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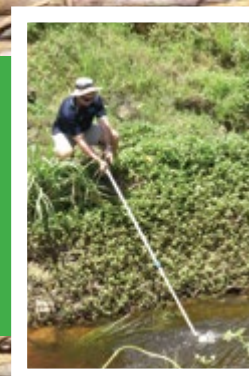
## COUNTING THE COST OF DEBBIE'S DESTRUCTION



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COVER IMAGE: CANEGROWERS Mackay CEO Kerry Latter and Board Director Greg Plath inspect crop damage in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

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# Industry counting the cost of Debbie's destruction

By Paul Schembri, Chairman CANEGROWERS

Farming by its very nature is risky. For the Australian sugar industry, operating over 2,000km of Pacific Ocean coastline, those risks are even greater.

Cyclone Debbie, an intensely powerful Category 4 cyclone born in the Coral Sea, hit the Queensland coast on Tuesday 28 March and in its wake left a trail of destruction through the sugarcane industry.

The cyclone made landfall just north of Proserpine and cast a net of damage over the whole central cane growing region, an area that produces approximately 25% of Australia's sugarcane, before continuing south.

The power of Debbie was so awesome that not a single farm in the central region escaped damage, with early estimates suggesting crop losses could be as high as 30%. In dollar terms, the losses are expected to reach \$150 million.

That does not mean that all farmers suffered the same damage. Inspections have revealed that some farms, particularly in Proserpine, have far greater losses. In addition, the scale of flood damage to machinery, homes, sheds and tramlines is in the realm of tens of millions of dollars.

All at a time when the harvest season is just weeks away!

Beneath the damage and destruction there are real people. As a grower in this region, I know that my fellow growers are feeling emotionally bruised and resigned to the fact that a large part of their 2017 profitability has been blown to the wind.

But be assured, CANEGROWERS has swung into action in concert with State and Federal government agencies to trigger assistance measures. We are already heavily invested in the first stage of identifying the extent and cost of the cyclone damage.

Cane growers are tough people and although we might be feeling battered, we will pick ourselves up and get on with life.

I assure all members that we will leave no stone unturned in the effort to secure financial assistance to our growers.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Ironically, in the midst of the Cyclone Debbie emergency, the Federal Government announced the introduction of a mandatory Code of Conduct for the sugar industry to act as a circuit breaker

in resolving disputes in three key areas: grower/miller contract disputes, disputes relative to On-Supply Agreements, and grower choice in marketing disputes.

CANEGROWERS welcomes the Code, as it places the sugar marketing dispute beyond the reach of Queensland's Labor Government, which is on the record as saying it will repeal the Real Choice in Marketing Legislation should it be re-elected to government.

Above and beyond anything else, this Code of Conduct will give growers certainty that they will not be exploited by regional monopoly milling companies. It also preserves grower choice in marketing.

The marketing dispute has been characterised as a fairly recent development. In fact, this dispute has been live for 13 years, since the deregulation of the Australian sugar industry.

The attempt by three milling companies to exit QSL without any reference to growers simply brought matters to a head.

Growers had had a gutful – unhappy that a marketing system that they understood and had confidence in was being dismantled.

While a number of individuals were involved in the realisation of this Code of Conduct, two in particular - Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce and Federal MP for Dawson, George Christiansen - were unrelenting in their fight for the rights of growers. For that we thank them.

As growers, we simply refuse to become economic servants of large monopolies. ■

*“Cane growers are tough people and although we might be feeling battered, we will pick ourselves up and get on with life.”*



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# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Cyclone Debbie chews up \$150 million of Queensland's cane crop

Initial estimates are putting the value of the Queensland sugarcane crop lost to Tropical Cyclone Debbie at \$150 million.

"While that is a huge blow to our members, and the cyclone has shattered some family homes and left significant damage to sheds and other farm infrastructure and machinery, we are hearing no reports of serious injury," CANEGROWERS CEO **Dan Galligan** said.

"In the hardest hit districts of Proserpine, Mackay and Plane Creek we have seen 100% of the crop damaged in some way by the cyclone – bent over, uprooted and snapped.

"There is a real danger now that some of the broken and water-logged cane will start to rot and be lost."

With the harvest due to start in less than two months, surveys are indicating cane losses of up to 35% in the Proserpine region (\$50 million), 20% across the Mackay region (\$81 million) and 20% in Plane Creek (\$18 million).

It will take some time for a more accurate industry impact assessment to be completed. See page 11 for details.

"The harvest itself is going to be a real challenge because the cyclonic winds twisted the cane in many directions in some paddocks and it's lying on the ground on many farms meaning the mills will have to deal with high mud and debris levels," Mr Galligan said.

As an ex-cyclone, the weather system has gone on to cause localised flooding and crop impacts in the Bundaberg, Isis, Maryborough and Rocky Point districts in Queensland and into the sugarcane areas of New South Wales.

"In the midst of all of the destruction, the messages of support CANEGROWERS has received on behalf of farmers from around the world, particularly from our colleague organisations in the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers, and from the wider agricultural community in Australia has been heartening.

"I want our members to know that as they begin the long clean-up and recovery process and begin to plan for a difficult harvest, there is genuine goodwill and concern for them, their families and their farms."

Assessments are still underway along the cane train network and damage to tracks may affect the start date of the harvest for some growers. The mills and sugar terminals appear to have escaped serious damage.

Cyclone coverage continues on page 6. ■

*Pictured: CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri and CEO Dan Galligan inspect cane damage with Kerry Latter and Jeff Grech*



## KINCHANT DAM INVESTIGATION

The Queensland Government has ordered an independent assessment into the operation of Kinchant Dam during Cyclone Debbie including communications with downstream communities.

The Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply, **Mark Bailey**, asked for the assessment after visiting the Eton region where residents had raised concerns.

"I have asked the Queensland Chief Scientist Professor **Suzanne Miller** to undertake an independent assessment into the operation of Kinchant Dam and warning systems," Mr Bailey said in a statement.

"The Chief Scientist will assess the dam's operation, the efficacy of the current communications systems, taking account of recent recommendations by the Inspector General of Emergency Management.

"It is crucial for communities living and working downstream of the dams to receive timely and clear notifications of any spills.

"Queenslanders have shown great resilience in dealing with extreme weather, but it's important for communities to be informed and prepared and to have confidence and understanding of the operations of the dams."

The Chief Scientist will work with the local community, irrigators and relevant authorities to make sure everything that could have been done, was done.

CANEGROWERS will support members and participate fully in the enquiry and will take such steps as are appropriate to ensure growers rights are protected and they are treated fairly and reasonably.

Professor Miller is due to report by 30 June 2017.

## ELECTRICITY TARIFF TRIAL DEADLINE EXTENDED

The application deadline for growers wishing to participate in the Queensland Government's agricultural electricity tariff trial has been extended to May 2.

For further information or to download an application form, visit: [ergon.com.au/agtariifftrial](http://ergon.com.au/agtariifftrial)

# NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct for the sugar industry, which sets down a process for arbitration when negotiations become stalled, came into effect on Wednesday 5 April, 2017. The Code will prevent a repeat of the long-running marketing dispute that has left Wilmar growers waiting for grower choice supply contracts for the 2017 season.

"A Code of Conduct should protect our members and the industry from ever again having to go through the protracted dispute and negotiations we've been caught up in for the past three years," CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said.

"While Queensland legislation has secured the right of growers to choose a marketer for their economic interest sugar, this Federal Government sponsored Code announced by Treasurer Scott Morrison and Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce is the fall-back mechanism in situations where commercial agreements which respect that right can't be reached."

The new Code of Conduct sits under the Federal *Competition and Consumer Act*. The Federal Government says its purposes are:

- to regulate the conduct of growers, mill owners and marketers of sugar in relation to contracts or agreements for the supply of cane or the on supply of sugar; and
- to ensure that supply contracts between growers and mill owners have the effect of guaranteeing a grower's choice of the marketing entity for the grower economic interest sugar manufactured from the cane the grower supplies; and
- to require and provide for

pre contractual arbitration of the terms of agreements for the supply of cane or the on supply of sugar if the parties fail to agree to those terms;

- to the extent that those contracts or agreements have at least one party that is a corporation.

Under the Code, if parties are unable to agree to terms of an agreement, either party may invoke the arbitration.

The Code obliges parties involved in contracts and agreements to act in good faith; to act reasonably, fairly, honestly and cooperatively, and not to mislead, harass, intimidate or oppress any other

party or proposed party. An arbitrator will be able to take into account the behaviour of parties.

The Code will be reviewed in 18 months as regulations made under the *Competition and Consumer Act* lapse after two years.

"This Code will prevent millers from abusing their regional monopoly power just as the Queensland legislation brings competition into the marketing environment," Mr Galligan said.

