

## **NSW**

The NSW industry has had a nightmare start to the harvest season with two east coast lows delivering up to 500mm between them over the last three weeks. Not the start we were looking for.

Much of the cane has lodged. That is, any cane that would have harvested in excess of 70 tph is fairly well down with much of it needing to be harvested by cutting one-way. We can only hope that the predictions of a warmer than normal winter are correct as much of the crop will be vulnerable to frosting in its present condition.

The land of drought and flooding rain is becoming the norm in recent times. Only a few shorts weeks back, some regions badly needed rain. El Nino had given us some rain in the growing period, and while in parts of the Tweed the rainfall has been enough to grow an average crop away from the coast on all three rivers have had a rainfall deluge.

My rainfall records show January 154mm; February 56mm (and these two months are when we get good rainfall) March 394mm; April 55mm; May 19mm (this was good for harvesting beans) and in the first 6 days of June 300mm and 500mm to 21 June.

The NSW mills started with wet feet and with an initial plan for all mills to finish late November or early December. The storms in the last couple of weeks will make the harvest difficult, if not very difficult, with any cane over 70 tons to the hectare lodged and anything heavier than that heavily lodged at about 30cm off the ground. It will take some time to recover even partially with the associated stool loss from harvesting.

### **Soy Beans**

The harvest has now finished in NSW with the crops varying from under one tonne per acre up to over two tonnes. the price is reasonable, so this encourages the good farm practice of fallowing with legume crops.

The 2016 harvest, should see all mills and farmers in NSW cut average to above average crop this season. Sugar prices continue to improve with speculators moving from gold and oil to sugar and with this speculative scenario, the sugar price can just as quickly move lower. However, for the present, with the price hovering above US 19¢/lb, there just may be some replacement of aging machinery.

I would like to wish all growers a successful harvest and let us hope that the sugar price and cane continue to grow for us.

Robert Quirk  
NSW director and senior Vice Chair.