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Economists develop new online tool to help sugarcane growers

Economists working at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries have developed a new online version of the Farm Economic Analysis Tool (FEAT) - that has been supporting sugarcane growers to make informed decisions for over 15 years.

“FEAT Online is a free tool that assists sugarcane growers with measuring the profitability of farming system changes,” said Mark Poggio, Agricultural Economics manager.

“This new tool streamlines data entry, allows growers to access regional scenarios and can be used on phones, tablets or computers. The regional scenarios are a convenient starting point for users and can be adapted to a specific farm by adjusting information as required.”

Burdekin grower Paul Villis said, “I have been using FEAT for years to help optimise my farming strategy and this new online version is very user friendly and has some handy new features”.

One of these new features is the ability to easily compare scenarios and be guided step-by-step through the tool. Growers can assess the profitability of existing farming systems and determine economic impacts and potential risks from proposed practice changes.

FEAT Online is useful to determine the farm production costs, profit and return on investment based on specific farm information entered by the grower. FEAT also calculates machinery costs (tractors and implements), nutrient management, weed control and irrigation expenses.

Cairns grower Mark Savina said, “I regularly consider what on-farm changes might benefit my back pocket and FEAT Online helps me to weigh up the pros and cons and distinguish the good from the bad”.

Mr Poggio thanked the FEAT project working group and industry stakeholders for their significant input.

FEAT is free for the Australian Sugarcane Industry, sign up online at <https://featonline.com.au>. DAF is offering FEAT training workshops online for sugarcane growers and extension advisors. To register your interest and to find out more information, please email FEATregistration@daf.qld.gov.au or call **(07) 3330 4523**.

Editors note

FEAT Online was developed by economists from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with project partners GP One.