"We thank the political and other supporters of our industry who have championed the cause of our farming families." ■

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# Debbie leaves \$150m trail of destruction

Tropical Cyclone Debbie tore a \$150 million trail of destruction through Australia's cane industry, flattening homes, businesses, and crops as she ripped through Queensland's central growing region.

## Proserpine

When Tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed Queensland's coastline on Tuesday 28 March, Proserpine took a direct hit. For over 30 hours 200+km/hr winds battered the north Queensland town, ripping up trees and pulling down power poles.

Roofs were torn from homes and sheds were ripped apart as the category 4 system cut a trail of destruction through the central cane-growing region.

No stranger to extreme weather, Proserpine has endured more than its fair share of cyclones in recent years - Ului (2010), Anthony (2011), Yasi (2011), Dylan (2014) and Marcia (2015) - but Debbie was by far the most devastating in recent memory, according to CANEGROWERS Proserpine manager **Michael Porter**.

"It was a pretty terrifying experience for people, even for those that have lived through a number of cyclones over the years," Michael told *Australian Canegrower*.

"People here remember Cyclone Ada, that hit way back in 1970 and virtually destroyed Airlie Beach. Many of those people will tell you that Debbie was worse.

"Even though Ada was a category 5, it only lasted around six to eight hours, whereas Cyclone Debbie lasted up to 30 hours.

"It was just so slow moving. Everyone had really endured enough by the 24 hour mark, yet we were still living it five, six hours later. People's nerves are very frayed."



Calculating the crop damage will take considerable time, but for the minute people are concerned with the more immediate clean-up, Michael said.

"We're expecting crop losses of up to 50% in some blocks, depending on the location and variety, but those figures are very watery at this stage.

"We were initially budgeting for a 1.8 million tonne crop, but we're probably looking at somewhere around the 1.2 – 1.4 million tonne mark now, although it's still a little bit early to tell for sure.

"Right now the concern for people is getting the power back on and getting on with the cleanup.

"There's a high degree of frustration around. Not with the recovery effort, we're very grateful for all the assistance provided by both local and state government, and from our governing organisations and bodies such as CANEGROWERS.

"It's just a general level of frustration, because everyone knows the clean-up needs to be done and they just want to get on with it, but without power and communications it's extremely difficult."

On the whole, Proserpine growers are coming to grips with their losses, which in some cases include homes, sheds and equipment, in addition to crop damage. But not everyone has been able to take Debbie's destruction on the chin. ▶





*"It was just so slow moving. Everyone had really endured enough by the 24 hour mark, yet we were still living it five, six hours later. People's nerves are very frayed."*

# n through Queensland's cane industry



"For the most part growers are very resilient people, probably more resilient than the crop itself. They're an upbeat lot and take this in their stride." Michael said.

"But there are some people out there that are hurting and are probably a little bit down and worried about the prospects of what 2017 is going to deliver for them. Those are the people we really need to be there for."

## Mackay / Plane Creek

While not faced with the level of destruction witnessed in Proserpine, the Mackay and Plane Creek regions also felt Debbie's wrath, CANEGROWERS Mackay CEO Kerry Latter said.

"This was a massive system, but also extremely slow-moving, so people just spent hours and hours being pounded by wind. On top of that you had up to 1000mm of rain in some areas, which then produced flooding.

"We really had two whole nights of this and the second night actually felt worse than the first. You had the south-easterlies that whipped everybody one way, then as the eye passed over the region the back end of it came along and whipped everybody the other way with a heavy northerly."

Those 200+km/hr winds flattened crops throughout the district, with no farm escaping undamaged, CANEGROWERS Mackay Chairman and Plane Creek grower Kevin Borg said.

"We have crop damage right through the region," Kevin said. "But there are also some really bad hot spots of damage around Plane Creek, especially around Rocky Dam Creek, Koumala and Carmila, where we're seeing lots infrastructure and equipment damage, as well as a lot of crop damage."

"It's very early stages so we can't say for certain what the crop losses will be, but cane



is a pretty resilient crop so we're hoping the majority of it can be harvested.

"Having said that, I know of one farm down at Carmila where the creek has broken its banks and has strewn big rocks right through the paddock, which will make it impossible to harvest."

"Obviously the crop won't be anything like it was. A lot of the leaves are shredded, so growth will be seriously impacted.

"In general it's going to be a difficult crop to harvest, it's not just lodged, it's lodged in different directions. And more difficult to harvest also means more expensive to harvest too.

"There's going to be a lot more extraneous matter going to the mill too, so CCS is going to be down. At this stage we're expecting there could be anything between a 20-50% loss in some areas."

Despite the damage, growers are trying to stay positive, Kerry Latter said.

"All our growers are resilient and are just looking to get on with it. They're trying to be positive, but we really need to wait and see how the recovery of the crop goes from here.

"It's going to be a matter of good weather and giving the crop an opportunity to come out of its stressed and shocked state. The immediate focus of growers is becoming functional again." ■

*"It's going to be a matter of good weather and giving the crop an opportunity to come out of its stressed and shocked state. The immediate focus of growers is becoming functional again."*



# Debbie's deluge swamps southern

The weather system that hit the coast as Cyclone Debbie has caused more damage and heartache as it tracked south dumping up to 400mm of rain and flooding creeks, rivers, paddocks and homes.

## Bundaberg

"We seem to have fared pretty well," CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Chairman Allan Dingle said after preparing for his low-lying blocks to be inundated.

"While the rain was welcome, the strong winds weren't and there is a lot of cane down across the district and this may result in a sub-optimal CCS result in the upcoming season year and another year of difficult harvesting conditions."

On the up side, the region's Fred Haigh and Paradise dams are now full and flooding was minor.

"This should have been a significant groundwater recharge event as well," said Allan. "What we want now is a heap of sunshine."

The Sunshine Coast area has reported the most damage, particularly from wind to both cane and buildings. Areas of cane have been snapped off at about 1.5 metres high in some of the older varieties and growers are unsure what that will mean for future growth and harvesting impacts. Shane Apps lost a large shed.

The rain does not remove the drought impacts but does bring some positive opportunities for the rest of the season and into the next.

## Rocky Point

While in excess of 30% of cane in Rocky Point went underwater due to the heavy rain from ex-tropical cyclone Debbie, much of the water drained quickly and was a welcomed drenching. Overall the wind damage across the area was minimal.

**"What we want now is a heap of sunshine."**

## Isis

The rain event raced through the region dropping well in excess of 250mm of rain in just two days. Floodwater has ripped up roads, fences and trees and isolated some properties. A number of growers had their crop sprawled and flattened, although most are optimistic that most of it will recover.

Whilst the rainfall totals were high, they were short lived and growers remain hopeful of more measured rainfall to really revive a crop stricken by drought.

## Maryborough

In the drought-declared Maryborough region, the rain has largely been welcomed as a lifesaver. Although it doesn't remove the need for the drought declaration, some farm dams have been filled. Flash flooding has damaged roads and ruined some infrastructure including a solar pump.

Throughout the Hervey Bay area and particularly closer to Gympie, tops were snapped off cane by the wind and some erosion has occurred. There was minor flooding onto farms from Curra Creek.

Roger Bambling recorded a total of 370mm of rain over the past three weeks – a vast improvement on the 16mm that fell in February.

*Pictured: Above is cane along the Albert River in the Rocky Point district. It's estimated 400 tonnes of cane has been flattened by water up to 3m deep on this farm.*

*Below is flooding on Kevin Twohill's Tumbulgum farm in New South Wales. The family had never before seen so much water in the yard.*





# crops

However, there are farms in Eagleby and Alberton badly affected by the flooding of the Albert and Logan rivers and some growers have suffered huge losses.

There is debris from nearby residential areas all through the cane, and large quantities of silt deposits. The losses in these areas will become apparent when the water subsides. It is expected that the flooding will make harvesting difficult for the surviving cane.

## New South Wales

The Tweed Valley was the worst affected area in the New South Wales cane growing region, with the Condong Sugar Mill and surrounding crops experiencing significant flooding.

The Tweed River flood level peaked 700mm higher than the 1954 flood, which was considered a one-in-100-year event. Clean up work is underway at the mill to allow for a full assessment of damage but it's expected to be ready for start of crushing in June.

When the crop flooding cleared in most areas of the Tweed Valley, the cane was still standing as a result of being well advanced and held up by water when the high winds hit. The biggest physical impact from this flooding event in the infrastructure and machinery area, with many farms having roads washed away and machinery inundated because the water rose too quickly for it to be moved.

Some low-lying areas at Broadwater have also been inundated.

Sunshine Sugar recognises the impact of the event on the mental health of growers and employees who, in some cases, have lost all of their possessions and machinery. A Counselling and Assistance Program is available to all employees and growers. ■



## Cyclone/flood assistance

### Personal hardship

Following the activation of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, hardship and distress assistance for families (up to \$900) and individuals (up to \$180) is available to help with emergency needs such as food, clothing and accommodation, essential repairs to homes and the replacement of essential household contents.

This is available in the local government areas of Gold Coast City, Isaac, Logan, Mackay, Scenic Rim and Whitsunday.

Go to [www.qld.gov.au/communityrecovery](http://www.qld.gov.au/communityrecovery) or contact the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349 for further information or to apply.

### Primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations

Category B assistance is available in affected local government areas.

Go to <http://www.farmerdisastersupport.org.au/> and use your postcode to check eligibility.

Freight subsidies of up to \$5,000 per property to move building and fencing materials, fodder and machinery and equipment. These freight subsidies are available through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/environment/disaster-and-emergency-assistance>

**Natural Disaster Assistance** - Primary producers and small businesses directly affected by Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie and subsequent flooding may be eligible for low interest loans up to \$250,000. Non-profit organisations directly affected by an eligible disaster may be eligible for a loan and grant package up to \$105,000.

### Natural Disaster Assistance (Essential Working Capital)

- Primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations which have suffered a significant loss of income as a result of Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie and subsequent flooding may be eligible for low interest loans up to \$100,000.

Go to the QRAA website <http://www.qraa.qld.gov.au/current-programs>

### Telstra

This website details an assistance package including free phone number and internet service diversions and modem replacement and some rebates.

<https://exchange.telstra.com.au/2017/03/29/cyclone-debbie-telstra-assistance-package-announced/>

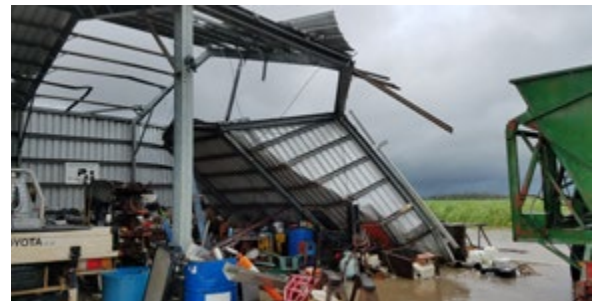
### Tetanus shots

The Queensland Government is making tetanus booster shots available free of charge to those affected by or cleaning up after Cyclone Debbie and the flooding.

Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or visit your GP for more information. While the vaccine is free, there may be a cost for the consultation. ■



Pictured: The Altmann family home was battered by Debbie's 200+km/hr winds. Stormchaser Josh Morgerman with Lindsay, Karl and Anne Altmann and Karl's girlfriend Kim (centre). Pictures supplied by Josh Morgerman



Californian stormchaser Josh Morgerman was forced to ride out Cyclone Debbie in the wind-battered home of cane grower Lindsay Altmann after getting caught in the category 4 monster outside Proserpine.

The experienced stormchaser's first trip down under to track a tropical cyclone proved to be memorable occasion for all the wrong reasons, as he found himself running through 200km/hr winds to shelter in the Altmann family farmhouse.

"As I headed down the highway toward Proserpine, conditions rapidly deteriorated until I felt like I was inside a washing machine," Josh reported on his Facebook blog, iCyclone.

"Several times I had to pull off the road. Finally, I could go no further.

"I hopped out of the car, into the fierce winds. Through the blowing rain and fog, I could just barely see the outline of a farmhouse in the distance.

"I grabbed my bags and supplies and struggled up the long driveway. The water was ankle deep but the winds were at my back, pushing me along.

"When I got to the top of the driveway, it was not a pretty scene. The farmhouse was taking a beating. Big windows were smashed and large parts of walls had been blasted away. A large tree was down. The nearby shed had been ripped open, as if by a bomb. Wreckage covered the property."

# ANY PORT IN A STORM

## Stranded US stormchaser forced to ride out Cyclone Debbie in the battered home of Prosperpine cane farmer.

When Josh finally reached the house he found Lindsay and his son Karl using a bed to brace the front wall against Debbie's raging wind.

"I couldn't believe it," Lindsay said of his unexpected guest. "It's the middle of a cyclone and this guy appears at the door out of nowhere, looking like a drowned rat, saying 'Can I come in?'. I just said get in here and hold this bed.

"We knew if that wall came in that the wind would just blow out the rest of the house, so we had to keep it standing."

Lindsay admitted Cyclone Debbie was one of the most terrifying experiences of his life.

"It got very hairy for a while, you know - it gave us a proper woofing. But there are people a lot worse off than us, so we're not going to sit here whinging about it.

"We'll just take it one day at a time and keep working away until we get back to where we were before Debbie."

As for Josh, he was on the first flight back to LA with a great story to tell.

"A fringe benefit to prowling the earth for cyclones - you cross paths with people you'd never otherwise meet.

"How many dudes from LA have ever spent 48 straight hours with Queensland sugarcane farmers - learning their way of life and their view of the world?"



### AFTER A CYCLONE, REMEMBER THIS:

- Expect feelings of fear, distress or numbness
- Support is available if those feelings persist
- You're not alone. We recover better together
- Spend time with friends and loved ones - it'll help a lot
- Accept help if it's offered; and offer to help where you can

# Policy Update

Industry with Burn Ashburner

Economics with Warren Males

## Impact Assessment Starts after Debbie

Australia's sugarcane industry took a massive hit when Tropical Cyclone Debbie crossed the Queensland coast and in the days that followed.

While Queensland's central growing region bore the brunt of Debbie's destructive power, growers as far south as Maryborough, Rocky Point and even NSW also felt the impact of the flooding that followed.

As in any natural disaster, the most immediate concern was for the safety and wellbeing of people in affected regions and with cleaning up the worst of the carnage left in Debbie's wake.

It is only after the danger has passed that our thoughts turn to costs to individuals and industry, and getting the economy back on track.

I had the opportunity to visit Proserpine on Friday 31 March, three days after the region took an almost direct hit from the category 4 cyclone, and it looked every bit as bad as I expected!

Visually the cane was a mess (a dog's breakfast I believe is the right term) and determining the yield loss seemed to be an almost impossible task.

However, I met with Peter Sutherland from Sugar Services Proserpine, who was already working out how to measure the loss.

Proserpine and Peter are no strangers to cyclones, having experienced both Larry and Yasi in recent years.

Peter also had reports from the 1987 ASSCT Conference, where research on the effects of cyclone damage on the crop growth was presented.

In my simple understanding, it was found that there was a relationship between the percentage of snapped stalks to yield, and also that the loss of leaf area can be related to a loss in yield.

Added to this there is the effect of stool tipping and lodging, with likely increased chemical application and harvesting costs, and a decrease in cane quality.

There may be other long term effects, with gaps leading to loss of yield in subsequent ratoons and early plough out.

There is a lot of work to be done, but it has already started.

The outcome of all this will be a scientific assessment of the crop loss, which we can take to government and enable the different categories of assistance to kick in.

This is a clear benefit of being part of an industry with a rich history of research and experienced staff – a benefit that we should not take for granted. ■



## QCA draft electricity prices 2017-18

Look out for higher electricity prices in the Ergon network from 1 July, if the prices contained in the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) draft determination on regulated retail electricity prices 2017-18 stand. Despite lower network prices there are several reasons for the prospective rises.

First, QCA has applied Energex network costs and applied these to the Ergon network in the calculations that support the prices contained in its draft determination.

In making its calculations, it has not taken account of the fact that many of the costs in the Energex area do not apply in the Ergon area.

A significant factor is that the Energex load profile is peakier than the Ergon load profile, meaning the cost of energy faced by Energex is higher than that faced by Ergon.

This is acknowledged in QCA's draft determination, but is not taken into account in the proposed retail prices.

Second, QCA has chosen to calculate the costs of renewable energy in a way that assumes Ergon is not managing its purchases as an efficient, prudent retailer, with a long-term view of the market and associated risks.

Third, QCA has chosen to escalate its already excessive estimate of retail costs, despite concerns raised by many consumer groups.

In doing so it has reversed the onus of proof, saying that customers have not provided evidence that retail costs have fallen.

The QCA conclusion is at odds with the federal Government commissioning the ACCC to inquire into retail electricity prices in response to concerns about excessive and unchecked electricity retail margins.

It is important that Ergon customers are not saddled with unnecessary costs. The QCA approach is to calculate every component of the electricity cost stack at the high end of the cost range.

This appears to be designed not to promote competition in the Queensland retail electricity market or to promote efficient, economical and environmentally sound supply and use of electricity in regional Queensland, but to minimise the payment the government makes in application of the its uniform tariff policy (UTP).

CANEGROWERS has raised these concerns and others in its response to the QCA draft determination. ■



Continued page 17 ►

# TROPICAL CYCLONE DEBBIE - photos sent in



Donna Watts, Proserpine



Plane Creek Qld - Sonia Ball

*"It was a terrifying experience! At the height of the cyclone it sounded like we had a curlew in the house. The howling of the wind was deafening. We've lost a fair bit of stuff – two centre pivots, an Upton boom, a big machinery shed and the cane has taken a fair beating as well – but it's all replaceable. Thankfully nobody was hurt."*

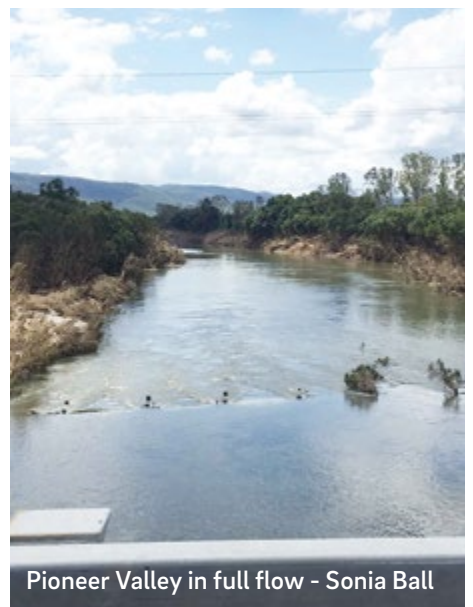
Donna Watts - Proserpine



Donna Watts, Proserpine



Rocky Point Qld



Pioneer Valley in full flow - Sonia Ball

# by cane growers across the affected regions



Gary Raiteri, Proserpine



Pete Twohill, NSW



Cane bins, Pioneer Valley - Sonia Ball



Tony Jeppesen - Proserpine

ABOVE: This cow was washed into a house at the Twohill's cane farm at Tumbulgum in NSW. It climbed the stairs and waited out the emergency on the top verandah.

# TROPICAL CYCLONE DEBBIE - photos sent in



Glenn Clarke, Proserpine



Wayne Vickers, Mackay

CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri, Glenn Clarke, and Lindsay Altmann, inspect damaged cane in Proserpine



Glenn Clarke, Proserpine



Wayne Vickers, Mackay

*"For the most part growers are very resilient people, probably more resilient than the crop itself. They're an upbeat lot and take this in their stride."*

Michael Porter, Proserpine.



# by cane growers across the affected regions



Lindsay Altmann, Proserpine



*"No one should feel isolated. There's always someone you can talk to. There are always people who can help you. Talk to your family and your neighbours and perhaps compare the experiences you've been through and your feelings."*

Glenn Clarke - Proserpine



Condong Mill, NSW

# PROJECT 25

## Growers get first look at results

Cairns Region cane growers got their first glimpse at results from the grower-driven water quality research initiative, Project 25, during an information session in Babinda recently.

The preliminary results, which collate data from 13 separate monitoring sites, made for some sobering reading, with elevated nitrate concentrations detected in two predominantly cane growing regions.

Presenting a rundown of early data to around 80 local growers, lead researcher, Dr. Aaron Davis of James Cook University's Centre for Tropical Water and Aquatic Ecosystem Research, said the results contained both positive and negative news for growers.

"In terms of phosphorus and total suspended solids (sediment) concentrations the data is very positive in cane growing areas," he said.

"Phosphorus concentrations were pretty much on a par with levels detected at our national park monitoring sites.

"In fact, the most significant spike in phosphorus levels we detected was immediately downstream of Gordonvale township, and probably had something to do with some sort of urban activity, or perhaps the release of treated effluent water from the sewerage treatment plant there.

*"If we look at real time water quality results over the six month period we see that for five and a half of those months nitrate concentrations are zero."*



"Total suspended sediment results were also very good.

"We did record slightly elevated levels at some sugarcane monitoring sites, but in reality the levels are quite low, to the point of not being hugely significant in comparison to what you would see in dry tropics grazing catchments of the lower Burdekin, where managing sediment loss is the major management issue."

However, it was the nitrate concentration results that really interested growers, especially in light of recently announced Queensland Government reef regulations aimed at reducing inorganic nitrogen in waterways.

As expected, elevated nitrate levels were detected across some predominantly sugarcane sites.

But, as Dr Davis pointed out, taken as a snapshot the nitrate data could prove misleading.

"If we actually look at the real time water quality results at one of those sugarcane monitoring sites, over the six month period between July 2016 and January 2017 we see that for five and a half of those months the nitrate concentrations are zero.

"There is a big spike in early January during a significant rainfall event that saw the stream rise from half a metre to five metres overnight, but once the water levels returned to normal, we see the nitrate concentration flat-line again."

So, what does it mean? Only time will tell, Dr. Davis said.

"These are only initial results from the dry season and early part of the wet season. We need to finalise the wet season sampling results to get a clearer picture of overall concentrations and loads at the various sites," he said.

"Once we analyse those results we'll have a better understanding of where we might have problem areas and look at introducing practices to address those issues.

"Water quality monitoring is a long-term process, and we need to be careful of focusing on a single year's results in isolation."

### ABOUT PROJECT 25

Launched by former Environment Minister Greg Hunt in September 2015, Project 25 is a grower-driven initiative designed to monitor water quality at various locations in the Russell-Mulgrave river catchments.

Unlike previous water quality studies that collected samples from lower catchment sites, often during peak wet season or flood events, Project 25 monitors water quality in real time across several different land use areas including national parks, banana production, urban areas, and predominantly sugarcane producing catchments.

Specially designed monitoring stations take hourly samples, which are analysed on the spot for real-time nitrate water quality data.



## Policy Update

Environment with Matt Kealley

### Biosecurity - Have you spotted anything unusual lately?

Biosecurity is all about the long game. It's about setting up processes and strategies to manage risk.

It's about peace-of-mind and knowing that when a pest incursion does occur, the processes are in place to deal with it efficiently, with the least amount of disruption and cost to growers, mills and the industry.

Unfortunately, biosecurity is also something that doesn't really get thought about until there is a problem. Which is my concern. Are we as an industry doing enough on biosecurity?

CANEGROWERS recently attended the Plant Health Australia (PHA) biosecurity regional forum in Brisbane to hear about the activities being undertaken by PHA, the Australian Government and other industries.

Some industries, such as citrus and the Australian HoneyBee Industry Council, are using their biosecurity levies to proactively manage activities and risk.

In the Australian cane industry, biosecurity risks have been managed quite effectively through membership of PHA.

CANEGROWERS is a signatory to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) on behalf of the industry. This deed provides the management and funding responses should there be a pest incursion.

The Sugarcane Industry Biosecurity Committee also meets regularly to discuss biosecurity related issues.

SRA puts considerable resources into managing pests and disease through variety research and development, while plant and machinery movement is also managed to reduce risk.

In March 2017, the *Biosecurity Manual for Sugarcane Producers* was released. This manual is designed for use by growers, extension officers, and industry to demonstrate simple procedures to minimise the risk of introducing and spreading weeds, pests and disease.

This is also supported by Smartcane BMP via the Weed, Pest and Disease management module. I urge you to review the manual and take advantage of the biosecurity checklist.

You can download a copy of the manual here: <http://bit.ly/2ovokON> ■



Also unlike previous studies, researchers report directly to grower representatives rather than any government agency.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Chairman Steven Calcagno said the initiative came about in response to grower calls for more targeted water quality research.

"Instead of taking responsibility for everyone's water we wanted to see how many Smarties were ours in the box," Mr Calcagno said.

"We identified sites where we could get reliable data and now that the data is starting to come through it's up to growers to take the results on board - whatever they may be.

"We've always said that if there is definitive proof that cane farming was impacting on water quality going into the Reef, then we'll address those problems through improved practices.

"Personally, I think these preliminary results are positive. They show that we're not causing sediment or phosphorus run-off, which we would have got the blame for in the past.

"If the final results show that we have a problem with nitrogen then we'll address that through improved practices."

*Pictured: Dr Aaron Davis takes growers on a field trip to visit one of the project's realtime water quality monitoring stations at Babinda; more than 70 growers turned up to the information session.*



## 2017 Townsville SPAA **PRECISION AGRICULTURE EXPO**

Sugar Research Australia proudly supported the Society of Precision Agriculture Association (SPAA) 2017 expo in Townsville and Burdekin regional field tour on March 14 and 15.

More than 50 people took the opportunity to listen to a range of speakers representing several agriculture commodities at the expo recently.

The afternoon's overarching theme was that a holistic farm management approach is needed when incorporating precision agriculture to bring efficiencies into the farming system.

Topics ranged from sugarcane canopy temperature monitoring, accelerometers measuring livestock behaviours, satellite imagery in tree crops, through to social media apps influencing the future of agriculture in Australia.

