

South Johnstone/ Mulgrave/ Tully

As I write this district report, the South Johnstone mill draws to a close with all cane delivered to the mill by 26th November. Mulgrave finished crushing on 16th November and there were comments shared that being both mills are owned by MSF, the cane between both mills could have been shared out more evenly, allowing both mills to finish on a similar date. Ten days doesn't sound like much over the length of a cane harvest season, however, up here in the north it can be detrimental should we have early rain.

When we get early storms while harvesting is still in progress, it drastically reduces CCS and inhibits new ratoon growth due to field damage caused by having to harvest on wet ground. This leads to lost production dollars in the current year and the next. Fortunately this year has been dry - perhaps too dry - although this has given us an excellent season average CCS, probably the highest South Johnstone has seen in years.

As harvesting finished on Wednesday November 26th in South Johnstone, the boil out procedure started early on the Thursday morning. *Total crush was 1,476,207 tonnes and an average CCS for season of 12 .88, with 18 days lost to wet weather at the start of the season.* Cane yield slipped below estimate due to dry conditions in the latter half of season.

At time of writing, Tully Mill was expecting to finish the 2014 harvest at the end of November, like its neighbouring mills it too has lost production due to the long dry period this year and the estimate reflects this with *2.45M tonne & an average CCS of 13.15* is predicted to be the final crop result.

Tully productivity and cane quality work is going well. With the dry conditions currently being experienced, very little weed growth is taking place, but some spot spraying for guinea grass is occurring throughout the district.

Tully Sugar and eight other Tully growers are part of the Game Changer project. The trial was established in October to test the use of "Entec", a Nitrogen stabilizer product designed to improve Nitrogen uptake. Another project underway is for Soil Ameliorants. Five on-farm trials to showcase the value of using Blend 3 Rate and/or Lime trials mid-crop cycle were established in 2013. This work was done on the variety Q200, in particular, which tends to get very thin in older ratoons. Three of the sites will be harvested last round and so far the results are promising.



The two year contract for the supply and delivery of farm practice training and extension to sugarcane growers in the Wet Tropics region has been announced. The project will deliver professional, targeted and coordinated support to cane farmers from Ingham to Mossman, some of 700 across the region.

In coastal North Queensland, agriculture, and in particular sugarcane is scrutinised because of the intensity of crop production inputs, past modification of landscapes, and close proximity to the Great Barrier Reef. The project is designed to support farm practice change, targeting water quality improvement, but not losing sight of farm productivity and profitability. Practices must be affordable and economical. The project will focus on farming practice, seeking in particular to support practice change to maximise the reduction of sediment, nutrient and pesticide loads resulting from farming in the local geography.

The project has created cross-industry partnerships which will encourage more farmers to take part. Partners include the ACFA, CANEGROWERS, Terrain NRM and milling companies. Extension and training providers are also involved including Sugar Research Australia's professional extension and communications unit, local productivity services groups, and Queensland Department of Agricultural Fisheries and Forestry. Private extension service providers such as Farmacist Pty Ltd have also joined the project. Don Pollock, Training and Extension Leader with CANEGROWERS, will be coordinating the project.

Michael Camilleri- Northern Director