes of raw sugar every year and this figure is expected to increase to meet domestic consumption needs.

"Australia is well placed to capitalise on this opportunity from China, with QSL already providing high quality raw sugar to Chinese clients on time, in full and within strict import requirements," said Mr. Beashel.

In announcing today's FTA, the Federal Government acknowledged a number of key issues still needed to be resolved and these will be further developed during a three year review of the FTA.

Mr. Beashel said QSL welcomes the review period and urges the Federal Government to support the Australian sugar industry by seeking to include raw sugar in any and all future FTAs.

By Greg Beashel,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Queensland Sugar Ltd



## Advanced Nutrients - Company Profile Changes 2014



### The Changes

Over the past 2 months Advanced Nutrients has been going through some company structural changes and we want to ensure all customers are aware of these changes and the opportunities moving forward.

As many will know, Profert Holdings (Pty) Ltd of South Africa are a significant investor in the Australian agricultural market, being a major shareholder and Directors of Advanced Nutrients amongst its interests. Although significantly strengthened with the majority acquisition and investment by Ruixing Group Co., Ltd. of China. Profert - Ruixing have decided to concentrate Profert interests in Africa and divest of its Australian assets and interests including its shareholding in Advanced Nutrients.



### Moving Forward

As a result of these changes EcoCatalysts Pty Ltd has acquired the Advanced Nutrients brand and its associated product brands Black Urea, Black DAP, BANG P, Advanced Liquids and C-Tech Brand Products for the Australian market.

The board has made the decision that it will not be in the interim continuing the supply of Allfert Commodity Fertiliser products.

EcoCatalysts Pty Ltd was the other joint shareholder with Profert Holdings of Advanced Nutrients Pty Ltd and is 100% Australian owned. EcoCatalysts Pty Ltd has interests in fertiliser manufacturing in the USA and has distribution across the US, Australia and throughout the world, as well as a significant environmental business in the waste water, mining and trade waste industries along with a strong Research and Development platform.

### You're Business

Our core focus moving forward is adding value to your business through key products and business partnerships in marketing and education to assist your business's growth.

We have taken the opportunity to revise the product range to ensure it is targeted to meet customer needs for successful agronomic and financial results. The **Advanced Nutrients** brand will support **Black Urea** and **Black DAP, BANGP, Advanced Liquids** and **C-Tech Brand Products**.

We have reduced the number of products in the Advanced Liquids and Black Blends range to better meet customer needs through less confusing but strong



scientific base product groups. Along with our solid Research and Development programs, we will continue to look at product development opportunities. Some products that were previously on the list may still be manufactured at a minimum quantity if required. Toll manufacturing is another service EcoCatalysts offers customers and if of interest to you we are only too pleased to discuss this service.

## Our Goal

To keep improving our service to you, we will continue to make slight changes that we believe will assist us to achieve these goals. With our customer service and sales we are creating a more team focused approach to your business.

Tammy Bell heads up our customer service team while Kelly Coppleman will return after maternity leave to join Tammy. Michael Hodge our CFO leads our account team.

Our sales team will consist of both inside field sales and support staff led by our Sales & Marketing Director, Craig Salmon. Deb Lord heads our Inside Sales team, David Rae the Environmental division of the field sales team, while Craig heads the Agriculture division which also consists of independent agent Peter Hicks. Gary Murdoch-Brown our CEO will work on Research and Development, Tech support and training.

The sales program is being carefully implemented and will involve more efficient processes of an inside sales approach via telephone, email and SMS with the outside field team for support.

Field staff visiting your business will still remain a key factor in growing a stronger relationship with you and your team, but will have key goals of creating greater value to your business through product introduction, technical support and training, and for a friendly face to face chat.

Our goal is to deliver value from each of our contact points to ensure profitable outcomes to your business. We are confident this is the core base to a more efficient customer service and sales process for our customers.

So don't be confused if your calls are answered or invoices are from EcoCatalysts, it is still the same helpful people and your feedback is always welcomed. In the next coming weeks, we will be sending out new Credit Applications and Distributor Agreements to get you up and running with the new company details.

In summary, it is business as usual and look forward to dealing with you soon.





**Neil-Fisher**

**By Neil Fisher,  
Chief Executive Officer**

**Sugar Research  
Australia**

27 October 2014

## **Sugar Research Australia** **Industry Update**

### **Driving adoption of RD&E findings in our industry**

Driving adoption of new and existing technologies is one of the key initiatives that SRA will focus on to improve the production, profitability and sustainability of our members and levy payers businesses.