SRA Researcher **Dr Jaya Basnayake** presented on SRA's work with measuring canopy temperature and its applications.

Day two involved a field tour for 30 participants, visiting four unique

properties and providing a contrast of what farming is like in the Burdekin.

These field tours allow firsthand experience and interaction with the farmers who have turned theory into profitable and practical farm management systems.

The first visit was Tom Pontarelli's sugarcane and horticulture farming business.

Tom uses a 1.53m, single row controlled traffic farming system incorporating a crop rotation between sugarcane and watermelon.

A state of the art Netafim drip irrigation system controlled by a cloud based Rimik management system, allows remote monitoring and prescription liquid nutrient blends applied to the crop when required.

Tom uses regular agronomist advice coupled with tissues sampling and soil moisture probes to monitor the horticulture performance and all yield data recorded down to a triple bay per block resolution.

The second visit was to Paul Villis's crop rotation and solid-state irrigation.

Paul Villis manages Jurgens' farm under a 1.8m, controlled traffic system using a variety of irrigation systems to address deep drainage issues.

One of which is a trial solid-state irrigation system that has comparable energy needs to a drip irrigation system and a reduced water volume use compared to traditional furrow irrigation.

Crop rotation in fallow management is also a major consideration to the farming system. ▶



All farming equipment is fitted with guidance, rate controllers and auto shutoff capabilities to apply liquid BioDundar blends subsurface and pesticides to the sugarcane and legume crops.

The third visit was to David Cox (Davco) to see farming sugarcane on a different scale.

Davco is considering using UAV mounting thermal imaging to monitor irrigation advancement within block.

The scale of Davco farming provides a unique vantage point when considering implementation of precision agriculture.

This property, designed from the ground up (approx 3000 ha), provides paddock uniformity, irrigation efficiency and an economy of scale.

Davco has shifted from a 3m to a 2.4m dual row controlled traffic system in both farming and harvesting operations, due to limitations in suitable harvester availability.

Data collection is key to Davco's continual improvement in farm management; constantly recording land-forming, guidance, soil, weed

pressure and yield data to allow manipulation and further efficiencies identified.

Davco are now evaluating UAV mounted NIR, NDVI and thermal sensor technologies to provide daily monitoring on irrigation advancement and crop stress, which will influence irrigation scheduling.

Finally, we visited Cy Kovacich, who is using extended fallow crop rotation in a permanent bed system.

Cy Kovacich farms using a controlled traffic 1.83m permanent bed system, when rotating between sugarcane and legume crops.

Controlled compaction is how Cy describes his management style. All farm machinery has full guidance capability including rate controllers and auto-shutoff fitted and soil moisture probes strategically place in paddock to schedule irrigation.

Events such as the SPAA expo demonstrates a bright future the sugarcane industry and opportunity to further improve productivity, profitability and sustainability of the industry via the adoption of precision agriculture. ■

# Money Matters

with AustSafe Super

## WHAT'S YOUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY?

Choosing the right investment option can have a major impact on how your super performs.

Most super funds have a mix of growth and defensive assets to choose from. AustSafe Super offers 'Ready-made Options' where the mix of growth versus defensive assets have already been selected, or 'Single Asset Class Options' where the option is invested 100% in a particular asset class, e.g. property.

If retirement is a long way off, a growth or balanced strategy may suit you. Typically higher risk growth assets generate higher returns over the longer term. It's up to you to decide if the likely rewards are worth the risk.

Alternatively, if your retirement is just around the corner you may want greater security and to avoid risk, so a lower risk, lower return investment option/s could work better for you.

Regardless of your life stage, you want your super to continue to grow and keep pace with inflation. Before choosing, think about how any of the following will impact your decision:

- **Your age** – what is your life stage?
- **Investment risk** – how comfortable are you with risk?
- **Retirement** – when will you retire?
- **Retirement goals** – do you have any?

There's a lot to weigh up, including investment strategies, timeframes, asset-mix, risk versus return, and volatility.

Speaking to a financial planner could help you find the right investment path for you. Our financial planner<sup>1</sup> is available to discuss and determine if you have a need for personal advice, without any obligation.

A quote will be provided for your approval to proceed. Call **1300 131 293** to find out more.

*AustSafe Super is the industry super fund for rural and regional Australia, and has been committed to looking after members' super throughout their working life, and into retirement for over 25 years.*

For more information, please visit [austsafe.com.au](http://austsafe.com.au)





# QSL launches pools and pricing products for Wilmar Growers

## QSL Marketing Choice will soon be a reality for Wilmar Growers

With this in mind, QSL has launched its range of QSL-managed pools and grower-managed pricing products available for Wilmar Growers for the coming season and beyond.

Of course, for a Wilmar Grower to access these pricing options, they must choose QSL as a marketer of their Grower's Economic Interest in sugar (GEI Sugar) for the 2017 Season. Details regarding this GEI Sugar Marketer nomination process will be released shortly.

For the 2017 Season, Wilmar Growers can choose either the QSL Harvest Pool or the QSL Harvest Pool in combination with one or more of the following QSL pools and pricing products:

### QSL-MANAGED POOLS:

- QSL Actively Managed Pool
- QSL Guaranteed Floor Pool
- QSL 2-Season Forward Pool

### GROWER-MANAGED PRICING PRODUCTS:

- QSL Fixed Price Forward Contract
- QSL Target Price Contract
- QSL In-Season Fixed Price Contract
- QSL In-Season Target Price Contract
- Any other pools or pricing products QSL offers in respect to the 2017 Season.

Key attributes for each pool are detailed in the Product Snapshot, featured opposite. Please note that these pool and product descriptions are designed to provide a brief overview of Wilmar Growers' 2017-Season pricing options. More detailed information about each of QSL's pools and pricing products is provided in the individual Pricing Pool Terms, available online at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au)

### OUR MANDATORY POOLS

All Wilmar Growers selecting QSL as a GEI Sugar Marketer for the 2017 Season will have an automatic and mandatory allocation to both the QSL Harvest Pool and US Quota Pool.

Participation in the 2017 QSL Harvest Pool is mandatory for production risk purposes, with 35% of each grower's GEI Sugar pricing allocation to QSL automatically designated to this pool, as per previous QSL pool arrangements. The QSL Harvest Pool is also QSL's default pool, meaning that if a Wilmar Grower does not make a pricing nomination or does not price their full QSL pricing tonnage allocation, any unallocated tonnages will default into the 2017 QSL Harvest Pool.

QSL will also operate a US Quota Pool, with a mandatory tonnage allocation from each Wilmar Grower of up to 5%. Please read the QSL US Quota Pool Pricing Pool Terms available at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au) for full details.

### NO FEES

Unless otherwise stated in a product's Pricing Pool Terms, QSL does not charge direct fees for grower-managed pricing products or QSL-managed pools. At the end of the season all QSL pricing products will receive an allocation of revenues and costs associated with the export and marketing of sugar from the QSL Shared Pool.

The costs and revenues included in the QSL Shared Pool can be found on our website: [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au)

### PRICING LIMITS

How much Wilmar Growers can price with QSL in the 2017 Season is governed by:

- The amount of GEI Sugar the grower has nominated to be marketed by QSL – i.e. The amount you nominate to be marketed by QSL is the amount that you can price with QSL.
- The total Committed Sugar allocation limits as determined in your Cane Supply Agreement, Grower Pricing Agreement and QSL's Pricing Pool Terms.
- The credit limits applied by QSL.

### MORE INFORMATION

Additional information regarding QSL's products for Wilmar Sugar Growers are available on our website – [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au) – or by contacting your local QSL Grower Services Team representative:

**HERBERT RIVER** *Grower Relationship Officer*  
**Jonathan Pavetto** on 0428 664 057  
or email [jonathan.pavetto@qsl.com.au](mailto:jonathan.pavetto@qsl.com.au)

**BURDEKIN** *Grower Relationship Officer*  
**Rebecca Love** on 3004 4455  
or email [rebecca.love@qsl.com.au](mailto:rebecca.love@qsl.com.au)

**PROSERPINE & PLANE CREEK** *Grower Relationship Officer*  
**Kathy Zanco** on 0437 645 342  
or email [kathy.zanco@qsl.com.au](mailto:kathy.zanco@qsl.com.au)



## GROWER-MANAGED PRODUCTS

QSL's grower-managed pricing products allow you to make your own pricing decisions, either for the current season or for future seasons. Your choices are:

<b>QSL FIXED PRICE FORWARD CONTRACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017, 2018, 2019 SEASONS</li> </ul>
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Enables Growers to price their GEI Sugar up to 3 seasons ahead of the current season. Orders must be in a minimum or multiple of 6 lots (304.815 mt). 2017 Season pricing to be completed by **15 June 2017**. 2018 & 2019 Seasons' pricing is to be completed prior to the Pricing Declaration Date (usually 28 February of the relevant season). Growers using this option can choose an accelerated Advances program (up to 90% of the value of their completed pricing by the end of crushing) or the standard QSL Advances program.

<b>QSL TARGET PRICE CONTRACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017, 2018, 2019 SEASONS</li> </ul>
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Enables Growers to price their GEI Sugar during the current season plus up to 3 seasons ahead. Orders must be in a minimum of 10 metric tonne lots, with targets in \$10 increments (e.g. \$410, \$420, \$430). Pricing is to be completed by **15 June** in the year crushing is to commence for the relevant season. Growers using this option can choose an accelerated Advances program (up to 90% of the value of their completed pricing by the end of crushing) or the standard QSL Advances program.

<b>QSL IN-SEASON FIXED PRICE CONTRACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017 SEASON</li> </ul>
---	--

Enables Growers to price their GEI Sugar incrementally during the current season. Pricing must be completed by **16 April 2018**. Allocations must be in a minimum and multiple of 6 lots (304.815 mt). Individual pricing orders may be in a minimum of 1 lot (50.8025 mt) with separate pricing decisions able to be made for each individual futures position.

<b>QSL IN-SEASON TARGET PRICE CONTRACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017 SEASON</li> </ul>
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Enables growers to price GEI Sugar incrementally during the current season. Minimum/multiple allocation of 60 metric tonnes. Individual pricing orders are in a minimum of 10 metric tonnes in \$10 increments, with separate pricing decisions for each individual futures position. Pricing is to be completed by **16 April 2018**.

## QSL-MANAGED POOLS

QSL-managed pools aggregate tonnage from one or more participants, with QSL making all pricing decisions for the pool. Your choices are:

<b>QSL HARVEST POOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNCOMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• QSL DEFAULT POOL</li> <li>• 2017 SEASON</li> </ul>
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A QSL-managed pool designed to manage a limited amount of production variation throughout a season. All Growers who nominate QSL as their GEI Sugar Marketer must allocate to this pool 35% of their expected GEI Sugar for which QSL is to be the marketer. Growers are only paid for the final sugar delivered into this pool. If QSL Growers make no other pricing product allocation their GEI Sugar defaults into this pool.

<b>QSL ACTIVELY MANAGED POOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017 SEASON</li> </ul>
----------------------------------	--

A QSL-managed pool which targets the best return over the season by pricing more frequently as short-term market opportunities arise. The minimum tonnage required to participate in this pool is 10 metric tonnes.

<b>QSL GUARANTEED FLOOR POOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2017 SEASON</li> </ul>
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A QSL-managed pool which provides a guaranteed minimum return with the potential for higher returns across the season. The minimum tonnage required to participate in this pool is 50 metric tonnes. Growers participating in this pool will receive an accelerated Advances rate of 90% of the pool value by the end of the crush for the relevant season.

<b>QSL 2018 2-SEASON FORWARD POOL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMITTED TONNAGE</li> <li>• INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTION RISK</li> <li>• 2018 SEASON</li> </ul>
---------------------------------------	--

A QSL-managed pool for the 2018 Season, with pricing undertaken across the 2017 and 2018 Seasons. This pool aims to target the best return, with some pre-set price triggers. It has been designed for Growers who seek exposure across multiple seasons.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information contact:

Queensland Sugar Limited  
GPO Box 891 BRISBANE QLD 4001  
Telephone (07) 3004 4400  
Email [info@qsl.com.au](mailto:info@qsl.com.au) [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au)



This document contains information of a general or summary nature. Before making pricing decisions you should read the Pricing Pool Terms, which will be available on the QSL website. While all care is taken in the preparation of this document, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. It does not constitute financial product or investment advice, nor does it constitute a recommendation to invest in any of the pools described above or an offer or invitation with respect to any of the pools. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this document.

# Growers brainstorm water quality solutions

Supplied by Terrain NRM



More than 500 reef water quality ideas were gathered at workshops in Innisfail and Tully recently. The workshops were an important first step for the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (WTMIP), a new project being designed by the local community.

The Queensland Government is committing \$33m to initiatives that reduce nutrient and pesticide runoff into the Great Barrier Reef, and these workshops were the first steps in developing and refining actions that will be implemented between June 2017 and June 2020.

Terrain NRM's CEO Carole Sweatman says a critically important part of the project is the level of local buy-in.

"It means local solutions that suit farmer circumstances," she said.

"The huge turnout and high energy at the workshops proved that we're on the right track to achieving a grass roots design driven by people in the Johnstone and Tully catchment areas.

"We're proud of the role the WTMIP has in empowering community driven design.

"Prior to the workshops, very few attendees felt they could influence water quality project design in the past.

"As a result of the workshops, we saw a significant rise in the number of participants feeling like they have been heard and contributed to a project that will have a positive impact."

In the next phase of the project, a small number of diverse technical, industry scientific, community, government and traditional owner expertise came together over two days to assess the ideas and commence geographic prioritization.

This expert advice provides assistance to the WTMIP Project Panel in their challenging task to develop the overall project design.

Over the coming weeks, concepts that show real potential for water quality outcomes and community benefits will be checked for feasibility and cost effectiveness, and further developed.

"520 ideas coming together is exciting, and challenging!" said CANEGROWERS

Innisfail Chairman, Joe Marano, who also Chairs the Wet Tropics MIP project panel.

"The project has tight timeframes but we're looking forward to putting up a draft design that encompasses everything we're trying to achieve in the Tully and Johnstone catchments."

Growers are invited to attend the WTMIP Solutions Workshops. These will be 1/2 day events on 27 and 28 April in Mourilyan and Tully.

This is an opportunity for input and refinement of the draft program design and to enable the continued involvement by communities in each catchment.

- 27 April, Australian Sugar Heritage Museum, Mourilyan, 9am – 12pm
- 28 April, Tully Mill Rec Hall, Tully, 9am – 12pm

Interested in attending? Please register at [www.terrain.org.au/WTMIP](http://www.terrain.org.au/WTMIP) ■



# Pineapple disease threat to germination

Supplied by Crop Care

UNTIL roots develop, young cane shoots depend on the planted sett for nutrients, and later as a conduit from the sett roots to the shoot. So rotting of the sett during this early period can lead to the death or reduced vigour of young shoots.

The main disease affecting cane emergence is pineapple disease, which occurs in the soils of all sugarcane-producing areas of Australia, multiplying on decaying plant material.

Spore loads can be particularly high soon after sugarcane stubble is ploughed in.

Caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis paradoxa*, pineapple disease rots planted setts, reduces plant stand and subsequent yield potential, and at worst, causes total germination failure.

Ratoon crops can also be affected when the fungus invades the cut ends of standing stubble after harvest, inhibiting germination of the buds that give rise to the ratoon crop.

## CONDITIONS FOR THE DISEASE

Conditions that slow germination – cool soil, excess or deficiency of soil moisture, poor soil preparation, planting too deeply, and poor soil-sett contact – favour pineapple disease.

Setts affected by pineapple disease when split longitudinally have discoloured internal tissue – from water-soaked to red to red-black. The tell-tale sign is a smell like an over-ripe pineapple.

The disease severely retards bud germination, shoot development and early shoot vigour.

## SINKER V PROPICONAZOLE FUNGICIDE

2014 trials at Bundaberg and Woodford by Crop Care and SRA tested the efficacy of the fungicide Sinker against pineapple disease.

Sinker sprayed on setts at planting provided good control of the disease.

This means Sinker can be used to protect setts from both pineapple disease and sugarcane smut with a single application at planting.

2016. Crop Care conducted a large plot trial near Giru in the Burdekin in May 2016, comparing the efficacy of Sinker vs propiconazole fungicide on pineapple disease when applied at label rates.

Each treatment was applied to setts in the planting chute.

- *The Sinker treatment was highly effective – providing 1.32 times more shoots per metre of row than propiconazole-treated sugarcane setts.*
- *With propiconazole treatment, shoots per metre of row were not significantly better than untreated plots.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Proven strategies to prevent pineapple disease include:

1. using an effective registered fungicide – Sinker – to thoroughly cover the sett, particularly the cut ends and cracks;
2. planting when conditions favour rapid germination, including soil temperature above 18°C;
3. reducing the soil spore-load with a rotational crop or a bare fallow between cane crops;
4. avoiding plough-out/replant which greatly increases the risk of pineapple disease;
5. cutting billets long enough to have 2 to 3 nodes to protect against fungus spread and increase the likelihood of a strike;
6. avoiding crushing and damaging setts at harvest and cutting billets cleanly;
7. ensuring good tilth, moisture and soil-sett contact.