SRA's new draft Adoption Strategy has been developed based upon feedback provided by a wide range of participants who represent the diversity of the SRA membership. To confirm that the strategy will meet the needs of both the growing and milling sectors, SRA will embark on a comprehensive consultation process with its delegates, members, industry representative bodies, key stakeholders and levy payers.

The strategy has been provided to our delegates for validation in the first instance. Positive feedback about the strategy and its principles has been received and the next planned step is to hold a webinar with all of the delegates to capture their feedback and input into the strategy.

The strategy comprises three main elements:

1. Development Officers will play a key role in the implementation of the strategy. The officers will spend approximately half of their time providing discipline-based expertise across 12 technical areas. Working with researchers they will also package the latest findings to produce extension materials for use by all extension providers. The other half of their time will be spent working collaboratively with local industry including our grower and miller members, levy payers and extension providers to identify productivity constraints, and develop tailored regional solutions to overcome them.

To ensure equity among the regions, the officers will be spread throughout the industry based upon an allocation of one officer, per each four million tonnes of cane produced. This will see a new position created in the Herbert and another position added to the Southern region.

2. The concept of Adoption Support Officers will also be piloted. These graduate positions will initially be recruited into two regions and will work alongside local extension providers to conduct on-farm trials and evaluations with interested groups of growers. Trial activities will be identified locally through consultation with industry.

3. SRA will accelerate adoption and develop capacity within productivity service groups and other extension providers by providing funding on a competitive basis for applied on-farm research projects. Each will be supported with funding of up to \$100,000. These projects will enable extension practitioners and growers to develop experience by trialling and evaluating new technologies over two-three years.

The success of this strategy will be measured by the return on investment achieved in response to the level of investment made in the strategy. This will be determined using a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation program.

## Growing the capability of the Australian sugar industry

SRA recently announced two new research awards – the Sugar Industry Travel and Learning Awards and the Early- and Mid-career Research Awards. This type of investment is just one of the ways in which SRA is helping to develop a highly-skilled industry workforce with the knowledge and capability to meet the current and future needs of our industry.

The Sugar Industry Travel and Learning Awards are open to any individual or group who is active in our industry and are available for a diverse range of activities such as funding a group of growers to visit other growers, in another cane-growing region, to understand how they manage aspects of the production cycle; attending a conference or workshop; or inviting a well-recognised expert to speak at a field day.

I therefore encourage all industry participants who have an innovative idea to apply for one of these awards by 7 November 2014.

## Research program review

As a part of continuing to provide industry and our research community with focussed research priorities, SRA will be conducting reviews of our investments in molecular breeding, precision agriculture and trait-use efficiency.

These reviews are designed to address key issues, review past research and adoption of this research, and make recommendations that can be considered for directing the short-to-medium term research investments in these areas.

# QRAA celebrates '20 years strong'

29 October 2014

**The Hon. John McVeigh MP**

The Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority (QRAA) is celebrating 20 years of supporting farmers and families across rural Queensland.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister John McVeigh said QRAA had made a valuable contribution to Queensland through its work administering government financial assistance programs including loans, grants, rebates and subsidies.

"I am grateful for the support QRAA has given to rural and regional Queensland and our farmers," Mr McVeigh said.

"While many producers have never had it tougher, given flooding in recent years and now what is for many the most severe drought on record, it is important to briefly acknowledge this anniversary in a low key way," Mr McVeigh said.

"QRAA is a longstanding and trusted partner of the Queensland Government. Agriculture is one of our four economic pillars and our partnership with QRAA is set to continue as the sector grows."

Over the past 20 years, QRAA has:

- processed more than 190,000 applications for loans, grants, rebates and subsidies
- approved more than 156,000 applications and \$2.6 billion in financial assistance across all financial assistance programs
- responded to 31 natural disasters and approved \$749 million to support Queensland's recovery efforts
- approved over 1,500 applications and \$270 million to help Queenslanders enter primary production
- offered over \$370 million to more than 3,500 primary producers to help support their productivity and sustainability

"QRAA offers a helping hand when Queenslanders need it most and the dedication of its staff does not go unnoticed," Mr McVeigh said.

**For further information visit [www.qraa.qld.gov.au](http://www.qraa.qld.gov.au) or contact QRAA on Freecall 1800 623 946.**



**John McVeigh**

# Review of Biosecurity regulations in Queensland

**Farmers, landowners and community members were invited to comment on new biosecurity regulations to protect the agricultural sector and our environment.**

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister John McVeigh said the regulations would underpin the new Biosecurity Act 2014 passed by Parliament earlier this year.