# Do we eat too many sweet treats?

By the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance Nutrition Team

It's Easter time, so lots of us will be eating more chocolate than usual, but as a nation do we eat too many sweet treats generally? Our latest National Nutrition Survey revealed we eat 'discretionary foods' of all kinds a bit too much.

## What are discretionary foods?

Foods and drinks like cakes, biscuits, pies, chips, pastries, confectionary, soft drinks and alcohol are called 'discretionary foods' by nutrition authorities.

They're also called 'sometimes foods' because they are recommended to be eaten sometimes and in small amounts.

These foods are typically low in nutrition but high in kilojoules, saturated fat, salt, sugar or alcohol.

We don't need to eat them but they add variety and enjoyment.

## How many discretionary foods do we eat?

On average, Australians over two years of age are consuming just over a third (35%) of our total daily kilojoules in the form of discretionary foods and drinks.

Teenagers aged 14-18 consume 41% - the highest proportion of any age group.

Eating too many discretionary foods is a problem for a number of reasons.

Firstly, they are replacing nutritious core foods we need to be eating for good health.

Secondly, they are contributing to weight gain and health problems because they contain more kilojoules than we need and more saturated fat, salt and sugar than is recommended.

## Which discretionary foods do we eat most?

Here is a table showing the top foods and drinks ranked by percentage of kilojoules contributed.

Alcohol tops the table (right), and there are a variety of both sweet and savoury foods.



## Differences across age groups:

- In general we eat less discretionary foods as we get older;
- Women eat proportionally less discretionary foods than men;
- Biscuits were the biggest contributor to discretionary foods in 2-3 year olds;
- Cakes and muffins contributed the most to the diets of primary school aged children;
- In teenagers confectionary and soft drinks were the top contributors;
- In adults over 19 years, alcohol was the top contributor at 6% of kilojoules.

Alcohol	4.8%
Cakes, muffins, scones and cake-type desserts	3.4%
Confectionery and cereal/nut/fruit/seed bars	2.8%
Pastries (sweet and savoury, eg pies)	2.6%
Sweet and savoury biscuits	2.5%
Soft drinks and flavoured mineral waters	1.9%
Fried potatoes (chips and crisps)	1.7%
Snack foods	1.5%
Frozen milk products (eg ice cream)	1.5%
Fried potatoes (chips and crisps)	1.3%

## How much sugar do Australians eat?

On average, Australians are eating 10.9% of kilojoules from sugars added by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, as well as honey, fruit juice and fruit juice concentrates.

The World Health Organisation recommends less than 10%, so we have a little work to do.

Eighty two percent of these sugars come from discretionary foods and drinks in Australia.

## How to eat less discretionary food

You will improve your diet with simple swaps from discretionary foods and drinks to everyday core foods and drinks.

When you do eat discretionary foods and drinks, enjoy them in small amounts. ■

Swap this...	...for this!
Regular beer	Low alcohol 'light' beer
Muffin/ banana bread	Raisin toast/ wholemeal toast with fruit spread
Chocolate bar	Nuts and dried fruit (trail mix)
Jelly babies	Grapes/ mango/ dried apricots
Cream biscuit	Wholegrain crispbread with ricotta and banana/ strawberries
Potato chips/ flavoured biscuits	Roasted nuts/cheese and wholegrain crispbread
Soft drink/ flavoured water	Plain water with slices of lemon/lime
Thickshake with ice cream	Flavoured light milk



*Women in Sugar*  
*Burdekin Inc*



*Women in  
Sugar  
Australia  
Conference  
2017*

TUESDAY -  
WEDNESDAY

**MAY 9-10**

CONFERENCE  
DINNER  
BUS TOUR

*Register by Friday 14 April*

Complete and return the Registration Form overleaf.

Phone: 0413 864 784 (Kimberley)  
Email: [womeninsugarburdekin@hotmail.com](mailto:womeninsugarburdekin@hotmail.com)

**CANEGROWERS HALL  
68 TENTH STREET  
HOME HILL**

# Registration Form

## Women In Sugar Australia Conference 2017 , MAY 9-10

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

WISA Member: Yes/No      Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation you represent: \_\_\_\_\_

### Events Attending

- Conference, Dinner & Bus Tour      (Members Price \$ 35.00 / Non-member \$65.00)
- Dinner Only      (Members Price \$ 20.00 / Non-member \$35.00)
- Bus Tour Only      (Members Price \$ 15.00 / Non-member \$30.00)

Dietary Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

### Partner Attendance

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Dinner & Bus Tour      (\$65.00)
- Dinner Only      (\$35.00)
- Bus Tour Only      (\$30.00)

Dietary Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Methods

- Cheque  
    Made payable to Women In Sugar Burdekin Inc
- Electronic Transfer  
    BSB: 014 500  
    Account No: 201909683  
    Ref: Your Name and WISA

**REGISTRATION FORMS MUST BE RETURNED BY FRIDAY 14 APRIL 2017**

Women In Sugar Burdekin  
PO Box 933  
AYR QLD 4807  
Email: [womeninsugarburdekin@hotmail.com](mailto:womeninsugarburdekin@hotmail.com)

For more information contact WISB President Kimberley Mallon on 0413 864 784

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Book online anytime of the day or night at [www.canegrowers.com.au](http://www.canegrowers.com.au) or email us at [ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au](mailto:ads@CANEGROWERS.com.au)

Next deadline is **Tuesday 18 April 2017.**

\* As a FREE service to CANEGROWERS members, *Australian Canegrower* will print suitable classified advertisements UP TO 5 LINES FREE, FOR ONE ISSUE ONLY. A charge of \$5.50 will apply for each extra line or part thereof. A charge will apply for advertising of non-cane growing activities. Advertisements must relate exclusively to cane farming activities, e.g. farm machinery etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at \$11 per line incl GST. Only pre-paid ads will be accepted.

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The first step in achieving a high yielding cane crop is a good strike and vigorous growth in the early stage of your crop.

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 Burdekin & Northern Region call Wally Ford 0417 937 722  
 Mackay Region call Noel Jensen 0438 595 325  
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Wanted to buy tractors in any condition  
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# Classifieds

## Mossman-Tully

Hooper land plane 12ft blade hyd angle and tilt vg cond best offer, Fiat 90-90 2wd open ROPS 4318 hrs vg cond \$16,000 inc gst, JD 3140 2wd open ROPS 5930 hrs vg cond \$11,000 inc gst. Ph 0409 720 972 Tully area

1 x 5 disc reversible Hodge plough, 1 x 3 row HBM plant cane cleaner, both newly painted and in very good condition. Ph 0488 633 777 4'6" plastic primary hood with liner for Toft 7000, 6" aluminium pipe couplings - complete - Southern Cross. Ph 4056 8158 (Cairns)

3 x JCB 2135 with 6 Tonne HBM Tipplers, Good Condition, \$44,000 each inc GST. Ph 0437 932 489 or 0427 337 601

600L Sylvester spray tank - good for parts - pump and control bank in GC, boom bent (Bellenden Ker). Ph 0427 142 102

Irrigator Upton 80, 4-inch soft hose, 1hp diesel, 40m boom. Ph 0427 142 102

## Herbert River-Burdekin

Slasher Field Quip Extreme 80, Galvanised Extra Heavy Duty Deck, 2 Land Wheels, 80 Inch Cut, As New Condition, Surplus to requirements. \$6,000 +GST Ph 0417 611 539

Nine-tine heavy duty ripper, category 3 - \$6000 inc gst. Burder Titan frontend loader with buckets, forks and hay spears. To suit an 895 Case International - \$8,000 inc gst. Ph 4777 2201 or 0417 638 424

250cfm Atlas Copco air compressor on wheels in good working order, serviced regularly, mid 80s model, \$12,000 negotiable on price. Ph 0456 041 428

Massey Ferguson 185 with Multi Power, Fully refurbished incl new paint job, gauges, seat steering wheel, injector pump, just serviced with all new filters and oils, linkage arms, tyres 80%, many other extras. \$9,000. Howard 60 inch rotary hoe, good working condition. \$1,500. Ph 0428 394 004

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AND PHOTOS?  
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## Mackay-Proserpine

Merrill Wholestick Plant Cutter with topper \$2750 inc GST cane plant trailers \$300 each inc GST. Ph Jason 0427 132 357

8' or 10' laser scoop in good or reasonable condition. Ph 4959 8974

Austoft Powerhauls x 2 (1998/1999), 1 x 9-tonne elevator, 1 x double 5-tonne side tipper. 4 complete wheel motors. Ph 4959 2260

DitchWitch R100 trenching machine with back hoe attachment. F10 Volvo 10-tonne tipper with tagalong trailer used to transport trencher. Ph 4959 2260

Ford TW10 4wd air cab 128hp tractor in good condition \$10,500 plus GST. Ph 0428 611 714

# Rainfall Report

brought to you by AustSafe Super

Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Year to date	Average rainfall (mm) January-March
	7 days to 9am 27.03.17	03.04.17		
	Mossman	81	0	1447
Mareeba AP	64	0	561	633
Cairns	17	9	986	1260
Mt Sophia	30	7	1750	1824
Babinda	50	0	1217	2173
Innisfail	58	8	1901	1763
Tully	39	0	1204	2088
Cardwell	130	3	1130	1302
Lucinda	158	0	1194	1258
Ingham	64	10	846	1195
Abergowrie	21	3	479	1079
Townsville	73	6	457	747
Ayr DPI	27	61	598	594
Proserpine	193	138	1118	787
Mirani	155	91	902	902
Mackay	309	471	1538	849
Sarina (Plane Ck)	470	772	2268	1028
Bundaberg	67	139	338	431
Childers South	83	205	476	330
Maryborough	23	128	288	494
Tewantin	49	155	718	691
Eumundi	94	141	609	709
Nambour	64	154	524	715
Woongoolba	61	135	439	491
Murwillumbah	59	160	844	641
Ballina	12	198	714	591
Woodburn	9	350	1057	491

## JOHNNY FARMING COMPANY

### New Hydraulic Heavy Duty

#### OFFSETS

3 metre width, 28 discs, All bath bearings \$11,000 plus GST (\$12,100 incl GST) Other size offsets available are 1.8m, 2.2m, 2.5m, 3m & 3.4metres. 3 point linkage offsets available also



### New Heavy Duty

#### SLASHERS

2.1 metres width \$3,300 incl GST Other sizes available are 1.2m, 1.5m & 1.8m

**Johnny Farming Company**  
Phone (07) 4952 2577 or 0412 535 887 (John)  
or 0407 638 674 (Andrew)  
133 Schmidtke Road Mackay Qld 4740



The industry super fund for rural and regional Australia.

Zero indicates either no rain or no report was sent. These rainfall figures are subject to verification and may be updated later. Weather forecasts, radar and satellite images and other information for the farming community can be accessed on [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au). Weather report provided by the Bureau of Meteorology's Commercial Weather Services Unit.

## Bundaberg–Rocky Point

Complete planting outfit. Cane Country planter. Bones plant cutter. Bonel 2 fan stripper with topper & 4 trailers all in good condition for sale \$4,500 + gst. Ph 0439 707 043

Land leveller 3.5m x 3.5m solid construction \$5,000 + GST. Quinco Fertiliser Distributor - discs, coulter, rippers rollers stainless steel Drive. \$10,000 + GST. Ph 4159 8340 or 0403 598 345

J I Case 1194 tractor 49hp 12 forward speeds 4 reverse, 2 speed PTO, power steering, 3 point linkage, drawbar 3000hrs approx \$7,700. 4 row Janke precision Planter with fert boxes with plates for soy beans corn peanuts etc. \$5,900. Approx 10,500 Isis Mill shares offers. Ph 0418 874 615

2014 6170R with premium Deere options, front suspension, cab suspension, pneumatic trailer brake system, extra 155L/min hydraulic capacity, 3 SCV, direct drive transmission, Bluetooth premium stereo, premium air seat with command arm, 3-point linkage with hook ends, front and rear fenders extn, very little PTO work. Michelin tyres are in good condition. \$115,000 inc. gst. Ph 0423 905 148

## Wanted

Wanted to buy: Subsurface fertiliser applicator. Ph 0427 403 833

4X4 open cab tractor 60-100hp in G/C. Any brand considered. Budget of \$12,000 max. Ph 0439 509 519

130-140HP 4WD Tractor, prefer Fiat or Ford. Ph 0409 050 502

Cross elevator for Austoft Power Haul. Ph 0414593105

CANE WANTED for 2017 and subsequent seasons. Tully area. Shawn Ph 0418 782 815  
TRACTOR TYRES of all sizes. 0418 775 698 all hours.

## Positions Vacant

Experienced farm hand wanted for Calen area. Position involves general farm work such as cultivation, planting, spraying and machinery maintenance. C and HR licence required. Permanent position for the person who meets requirements. Contact Keith 4958 8248.

Caretaker required Murwillumbah (Northern Rivers). Position would suit retired person on a pension. Applicant must be fit, active, reliable, honest and self-motivated. Light duties in exchange for permanent accommodation. Enquiries please call 0403 035 015.

Experienced cane harvester operator; 7700 full track; 2017 crushing season. Upper Pioneer Valley area; must have mechanical knowledge and hill experience. 30,000t plus. Apply in writing: PO Box 31 FINCH HATTON QLD 4756. More information: 0419 260 879  
Sugarcane harvester and bin driver required for Condong Mill area. Machinery, maintenance and management skills required. Position for 2017 season and beyond, with prospect of full-time Harvester Operator position. Ph Bernard 0428 298 618.

A Northern NSW Harvesting Co-Op is seeking a Manager/Harvester driver for the 2017 season and into the future. Mechanical experience is essential. Ph Jim 0416086227 or Ben 0402421565

## Work Wanted

BUNDABERG area seeking work in upcoming harvest season, semi retired with various machinery operating experience over many years in earthmoving, broad acre farming and equipment maintenance. No cane experience but I am self motivated with a positive attitude and a clean safety record. Licence class UD HC. Contact Dave 0428717893 North Bundaberg.

Looking for work in plant breeding, plant disease identification, pest management, soil testing, landscape restoration. Completed Bachelor Degree Food & Agricultural Science (Nov 2016). Mature age, seeking work in the BUNDABERG area. LR licence, Agricultural Chemicals Certified, chainsaw, forklift. Resume/references available. Ph 4155 2909 or email kevin.aldcroft@cqumail.com

NORTHERN RIVERS: Looking for a driving job preferably HC truck (Mud Truck). Licences Class 5 open. Experience with Elevated Tipper Trailers and Side tipper truck. 66 years of age. Clean record. Good health. Prefer not to be hard in. Michael Hansby email startrucker1@gmail.com

CAIRNS REGION: Driving position wanted in the upcoming season. I have a HC Open licence. Happy to sit MC if needed. Work wanted around the Palm Cove Cairns area. Mature hardworking and reliable. I have experience in livestock driving (NZ) Please call Kirsty on 0401481051

ANY DISTRICT: Looking for work as a truck driver for the 2017 harvest. High Risk Work Licence, White card, Bluecard, Front-end loader and Heavy Vehicle Driver Licence. Finish grape harvest end April. Wife also seeking work, keen and willing to learn. Offers greatly appreciated. Ph Rudy Capazzo 0427300548 or email rudy.rct@icloud.com

MARYBOROUGH: Mature gent seeking driving position for upcoming harvest season. Have recently relocated and purchased home in Maryborough Qld. and keen to start work Have MC license Familiar with haul out (Burdekin Qld) Steve King - 0427775660

BURDEKIN REGION - Experienced farmhand seeking full-time work or haulout job for 2017. Keen, honest and reliable hard worker with HR license, forklift license, white card and chemical accreditation. Ph. 0417682797 / 47822064 or email John jgreco127@yahoo.com.au

MARYBOROUGH to CHILDERS: Looking for work as a truck driver during the harvest season. Approx 4 years experience operating heavy vehicles. Qualified light vehicle mechanic. Call Mitchell Hastie 0435872186

BUNDABERG area. Seeking Cane Harvesting jobs for upcoming season 2017. Hard worker and quick learner. Experience driving trucks/tractors. HC license. Concreter by trade, managed a small farm with stock, mechanically minded, willing to give anything a go. Forklift Licence, Heavy Articulated Licence, Manual Drivers Licence, White Card. Ph Mark 0409951568

## Property

MARYBOROUGH: Pocket area. Cane farm for sale. 60 acres, 40 acres in cane, fully irrigated, 2 houses, sheds etc. Ph. 4122 2295

HALIFAX: Cane land for sale. Taylors Beach Road. 27.6ha. Freehold. Genuine enquiries phone 4777 7277

INGHAM Cane farm for sale. Hawkins Creek. Total area 48.3ha. CPA 46.6ha. Shed, electricity & water. Genuine enquiries phone 0407 635 175

ABERGOWRIE: Cane farm on Tarakan Rd, 270 acres freehold. Genuine enquiries please phone 4777 4633 or 0408 608 664

Farm for sale (Bellenden Ker), 40km south of CAIRNS. 80ha–40ha under cane. 5brm home + big shed. Around \$800K. Ph 0427 142 102

WALKERSTON area: Cane farm for sale, fully irrigated. 42.5ha cane 3.6ha grazing. Ph 0418 185 663



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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.

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