“The legislation serves to safeguard not only agricultural businesses, but also the environment and our Queensland lifestyle,” Mr McVeigh said.

Mr McVeigh said Queensland was at the frontline for preventing animal and plant pests and diseases entering Australia and needed to maintain its reputation for high biosecurity standards to ensure unfettered access to export markets.

“The new Act will streamline processes, reduce red tape and improve service delivery. Most importantly, it acknowledges biosecurity is a shared responsibility, and provides flexibility for individuals to manage their own, everyday biosecurity risks.

Mr McVeigh said some of the requirements in the current regulations would be maintained, but others would be removed as they were no longer necessary.

“New ways are proposed for managing banana and mango pests, cattle ticks, bee pests and there’s a fee for property registration,” he said.

“The options outlined in the Regulatory Impact Statement were developed in consultation with industry over many months, with the costs and benefits of each option now detailed for wider community consideration.”

ACFA submitted joint comment on the proposed provisions for the sugarcane industry with CANEGROWERS, SRA and ASMC. Comment closed on 21 November 2014.

**Listed below are the provisions that were proposed to be discontinued or maintained in the regulations for sugarcane pests.**

**Category 1:** It is proposed to discontinue the following regulations:

- The pest quarantine area (PQA) for Asian sugarcane planthopper, as it is listed as a prohibited matter under the Biosecurity Act and a person must not introduce the pest into Queensland. In addition, the PQA is unnecessary as no sugarcane plant, machinery or soil can be moved into Queensland without being certified that it is free of pests.

- The restrictions on planting and cultivation of non-approved sugarcane varieties. Industry is in a better position to manage the sugarcane varieties through an industry agreement. The growing and milling sectors could also work together to determine the varieties that should be produced in each area. Contracts between growers and mills could be used statewide or at a regional level.
- The restrictions on planting and cultivation of plants infested with a sugarcane pest. The general biosecurity obligation will mean that a person who plants or cultivates a sugarcane plant must ensure that it is not infested with a pest, as this would likely exacerbate a biosecurity risk.

**Category 2:** It is proposed to maintain the following regulations:

- The restriction on moving sugarcane, an appliance or soil that has been in contact with sugarcane, into Queensland without a biosecurity certificate stating that it is free from sugarcane pests.
- The current PQAs to be retained as biosecurity zones that cover the whole of Queensland. Restrictions on the movement of sugarcane plants and machinery into and out of these areas will be maintained.
- A full Queensland coverage of quarantine areas and declare them in regulation as biosecurity zones; however, it is proposed to reduce the zones to seven and amend the boundaries as follows:

Far Northern  
 Coen to Townsville  
 Townsville to Abbots Point  
 Abbots Point to Rockhampton  
 Rockhampton to Victoria Point  
 Victoria Point to New South Wales border  
 Woodford special.



**Driven by growers.  
Used by growers.  
Owned by growers**

In recent years how we farm has been dictated by others. As Australian farmers, we would much rather have a system which works for us. A system which is about improving our bottom line and one we can use to market our sugar to the world.

The Australian sugarcane industry has worked together and built just such a system. Smartcane BMP.

Smartcane BMP will help Australia maintain its competitive edge in the increasingly competitive world market. Being able to show we are productive and sustainable producers of quality sugar is becoming increasingly important to our customers, and the Smartcane BMP system is the way we are going to show just that.

**Become part of the movement:  
Sign up to Smartcane BMP**

Contact your local Smartcane BMP facilitator. Get recognised for what you are already doing.



[www.smartcane.com.au](http://www.smartcane.com.au)

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## ACFA SERVICES

**Publications:** The Australian CaneFarmer. Australian Sugarcane - the leading R&D publication - Bimonthly.

**Representation:** ACFA has a proven record of fighting for farmers where others have either given up or not begun.

**Branch Network & Local Representation:** Make use of your local ACFA branch, call your local director or visit [www.acfa.com.au](http://www.acfa.com.au)

**Corporate services:** World sugar news; Market information; Political and Local sugar related news; Wage and industrial relations information; Environmental matters; Water issues.

**Industry surveillance:** ACFA is constantly monitoring matters relevant to canefarmers.

**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.
- Financial planning - ACFA members have access to AON financial planners.

**Pays:** For a fee, ACFA members have access to an automated pays service.

*Articles in The Australian Cane Farmer do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the ACFA.*

**Editor-in-chief:** Stephen Ryan

## ACFA PARTNERS:

