

# THE BILLET

March 2021

MACKAY & PLANE CREEK

**Positive  
signs for  
2021**

**Going into  
bat for  
irrigators**

**Reef report  
review win**



**Meet Jo and Joe, gold standard growers**



March 2021

# THE BILLET

**THE BILLET** is a monthly publication produced by CANEGROWERS Mackay on behalf of nearly 1000 sugarcane farming members in Mackay and Plane Creek districts.

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS

**THE BILLET** is free to all farming members of CANEGROWERS Mackay. There is strength in numbers. If you know a cane farmer who would benefit from being a member, please ask them to sign up for membership today by ringing the Growers Services Team on 4944 2600.

Membership fees are based on a rate per tonne of cane supplied during a crushing season. They are reviewed annually by elected grower representatives. Some benefits of being a member include:

- a friendly voice (not a computer) at the end of the phone to help you overcome an obstacle in running your business
- automatic crop insurance cover for accidental fire damage
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- the latest sugar industry news and information through **THE BILLET** and the statewide **AUSTRALIAN CANEGROWER**
- free classified advertising
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# Chairman's Message



Kevin Borg

## Positive signs for 2021

In the central region we are proving to be lucky weather-wise. As I speak to my fellow QCGO Board members from other regions it has become apparent that in the north of the state continuous rain is beginning to take its toll on their crop while south of us a lack of rain has certainly made its mark leaving those growers to contend with dry conditions.

Our weather, although being quite mild for a monsoon season, thus far has been kind to us with intermittent falls setting the crop up with good growth rates. At this early stage we hope we can see the wet season pass without any inclement weather.

In recent times we have seen strong rallies in sugar prices. The 2021 price movement in the last weeks has been welcome and hopefully we can see them strengthen even further in the near future.

Choice in marketing has given us that opportunity to lock in these strong prices when they become available. I encourage growers to undertake the Pricing Essentials course developed by CANEGROWERS with funding from TAFE which is on offer this year to improve

understanding of business and risk management.

CANEGROWERS Mackay has been working closely with CANEGROWERS Queensland to provide a submission to the Queensland Government about the draft standard conditions for new or expanded commercial cropping and horticulture activities. These unnecessary proposed regulations if not amended will be an added layer of red tape on top of the existing Reef regulations. It is CANEGROWERS' view that the existing regulation already puts in place enough protection for maintaining water quality in greenfield projects.

The latest release of another Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Report Card has showed significant

improvements in water quality for 2018/19 in many catchments as a result of the many projects that growers are involved with on their farms. Unfortunately, these Report Cards grossly underreport our efforts in the adoption of Best Management Practice. On the bright side our relentless lobbying of both the State and Federal Governments for a review of the Paddock to Reef program which monitors water quality has been successful. There are moves from the governments to begin a review as soon as possible on the methodology and the management practice target itself.

We recently had a visit to our region by the Federal Trade Minister Dan Tehan. We feel that Dan's interest in our industry increased at this meeting. We discussed the need for sugar to be included

in Free Trade Agreements and the dispute with India over their illegal subsidies, now before the WTO. There is no better way to host a Minister, State or Federal, than to have them on farm where they can see the operation first hand. We feel the Minister came away from the meeting with a greater understanding of our industry and the issues we face. I would like to thank the Federal Member for Dawson, George Christensen for coordinating the Minister's visit.

*(Below) Federal Trade Minister Dan Tehan met with elected members on the Camilleris' farm in February. (R to L: Kerry Latter, CANEGROWERS Mackay CEO, Kevin Borg, CANEGROWERS Mackay Chairman, Serg Berardi and Frank Perna, Board members, Andre Camilleri, Mackay Area Committee member, and his father, Victor, the Minister, CANEGROWERS Qld Chairman, Paul Schembri and the Member for Dawson, George Christensen.*



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# We've got your back

## Insider's knowledge of the mills

### Introducing

#### Frank Perna

- Director, MCL Board
- Member, Mackay Area Committee
- Chairman, Mackay Area Productivity Services
- Member, MCL Cane Audit, Environment and Sustainability and Finance committees.

If you are going to have someone represent you on milling issues it is handy to have someone on your team who has an insider's knowledge of mills.

Frank Perna has worked much of his life in the local mills as a mechanical draftsman. That includes Marian, Pleystowe, Pioneer, Invicta, Racecourse, Farleigh and Plane Creek mills.

After finishing secondary school at St Patricks and the Mackay Christian College, Frank obtained an Associate Diploma in Mechanical Engineering while undertaking an apprenticeship at Marian Mill as a fitter and machinist. Over the years as a contracted draftsman, he's drawn up a host of milling layouts, starting with a pen and a board but graduating to computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) software. So, if you want to know anything about the milling process talk to Frank.

It is a useful knowledge to have as a grower. If a mill says they had trouble with the slowness of their crushing rate because they couldn't get their cooling tower built in time, Frank will be able to tell you whether they are fair dinkum or whether they are talking through their hats.

"There's a lot of stuff that is integral to the milling process and can go wrong quite easily," said Frank.

That's not to say that Frank

considers himself a miller. He grew up on the family cane farm at Hampden with seven siblings and has always loved being around tractors and farm machinery, working the ground and improving production, and pitching in at harvest time. He met and married Susan in 1993 and began farming full time in 1997 at the family farm at Yalboroo.

He believes that representing the growers in mill negotiations is his most important role as an elected member.

Frank followed in his father, Tony's, footsteps and became an elected member in the early 2000s.

At the time he was once again working off farm. An elected member for the North Coast branch was needed after Ian Wallace retired. The Perna family trust had the Yalboroo farm in the northern coast region so Frank stuck up his hand and was accepted. He later became a member of the Mackay Area Committee and an MCL Board Director.

### Community minded

Frank has always been involved in community work. He was the P&C President for nine years out of the 11 that his four children - Mitchell, Jordan, Andrea and Benjamin - attended Hampden State School where he himself had attended and his father before him.

As an MCL Board Member he is also the QSL grower representative and MAPS Chairman. In the latter role he has been instrumental in trialing the Agtrix record keeping program and is proud of the role MAPS has played in bringing it into the industry. He encourages growers who haven't tried it to get some one-on-one help from MAPS to get started saying it doesn't

take long to pick up and offers business management advantages.

He is also Chairman of the Mackay Show Cane Subcommittee which each year organises the cane competition (back on in force this year so remember to get your best cane organised!).

When *The Billet* visited, Frank was being pursued by the Red Cross for his regular plasma donation.

### Don't be a sideliner

"I'm not one of these people who can sit on the sidelines and whinge and complain. That doesn't achieve a lot. If people think they can do a better job and have some solutions to the issues we all face then they should put their hand up and get involved.

"People who shoot bullets, whether their own - or worse, the ones given to them by others, don't have to worry too much because they are not taking responsibility for what they say or do. They are not accountable to anyone.

"I'd rather follow the example of the people prepared to step up in our industry. People like Paul Schembri, Kevin Borg, Greg Plath, Tony Ross... the list goes on - they've taught me a lot about what real leadership looks like. Growers should be very proud to have them on their team.

"The sugar industry has come a long way but we still need to provide a united force for growers. While things could well prove to be rosy at the moment if you do not remain united you're just asking to be picked off. The mills and the government would prefer to speak to one group rather than 20 different groups because that way you can actually get things done."

Frank says the two major challenges in the district are

keeping land under cane and getting young people into the industry: "Sometime soon mills and growers will have to get together and work out a system where older growers can transition out of the industry with dignity, respect and comfort while enabling young growers to reach their farming goals."

Frank has a strong empathy for growers who must work jobs off the farm to make ends meet.

There have been a few times when Frank has had to return to a job off farm himself. He worked in the mills until 1997 then full time on the farm until 1999 when drought and orange rust slashed production and forced him back to a job in town. While in 2016 the total tonnage across four farms was 44,000 tonnes the following dry seasons saw that drop to under 30,000 tonnes and Frank went back to being a contractor.

"I take my hat off to young growers who have bought a farm but have to stay working off farm to help them pay it off. Not everyone has family backing and it's a tough haul. There's a lot of hard work and long days in that," he said.

### Good future in sugar

But there's a good future in sugar, he emphasises.

"Unlike most other crops if you get a bad storm, a dry period or bad frost, cane is resilient and you will still cut something, even if it lodges. Mackay has a highly variable climate but sugar is something that grows really well here.

"Economically, it is still a better deal to be in sugar. If you talk to any bank manager they will tell you the same.

"Thanks to the past work of CANEGROWERS and governments with foresight, the sugar industry is well set up with established systems, processes and markets. Now with forward

pricing it's a whole new ball game for growers. There's a lot of leasing going on at the moment which shows confidence. Growers who want a standard lease should get in touch with CANEGROWERS Mackay who can do the paperwork without charging what a solicitor would."

But while growers no longer need to get on a protest train to George Street in Brisbane like Frank's father, Tony, did in the 1980s, major industry challenges are still there and must be addressed.

"If it wasn't for CANEGROWERS lobbying the politicians about India the current negotiations before the WTO would not have gone ahead. A new cane supply agreement with Nordzucker has to be worked out and an effective united body with expertise at hand will be necessary. It's work that will bring benefits for all of us.

"People think they can just opt out of CANEGROWERS but when the crunch comes and your back's against the wall - who are you going to call?"

He understands that growers are busier than ever and this is one of the reasons why branch meeting numbers have been declining.

"People have a lot going on in their lives. The last thing they probably feel like doing when they get home from work is to go to another meeting.

"But face to face catch ups are important. Meetings are best not done over Zoom. Growers must tell us what they want to be supported. If it's a sausage sizzle in a shed once a month we're happy to get it organised."

Frank encourages growers to call him: "That's what I'm here for. If I don't have an answer for you on the spot I will chase it up for you." Contact Frank Perna on E: faperna@bigpond.com or T: 0418 765 243.



Frank Perna with his family: (L to R): Andrea, Mitchell, wife Susan, Frank, Jordan and Ben Perna.



## Plane Creek Area Committee ANNUAL INFORMATION MEETING

1.30 PM

FRIDAY 12 MARCH  
SARINA BOWLING CLUB  
1 Patroyce Ct, Sarina

Special guest speaker: Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS QLD

RSVP: [julie\\_watson@canegrowers.com.au](mailto:julie_watson@canegrowers.com.au)

## Trials show how to reduce ag chem runoff



SRA Adoption Officer Steph Roberts talks about the trial results with growers at the workshop.

Applying herbicides late in the season where there is increased chance of heavy rain carries the risk of the chemicals being washed away in runoff. The risk of such herbicide losses can be reduced through the selection of chemicals less susceptible to runoff. This was demonstrated in a recent trial undertaken by Sugar Research Australia in the Plane Creek district.

The results of the trial were presented to growers at a workshop on Friday 12 February at the trial site paddock on PCPSL Chairman, Malcolm Langdon's farm.

"We set up a trial comparing two residual controls and an enhanced knockdown application, with the aim of measuring water quality and effectiveness of weed control. By chance, a storm event occurred shortly after the treatments were applied. This

heavy rain event allowed us to compare the performance of the herbicides under these weather conditions," said SRA Adoption Officer Steph Roberts.

The trial involved three commonly used herbicides for the control of broadleaf weeds and vines - Bobcat i-maxx, Spark and Valor. All were combined with paraquat.

Treatments were repeated twice across five dual rows each of 470 m in length. Bobcat i-maxx (imazapic/hexazinone) was applied at 3.8 L/ha for residual control; Spark (imazapic) at 400 mL/ha, also for residual control and Valor 500 WG (flumioxazin) at 120 g/ha for enhanced knockdown.

The treatments were applied on 8 December 2021 with a storm on 10 December resulting in 91 mm of rain and subsequent runoff from the paddock.

Water sampling detected relatively high concentrations of imazapic and hexazinone (Spark and Bobcat i-maxx) in runoff water, whereas there was little flumioxazin (Valor).

In addition, the weed control nine weeks after the storm event was found to be better in the Valor treatment as compared to the Spark and Bobcat i-maxx treatments.

"The results are most likely due to the chemical characteristics of the actives in the herbicides. Imazapic (Spark) and imazapic/hexazinone (Bobcat i-maxx) are more soluble and mobile than flumioxazin (Valor), therefore more susceptible to being washed away in heavy rainfall events shortly after being applied, as happened in this trial," said Adoption Officer, Matt Schembri.

"The key message from this work is that for late season herbicide applications, the

risk of chemical losses due to heavy rain events can be minimized by selecting herbicides with actives less prone to being washed away by rainfall," he said.

In a separate trial, three treatments of the cane grub control insecticide, imidacloprid (Confidor Guard, Nuprid 350SC) were applied at maximum label rates: treatment one - 100-125 mm depth with closed slot; treatment two - 40 mm depth with closed slot; treatment three - no imidacloprid applied.

The water quality results showed concentrations of imidacloprid in the runoff water was higher from rows where the application was at 40 mm depth rather than 100-125 mm in depth. The result confirmed what was expected - i.e. the loss of imidacloprid to runoff can be greatly minimised by applying the chemical at the recommended depths of 100-125 mm.

"That means growers must take the time and care to apply imidacloprid at a consistent depth of 100 to 125 mm across the paddock. Growers who want more information or help with achieving this on their farms should contact their local SRA, MAPS, PCPSL or Farmacist staff," said Steph Roberts.

The project, Cane to Creek Mackay Whitsunday, is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, with support from SRA, MAPS and PCPSL. Trial results: email: [MSchembri@sugarresearch.com.au](mailto:MSchembri@sugarresearch.com.au)



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation

## More help with ag chem management

Additional funding from the Australian Government's Reef Trust, via the Great Barrier Reef Foundation has allowed the Project Bluewater to expand, giving the opportunity for more growers in the Pioneer and Plane Creek catchments to be involved.

Project Bluewater is a government-funded project which has seen 35 local growers gaining assistance to improve their chemical management.

The project provides growers with a tailored chemical plan which includes maps of weed pressure, grub pressure, active ingredient plans, drainage, slope, and buffer zones.

The maps help growers understand their buffer zones and runoff areas when applying certain chemicals, especially paddocks near creeks.

Chemical active plans for each crop growth stage are developed with the grower. This effectively helps the grower select and budget for chemicals for the season.

Growers are given spray record books to help with record-keeping.

Project Bluewater also provides spray application workshops and incentives for spray rig upgrades, such as nozzles, controllers, wind monitors, mixing hoppers, spray water testing and pressure gauges.

To become involved in Project Bluewater contact Adam Keilbach at Farmacist on 0409 260 233.

This project is funded through the Australian Government's Reef Trust in partnership with the Great barrier Reef Foundation.



Warren Males talks with (l to r) Marice Perna, Judy Thatcher, Therese Russell, Jill Fox and Mary Wallace.

## Tariffs talk

The new electricity tariffs for irrigation pumps which will replace existing tariffs on 30 June were the subject of the February General Meeting of CANEGROWERS Mackay's Network.

Warren Males, Head of Economics at CANEGROWERS Queensland was guest speaker.

Warren's comprehensive Powerpoint presentation explained existing tariffs, what the new tariffs will be, and the rates for the

peak, off peak and control loads. It is available on the CANEGROWERS Mackay website: [www.mackaycanegrowers.com.au](http://www.mackaycanegrowers.com.au)

For more information visit [www.ergon.com.au](http://www.ergon.com.au) and search for small business tariffs - tariff facts.

To chat to someone at Energy Queensland ring:

- **Brian Elmer Ph: 0467 774 409 (technical issues)**
- **Bonson Lam Ph: 0418 714 463 (tariff issues).**

The next General Meeting will be held on 23 April 2021.

More information will be

provided in the next issue of *The Billet*. Suggestions for future speakers would be welcome.

## WISA in May

CANEGROWERS Mackay Network will host the 2021 Women In Sugar Australia conference on Monday-Tuesday, 10-11 May 2021.

Please contact Ann Jansen if you'd like to attend.

Telephone: 0402 248 462

Email: [aajansen78@gmail.com](mailto:aajansen78@gmail.com)

## New QCS in-season pricing mechanism

Growers can now manage their individual in-season GEI sugar pricing with QCS' new 2021 Season pool, Grower-Managed In-Season Pricing (GMISP).

The new mechanism allows growers to manage their Growers' Economic Interest in Sugar (GEI) sugar price risk during the season (less their US Quota allocation), providing greater control over pricing outcomes.

QCS General Manager Brent Casey said that like all QCS pricing products, "the GMISP mechanism is an easy-to-use, pricing option.

"We believe GMISP is the most straightforward self-managed product available from a GEI sugar marketer," said Mr Casey.

"Our aim is always to make managing your own pricing outcomes to suit your

business as uncomplicated as possible, and GMISP fits this bill perfectly," Mr Casey noted.

"Growers have been able to set their own forward pricing targets for many years with QCS' Grower Individual Pricing Orders (GIPO) forward pricing option, and they can now also set pricing levels during the season using GMISP."

Mr Casey said it was important for growers considering managing their own in-season pricing risk to be aware that they would be the decision maker for 100 per cent of the sugar nominated to GMISP.

"This means you are responsible for all risk management for the sugar in the pool, including the management of price risk, production risk and delivery risk," Mr Casey advised.

"As always, our Grower Services Officer, Arthur Douglas, is only a phone call away and can talk you through how GMISP works, including the eligibility criteria. If GMISP sounds like it could be of interest to you, don't hesitate to give Arthur a call."



Contact QCS Grower Services Officer Arthur Douglas on T: 0447 534 791 or E: [ad@qcs.com.au](mailto:ad@qcs.com.au). Growers can also call QCS on 1800 774 246.

# Grower Profile

## Top production & BMP accredited: gold standard growers

When it comes to cane farming Joe and Josephine Quattromani will tell you that while weather is a large contributor, and luck plays a part, it is timing that is the real key to improved results. That's not just for increased production and CCS but also when it comes to setting the farm up to demonstrate its environmental credentials and sustainability.

The couple, who are third generation (Jo) and second generation (Joe) cane farmers from the Habana and Alligator Creek areas respectively, have owned their farm at Ilbilbie for more than 30 years, initially starting off in a partnership. In December they were presented with an award for the top producing farm in the Ilbilbie area at the Plane Creek Productivity Services Limited's annual Productivity Awards. Last month they passed their audit and were Smartcane BMP accredited.

In a good year the farm produces 7,600 tonnes cane on 85 ha with a CCS above average for the district at more than 14. They grow the

varieties, Q183, Q208, Q240 and have started growing the newer variety, Q253.

Joe has a dunder contracting business which gives him the opportunity to visit a number of farms where he is able to see what variety is doing well under what conditions.

But running the dunder business also keeps him extremely busy. Despite this, his cane comes first and he still goes out of his way to ensure that farm operations are done at the time that the cane dictates.

The farm is set up to dual row at 1.85 m spacing. Dual row does not guarantee increased production but it means less travel up and down the paddock for less soil compaction. With more cane per row the harvester must work more slowly and there is less opportunity for running over the cane stool because of better row spacing for the wheel tracks.

"You can see that the stool is not getting damaged like it used to and I think that's why I am getting viable ratoons for

longer. We go to six ratoons here," said Joe.

Some of the blocks have been laser levelled to prevent water logging and some are being irrigated using a high pressure winch. Runoff flows away from the local creek.

The farm has no sodium issues and grubs are the only pest problem. Joe applies Confidor using a stool splitter for this, ensuring it is to the right depth with enough cover over it as directed by SRA.

Ten to 15 hectares are fallowed for six months each year and at the moment that means simply trash blanketed. However, Joe would like to try soybeans as a green manure crop. He will borrow the planter from Plane Creek Productivity Services (PCPSL) when the time comes. He hopes the soybean crop will decrease the amount of nitrogen needed for the following plant crop.

Dunder is, of course, the farm's principal fertiliser treatment with granular fertiliser only added at planting and covered over. In addition

to impressive production results, the Quattromanis are committed to showing the community that growers are doing the right thing environmentally.

They began their BMP journey some years ago but became "fair dinkum" with Jessica Turchet's help over the past two years.

"It's a bit daunting," said Jo. "We haven't had much to change as far as farm practices are concerned but writing up the records in the right format was challenging until we got Jessica on the team to show us what to do. Writing up the records at the right time is hard when we are so very busy doing the farming operations. A job off farm, too, doesn't make it any easier."

Jo says she has "dabbled" in computers for more than 30 years. They operated a harvesting contract for 25 years. And then Jo did the administration for a large harvesting group, Progressive Harvesting Group, for a number of years. It seemed like a natural fit for Jo to pick up the Smartcane BMP record keeping, transferring Joe's hand written records into the computer. However, Joe does the more complex chemical records, using a CANEGROWERS Mackay chemicals record book.

What changes that needed to be made were inexpensive and demonstrated Joe's ingenuity. The farm chemical shed is concrete floored but in order to add bunding as extra protection around the stored chemicals Joe bought square PVC down piping from a local hardware store and attached it around the edge - simple and effective. Jo and Joe's goal has always been to farm and to farm well and sustainably. CANEGROWERS Mackay congratulates them on achieving their goals.





Pioneer Valley Water Chairman and CANEGROWERS Mackay Board Director, Joseph Borg makes an impassioned plea on behalf of irrigators.

## Soaring water and electricity prices on the agenda

Steven Ford, General Manager, Pioneer Valley Water, in February hosted the first of what will be several round table discussions involving stakeholders from across the region to brainstorm solutions to increased water and electricity prices from SunWater and Ergon.

“If the government keeps putting up their water prices and their electricity prices then farmers can’t sustain it,” Steven said.

“In 2008 water for Pioneer Valley irrigators cost \$300,000. This year it will be close to \$1 million. Over the past 13 years Pioneer Valley water users have dropped their water use more than 50 per cent.”

Joseph Borg, Chairman of Pioneer Valley Water and CANEGROWERS Mackay Area Committee said it was purely because growers could not afford to pump the water.

“Inflated water and power costs are taking a toll on their yields. The region’s crop has reduced by 25 per cent as a result of the prices,” he said.

“With further rises on the horizon how much damage is it going to do to the local crop?”

“What the government needs

to understand is that it doesn’t just affect the growers.

“For every \$1 produced on a sugar cane farm its flow-on effect to the Mackay community is around \$6.40.”

Mr Borg said it was great to see the Member for Dawson, George Christensen and the Member for Mirani, Steven Andrews attend the round table.

“It was very disappointing that the Member for Mackay Julianne Gilbert didn’t think it was an issue important

enough for her to attend,” he said.

The State Government has frozen irrigation prices until the end of this financial year. It committed to cheaper irrigation prices during last year’s election campaign.

From 1 July some fruit and vegetable growers will get half price water while other irrigators will get a 15 per cent discount.

CANEGROWERS Mackay industry leaders and the State Opposition are calling for the

State Government to come to the sugar district and meet with farmers.

At a meeting with the Shadow Minister for Water, Deb Frecklington, Shadow Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Sam O’Connor and Shadow Minister for Child Protection and the Member for Whitsunday Amanda Camm, Joseph Borg made an impassioned plea for lower electricity and water prices for irrigators across the board, regardless of what they grew.



Steven Ford, General Manager, Pioneer Valley Water (right) and Joseph Borg, Chairman of Pioneer Valley Water (centre), put the case for irrigators to Deb Frecklington, Shadow Minister for Water, Sam O’Connor, Shadow Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef (left), and Amanda Camm, Shadow Minister for Child Protection and the Member for Whitsunday (right).



## Governments agree to Paddock to Reef review

In good news for growers, CANEGROWERS has been successful in being heard by the Queensland and Federal Governments about the unfair process used to judge the industry's commitment to improving water quality.

The Queensland Government's Office of the Great Barrier Reef has agreed to review the Management Targets and the Paddock to Reef methodology which is used for the Reef Water Quality Report Cards, including the 2019 Reef Report Card released last month.

The terms of reference for the joint Queensland Government/Federal Government review are expected to be announced shortly.

CANEGROWERS argues that the Reef Report Cards lack credibility because the criteria are at odds with the industry's Best Management Practices (e.g. Six Easy Steps) and fails to acknowledge the large number of growers who have adopted these.

This is despite the fact that the Queensland Government has supported Smartcane BMP as the industry's sustainability program since its inception and that the program aligns with worldwide sugar industry sustainability standards of both Bonsucro and a major

customer, Coca-Cola Amatil.

Mick Quirk, Manager for Environment and Sustainability at CANEGROWERS discussed the state of play with growers as Guest Speaker at the Plane Creek Productivity Services Limited's AGM late last year (*photo below*).

"Regulations were intensified in 2019 based on and justified by the Reef Water Quality Report Cards. You'll remember the Environment Minister told us we were not changing fast enough and that the industry needed to do more.

"However, growers have made significant changes to their farming practices over recent decades but little of this is accounted for in the Government modeling that assesses the industry's risk to water quality.

"We know that any effects of water quality from farms is largely restricted to inshore areas. This has not prevented the Federal and Queensland Governments overstating the potential influence of cane farms on the health of the reef lagoon as a whole. The latter is mainly influenced by climate change and severe weather events.

"Be that as it may, huge amounts of money, policies,

programs and government credibility are resting on managing what is happening in the catchments.

"This is all based on how much dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN), how much sediment and how much agricultural chemicals are going from the rivers through the catchments each year.

"As far as the impact on the Great Barrier Reef is concerned they are looking at what happens based on the annual loads that come through. Their targets for diminishing these loads are based on what they estimate to be the 'anthropogenic' or human derived impact, that is, since European settlement.

"Based on this Reefwide assessment with regard to DIN and water quality they want to see an 80 per cent reduction on the benchmark level of 2009.

"To date, the models estimate we have achieved about a 20-25 per cent reduction. But this is based just on data from farms involved in recent reef incentive programs. It does not account for past changes in practices that were unrelated to reef funding.

"The water quality targets seem totally unrealistic. We'd

have to reduce nitrogen rates by 60 per cent or more to get even close to them.

"What the Reef programs define as best practice would threaten the viability of growers and mills. To meet their definition, N rates would need to reduce by up to 30 per cent below Six Easy Steps recommendations. This is not economic and unsurprisingly is not happening.

"But we also know that, according to Government modelling, even a 30 per cent reduction in N rates would not go anywhere near to achieving the water quality target.

"Making sure government policy is evidence-based is our biggest challenge.

"We're complaining, we're frustrated, but the problem is not going to go away so we need to take ownership of it.

"The industry must come up with its own plan that we are happy with, and bring the government along with us, using our Smartcane BMP program and developing targets that are consistent with a viable cane industry."

The review of the Management Targets and the Paddock to Reef methodology is but one positive step on this journey, concluded Mick.





# QSL Grower-Managed Pricing Options

QSL's growers have until 30 April to decide which grower-managed pricing options they'd like to use for the coming season.

## Target Price Contract

**Nomination period:** Until 30 April in the year of delivery

**Minimum tonnage:** 10 tonnes for nominations and orders\*

- Price your GEI Sugar during the current season and up to three seasons forward.
- Orders target a weighted season average in \$5 increments (e.g. \$400, \$405, \$410).

## Defaulting Target Price Contract – NEW

**Nomination period:** Until 15 April in the year of delivery

**Minimum tonnage:** 10 tonnes for nominations and orders

- Price your GEI Sugar up to three season forward.
- Orders target a weighted season average in \$5 increments (e.g. \$400, \$405, \$410).

## Grower Floor Price Contract – NEW

**Nomination period:** Until 15 April in the year of delivery

**Minimum tonnage:** 10 tonnes for nominations & orders

- Target your own 'floor' price to lock in a known minimum return while also receiving 50 per cent of any subsequent prices above your floor.

## Individual Futures Contract

**Nomination period:** Until 30 April in the year of delivery

**Minimum tonnage:** 60 tonnes for nominations & 10 tonnes for orders\*\*

- Price your GEI Sugar incrementally during the current season and up to 3 seasons forward, with separate pricing decisions for each of the 4 individual futures contracts.
- Order targets in \$5 increments (e.g. \$400, \$405, \$410).
- Option to roll pricing between ICE 11 contracts in the season of delivery and choose the day you want to roll (costs may apply).

## Self-Managed Harvest Contract

**Nomination period:** Until 30 April in the year of delivery

**Minimum tonnage:** 30% of GEI Sugar estimate (min. 300 tonnes), including US Quota allocation Manage your tonnage usually allocated to the Harvest Pool

- Order targets in \$5 increments (e.g. \$400, \$405, \$410).
- Minimum allocation of 30% of your GEI Sugar must be

priced after 1 May in a 1:1:1 ratio against the October, March and May contracts for the season.

- Incorporates a production buffer portion able to be priced upon delivery.
- Option to roll pricing between ICE 11 contracts in the season of delivery and choose the day you want to roll (costs may apply).

Get all the details and terms of these options from your local Mackay and Plane Creek QSL teams, or you can find these on our QSL website.

Some conditions may apply.

# Training sessions

## Mackay Training Sessions

- **Tuesday 9 March, 4 pm** – Self-Managed Harvest Contract Information Session
- **Tuesday 16 March, 4 pm** – Understanding QSL Payment Statements

## Plane Creek Training Sessions

- **Tuesday 16 March, 10.30 am** - Grower Managed vs QSL Managed Forward Pricing Options
- **Tuesday 30 March, 10.30 am** - Understanding your QSL Payment Statements

Please RSVP to the local QSL team representatives in your region, below. All QSL and non-QSL growers can also make a one-on-one appointment with our QSL Team if they prefer. We look forward to hearing from you.

# Do you need increased cash flow prior to the harvest?

## QSL Pre-Crush Advance Payment Scheme nominations close 12 March

The QSL Pre-Crush Advance Payment Scheme gives growers a payment for their 2021-Season QSL GEI Sugar in March 2021 – before the crush begins.

Participating growers receive \$50/tonne of sugar IPS on 26 March for up to half of their 2021-Season QSL GEI Sugar.

This Pre-Crush Advance payment is then deducted from their Standard QSL

Advances payment/s once they start their harvest.

QSL passes on the charges for this product at cost, enabling participating growers to enjoy the same favourable interest rates available to QSL through our strong relationships with leading banks.

For more information please contact your local QSL Growers Services team.

**Open to:** Growers using QSL Direct

**Nominations close:** 12 March 2021

**Payment is made:** 26 March 2021

**Payment rate:** \$50/tonne sugar IPS

**Nomination amount:** Up to 50% of your 2021-Season QSL GEI Sugar estimate

**Finance costs:** Approximately \$0.50/tonne sugar IPS, utilising QSL's funding costs of approximately 2.3% p.a.

**Signing up:** Click on the 'Season Preferences' tab within the 2021 Season section of your QSL Direct account. You can then nominate up to 50% of your GEI tonnage in the 'Pre-Crush Advance' field.

*Disclaimer: This document contains information of a general or summary nature. Before making pricing decisions you should read the full Pricing Pool Terms at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au). 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.*

## YOUR QSL GROWER SERVICES TEAM

QSL Direct Helpline P 1800 870 756

### Mackay and Plane Creek

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**Harriet McLennan**

0409 830 554  
[harriet.mclennan@qsl.com.au](mailto:harriet.mclennan@qsl.com.au)

Grower Relationship Officer  
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0418 978 120  
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Grower Relationship Officer  
**Kathy Zanco**

0437 645 342  
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# PUT YOURSELF IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



QSL's **Self-Managed Harvest Contract** is now simpler to use than ever before while also offering unmatched flexibility.

## Key features include:

- **A wider nomination window**, so you can sign up now if you're ready to go, or leave it to as late as 30 April in the year of delivery when you're more confident about your crop
- **A fixed pricing profile** so you know ahead of the season how much of your Harvest Pool you need to sell, and when
- **Price your minimum allocation directly against the October, March and May contracts** in 10 tonne/ \$5 increments, instead of targeting a weighted average for the entire season
- **The option to roll unfilled pricing** between in-season ICE 11 contracts, and potentially price all of your tonnage as late as April in the year after the harvest
- **Roll when it suits you**, rather than rolling on a set date
- **No washout costs for unpriced sugar**, with sugar only considered committed tonnage once it has been priced
- **Your personal buffer component** helps you weather in-season production drops
- **No administration or handling fees**

**QSL's Self-Managed Harvest Contract is accepting nominations now. See your local QSL representative for details or visit [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au).**

Disclaimer: This information is a high-level summary of the Self-Managed Harvest Contract. Full details of this product are contained in QSL's Pricing Pool Terms, available at [www.qsl.com.au](http://www.qsl.com.au). This information does not constitute financial advice. Growers should seek their own financial advice and read the QSL Pricing Pool Terms in full before making any pricing or pool selection decisions.

# Positive news from the world market

Australia will consolidate its place as the second largest raw sugar exporter in the world this year, after Brazil. Our high rank is the continuation of drought in Thailand affecting their raw sugar export supply, according to Dougall Lodge, who was guest speaker at CANEGROWERS Mackay's AGM in January (*photo right*).

Dougall is a consultant to CANEGROWERS Queensland supporting the Marketing Information Service to growers which is designed to help growers make informed decisions and reap the benefits of marketing competition. He gave growers at the AGM some insights into the market, while adding the disclaimer that CANEGROWERS does not have a Australian Financial Services License so that the information should be treated as general information only.

One of the outcomes of the lower crop for Thailand is record high values for sugar in the Asia region – which will bring Queensland cane growers an estimated additional \$25/tonne of sugar as part of the shared pool.

“As a consequence the customers for raw sugar in Asia like Japan, Korea, Indonesia and others will have to source sugar from Brazil and other Western Hemisphere producers where freight cost is higher,” he said.

“It means that whatever happens with your harvest pool or your short term pool you are likely to be receiving around an extra \$25/tonne for the Shared Pool as well this year.”

Dougall said it was unlikely the high Shared Pools would continue through again in the 2022 season because of an expected recovery in the Thai crop for their 2021 crop starting in November.

Turning to Brazil, Dougall said it was important for growers to

remember that the country's sugar industry was 20 times the size of the Australian industry, producing a staggering 600 million tonnes of cane annually compared to our 35 million tonnes.

“When I fly into Mackay it's always very impressive when you see all the cane going out to the horizon but when you go to Brazil it is that times 10. You can see cane going on forever,” he said.

“In their 2019 season the percentage of cane they allocated to raw sugar was comparatively low compared to the allocation for ethanol but in 2020 they increased the allocation of cane to raw sugar production from 34 per cent to 46 per cent in one year! That's an increase from 26 million tonnes of sugar production in 2019 to 38 million tonnes in 2020 - 12 million tonnes of extra sugar or nearly triple our Australian annual raw sugar production!”

Dougall said one of the reasons Brazil is producing more sugar than ethanol is because even with some recovery in oil prices, the price of domestic ethanol is lower than sugar. Meanwhile, the price in Brazilian Real per tonne for sugar is the highest it has ever been locally. So of course, Brazil is going to produce as much sugar as possible.

“Some analysts expected that Brazil's sugar industry would have issues related to COVID last year but it didn't really impact the supply chain. They have finished their crop and it was a fantastic year for them. Looking into 2021 we expect to see another year of very high allocation of cane to sugar. However, fortunately for us, it is expected that some of the Brazilian millers have already sold at the high prices already. Their industry is quite differently structured to us. The majority of the cane is grown on farms owned by mills, whereas a smaller



proportion of the cane comes from individual farmers. In 2021 Brazil is expecting a slight reduction in their cane crop because it has been very hot and very dry. This is typical for them when we have a La Nina weather pattern and more rain is forecast for Australia.”

In other news, Europe's beet producers had a very tough 2020 with a number of disease issues and very dry weather, affecting global supply.

Despite a probable surplus of raw sugar because of Brazil, the first quarter of the sugar marketing year has been tight without new season Brazilian sugar available yet and while waiting on Indian sugar exports to be released. Consequently, the price touched US 16.7c/lb for the first time in three years. Both March and May futures contracts have high prices partly because of recent speculator buying, Dougall said.

“These speculators amplify the mood of the market but they are pretty good at buying in when the price is low and selling when it's high,” he said.

Speculators - hedge funds such as superannuation funds - have bought about 7.5 million tonnes of sugar in futures contracts in the past six months. That's more than 30 per cent of the total sugar market.

“Basically, if we nearly doubled the whole Australian production that's what speculators have bought over the last six months,” said Dougall.

However, he warned that the market was vulnerable to a sell off by these speculators and India coming onto the market. Dougall said there had been some progress from the WTO about India's illegal subsidies to farmers, but decisions were not going to happen very quickly as WTO rulings take a long time and implementation in a nation where you have 50 million farmers who represent 50 million voters was going to be slow.

“So we've got Indian sugar sitting there, potentially about to come on the market,” said Dougall.

Dougall reminded growers that they were the only farmers in the world who could place an order for a sugar price three years in advance.

“You have an amazing tool here. Even if you compare it with other industries like grains and cotton, where again, Australia is very advanced, in sugar we can price three years out. No one else can do that!”

A two-day business and risk management course, *Pricing Essentials*, developed by CANEGROWERS with TAFE starts this year.

## Blockchain technology project reaches test phase



Kate Gowdie

Progress on CANEGROWERS' blockchain technology project was outlined by Kate Gowdie, Smartcane BMP Manager at the Case IH Step Up Conference in Bundaberg last month.

The Federal Government provided funding for the project in 2018 to help the industry to find a secure, reliable way to demonstrate the sugar industry's sustainability to its customers and strengthen its global marketing position.

Blockchain is a digital technology used in a number of industries to provide secure encrypted information about a product or crop throughout its movement along a supply chain, regardless of how many hands the information passes through or how many times the product/crop is

transformed into something else.

CANEGROWERS engaged KPMG to undertake the first phase of initial research for the project last year, which was to complete a detailed supply chain map from grower through to end customers and regulators.

Kate said that KPMG's research had confirmed a blockchain for tracing sugar was feasible "on a mass balanced basis". This means that while an individual grain of sugar can not feasibly be traced back to a farm, where 80 per cent of the people who supplied the sugar in a mill area were accredited growers then on balance 80 per cent of the sugar that left that mill was sustainable.

After doing the legwork on defining the value chain and areas of value KPMG then developed a prototype blockchain platform for CANEGROWERS. The prototype is an internet-based website that allows all participants in the supply chain to log on and 'see' the sugar moving through the supply chain, the organisations at each step of the journey and their credentials.

"Importantly, the blockchain starts with digitizing a grower's

Smartcane BMP accreditation certificate. This sustainability accreditation data is then carried through all steps of the journey of the sugar cane from raw sugar (the mill), to refined sugar (the refinery), and products (food manufacturers) and by-products (ethanol, plastics)," said Kate.

"Built into the prototype is the ability for the grower to share their certificates with other parties, either because they have received a request to, or by instigating the share themselves. The list of potential companies the grower might share the data with goes beyond participants in the supply chain. It might include their bank who may provide some sort of preferential loans in the future for certified growers," she said.

Kate said that through their research, KPMG had showed there were potentially seven opportunities where blockchain could create added value for the industry: market premiums, alternative finance sources, sustainability credits rewarding improved natural capital, incentive payments, credits for sustainable byproducts and non-sugar products (e.g. the value of sharing data about our industry).

"In summary the platform not only satisfies the traceability and the provenance of our sugar for customers seeking accredited sustainable sugar, but it also provides individual users along the value chain with a product. So, while it's a platform to house data it is also a platform to share data for potential added value."

Kate said that now that the project had shown that developing a digital supply chain platform using blockchain technology was possible the next step would be providing a proof of concept. This would be done by tracing an actual shipment of Smartcane BMP sugar to a customer offshore using the blockchain platform, and testing an alternative finance model using Smartcane BMP.

"The blockchain platform can improve the visibility of Queensland's sugar, which is important because we want our sugar to stand out in the crowd, head and shoulders above lots of other sugar," said Kate. By combining our industry leading sustainability certificate using Smartcane BMP with a mass balance model and blockchain-enabled traceability platform, there are real opportunities to be realised for the sugar industry."

## MACKAY SUGAR TO CEASE SUPPORTING ITS GPS BASE STATIONS

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## Demand for sustainable accredited sugar is growing

Pressure from food manufacturers for sustainable sugar has been increasing in the past three years from one or two enquiries a year to three or four a month today, says Andrew Phipps, Senior Manager, Marketing and Logistics at Queensland Sugar Limited.

Speaking at the Case IH Step Up Conference in Bundaberg, Andrew said that the Australian sugar industry was ahead of the pack in meeting the market's sustainable sugar requirements but could not afford to rest on its laurels and needed to proceed with a full accreditation scheme.

Andrew is responsible for QSL's physical marketing function, overseeing customer relations, sugar sales and the execution of sales contracts, including storage and supply chain management. He reminded the audience that his presentation was a general discussion and did not constitute financial advice.

"The global sugar market is telling us that they want sustainable sugar accreditation, or even, that's what they require. They need the supply chain to implement this accreditation."

Andrew explained it was the large manufacturers such as Coca-Cola Amatil, Unilever, Nestlé and Kellogg's who drive the supply chain and they listened to their consumers.

He gave examples of the power of consumers to drive supply chain change:

- 85-90% of tuna consumed in Australia is now in some way certified or accredited as 'dolphin safe'
- Unilever, as the largest user of palm oil in the world achieved 95 per cent sustainably sourced palm oil and palm kernel oil in 2019
- The sales of free range eggs have risen substantially

over the past 10-15 years, despite their increased price. Two years ago free range eggs accounted for 47 per cent of the volume but 56 per cent of the value with the premium and cost passed back to the consumer and the values to the producer.

He also talked about the rise of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing: "It represents the fastest growing investment asset class and investment pool and involves people only investing in companies that can prove socially responsible operations," he said.

"An American bank, Morgan Stanley, recently found that 95 per cent of Millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996) who are the fastest growing investor group, prioritise socially responsible investing. They invest their money in places that they know have a social licence rather than actually just focusing on straight returns.

"The amount of ESG funds under management in the United States in 2016 was about US \$8 trillion (AUD \$10 trillion) but by 2017 it had jumped to US \$17 trillion (AUD \$21 trillion), or more than 100 per cent in four years."

Andrew said that under the new US President, Joe Biden, it could be expected that the social and political situation would be more conducive and supportive of ESG investing.

He said that most retail superannuation funds and industry super funds all offer ESG options now and public institutions such as universities with large endowment funds were divesting their fossil fuel stocks and investing in carbon neutral alternatives.

"It's not just good enough to be doing it. The manufacturers have to be seen as proactive and not reactive. They have to

be ahead of the curve, driving the change, not just complying with it," he said.

"The most effective way for them to do that is through accreditation. That way they've met their responsibility, they can proudly badge their products and avoid any consumer backlash."

Andrew said the World Economic Forum had actually recommended a global audit standard for ESG policy "so they want to audit ESG compliance like they audit financial statements."

Andrew said that Australia currently sits at the forefront of compliance. He said companies like Unilever, whose products are used by around 2.5 billion people every day, had service sourcing policies which largely related to human aspects of production, where Australia could tick every box e.g.: workers have rights and work voluntarily, not as slaves, business is conducted lawfully, there are reasonable working hours and OH&S standards are in place. Compared to other countries growing sugar Australia was also light years ahead in terms of production with GPS driven harvesters and small workforces.

However, he warned that Australia could not afford to sit back and enjoy our current advantage when other countries were investing in



Andrew Phipps

processes and improving every day. He reminded the audience of the example of Nokia, the dominant mobile phone marketer in the mid 2000s which took its eye off the ball and didn't listen to consumers – with the result that Nokia now has about 2 per cent of the market. In addition, the Australian wheat market also lost export market share when the Black Sea countries invested heavily to improve their comparative advantage, improving their wheat protein content and their export infrastructure.

"We are in a great position to take advantage of the market's need for accredited sugar. But we need to be in the driver's seat and try and steer the outcome, either to preserve our value in the market or, the scenario that we all want and we're working towards, to lead the discussion and drive the added value back to our growers."



More reports and photos next issue

## Farmers' pension eligibility #2

This article continues the discussion from last issue about the criteria to be eligible for the Centrelink pension. The last criterion that needs to be satisfied is the 'Assets Test'. As set out in the last issue, Centrelink doesn't count your Principal Place of Residence and an area of up to two-hectares around it as part of your assets for this test.

However, for farmers, there are some additional rules that may apply.

Is your home on a farm? Then, your home's title may be exempt from the assets test if:

- you have lived there for the past 20 years, and
- you satisfy the 'Land Use Test' – which establishes whether the land is used to run a farming business (either by you or someone else), unless that land is unable to be farmed.

### Examples of the 'Land Use Test'

#### Example 1:

Bob is single and 65. He owns 52 hectares (130 acres) on a single title. He's lived there all his life and runs a cane farm. As long as Bob keeps working the farm to its potential, the

whole property is exempt from the assets test. Any other assets aren't exempt, such as the crop, sheds and plant and equipment.

#### Example 2:

Bob and Jenny are 85 and have lived on their 40 hectare (100 acre) single title farm for the past 40 years. They can't run the farm anymore. Their son, John and his family live in another house on the land. John earns his living from running the farm and pays Bob and Jenny rent for the use of the farmland. The land is exempt from Bob and Jenny's assets test, however they still need to declare the rent income received.

What this means is if, say, Bob and Jenny have the following assets:

- the farmland (worth about \$800,000)
- their cars (collectively worth \$60,000)
- cash in bank (collectively \$50,000), and
- household furniture (worth \$20,000),

their farm is excluded from the Assets Test as far as Centrelink is concerned. They have only \$130,000 worth of assets and could therefore be eligible for the full pension as

their total assets are under the threshold of \$401,500 as a couple.

Further information and examples can be found at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/age-pension>

### How does Succession Planning affect all this?

If you transfer part or all of your farmland or any assets you own to a family member and don't receive the fair market value for it, it may be classed as a 'gift'. In this case it can be counted towards your 'assets test' for five years after you've made it, if it is more than a certain value. The allowable amount of a gift is the same for a single person as a couple and is:

- \$10,000 in one financial year, or
- \$30,000 over five financial years (which can't include more than \$10,000 per year).

#### Example 3:

Henry and Jane own a cane farm consisting of three lots. They transfer two of the lots (that they don't have their house on) to their son, Harry, for \$400,000 to farm. The two lots are worth \$800,000. They will be deemed to have gifted to him \$400,000 and accordingly this \$400,000 would be classed as an asset of theirs and taken into account for the next five years – potentially affecting their pension payments.

Clearly, planning for retirement can be extremely important.

In addition to this, figuring out whether you are eligible for the Pension and what you have to provide and what you need to start getting the Pension can be confusing and daunting.

As a first step you can go to the Services Australia website



and use the online tool to see what payments and services you may be eligible for. The link directly to the online tool is here: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/age-pension/what-other-help-available/payment-and-service-finder>. You can also call Services Australia on 132 300 during business hours.

Alternatively if you want specific advice about your particular circumstances and you want to put a succession plan in place for the benefit of your family, while also exploring your options to obtain the Centrelink Pension, you should engage an experienced property lawyer who practices in this area and also a Financial Planner to provide you further assistance.

*The content of this column is a general guide on this topic. Professional advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.*

**More information:**  
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**T: 4963 0888**  
**E: [Mackay@mckayslaw.com](mailto:Mackay@mckayslaw.com)**



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Contact us today

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# PAYROLL Remember these dates



<b>Friday 2 April</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>
<b>Saturday 3 Apr</b>	<b>Easter Saturday</b>
<b>Sunday 4 April</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b>
<b>Monday 5 April</b>	<b>Easter Monday</b>
<b>Monday 26 April</b>	<b>Anzac Day</b>
<b>Monday 3 May</b>	<b>Labour Day</b>
<b>Thursday 17 June</b>	<b>Mackay Show Day</b>
<b>Monday 4 October</b>	<b>Queen's Birthday</b>

Public holidays are provided for in the National Employment Standards (NES) and are among the 10 minimum employment entitlements that have to be provided to all employees.

An employee required to work on a public holiday is entitled

to no fewer than four hours' pay at double time and a half, provided the employee is available to work those hours.

Payment of double time and a half is calculated using the Award rate not the loaded rate for hours that are worked.

Find out how CANEGROWERS Mackay can assist your business to meet your employer obligations. Phone: Julie Green CANEGROWERS Mackay on 4944 2623

## ATO alert - beware phone SCAM

The Australian Tax Office is receiving increasing reports of people losing money to automated phone scams.

Scammers pretending to be from the ATO tell people their tax file number (TFN) has either been suspended due to illegal activity or compromised by a scammer.

They request the call recipient either pay a fine to release their TFN or transfer all bank funds into a holding account to protect it from future misuse.

The ATO does not suspend TFNs and will never request you pay a fine or transfer money in order to protect your TFN, pending legal action. Phone calls from the ATO do not project a number on caller ID and do not send unsolicited pre-recorded messages to your phone. If you receive a phone call like this, hang up and do not provide the information requested. If you're unsure whether an ATO contact is genuine, phone the ATO on 1800 008 540 to check.

# TRAINING Pilot course popular



Two separate Pilot training courses were held at CANEGROWERS Mackay in February with more planned for March.

(Above left, l to r) With Darryl Cullen, the trainer/assessor, from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO), The Motor School, are prospective pilots: Luke Ferguson, Aaron Ahern and Michael Brombal (from the Burdekin), and Matthew Vassallo and Aaron Craig; (above right) Brett Ericksen, Stuart Volker, and Andre Camilleri and Jacob Camilleri.

## Expressions of Interest for these courses are welcome

- Pilot/Escort Level I & II Vehicle Driving: date to be advised, based on numbers who express interest (book today!)
- Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control (ACDC) Chemical



Accreditation: Tuesday - Wednesday 6-7 April and Tuesday - Wednesday 4-5 May

- First Aid – date to be advised based on numbers who express interest.

Note: the course fee for these three courses is set by the RTO. No discounts are available.

- Annual four-day sugar cane haulout training course: Monday - Thursday 10-13 May – this course is fully funded by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) at no cost to the participants.

**Contact:** Shelley Dent, Training Coordinator: E: Shelley\_Dent@canegrowers.com.au, T: 4944 2600.

# Classifieds 2021

## FOR SALE

EHS 15in 8 blade chopper drum, 95 mm blade. \$5,500 inc. GST.

**Ph: : 0407 179 571**

Refalo 2-tonne fertiliser box on wheels; 3-row trash rakes; 3-row multi-weeder; cutaways; grubbers for ratoons and fallow; cane break pushers; & more.

**Ph: 0417 612 883**

Westhill plant cutter with topper \$1,000 inc. GST

**Ph: 0409 264 351**

Set of McLean halftracks to suit Cameco / Austoft. 2 sets sprockets.

**Ph: : 0427 186 570**

T300 Trailco soft hose irrigator, 200 m of 3 1/2" hose. 200 Nelson quick return gun. Good condition \$7500 ono incl. GST.

**Ph: 0419 705 530**

2 x 3T side elevating bins on Vane double trailer with own hydraulics. Ideal for planting.

**Ph: : 0418 983 163**

Celli Rotary Hoe, 100" Heavy Duty, in good condition \$12,000 + GST.

**Ph: 0407 165 557**

Ford 8401 coupled to 6 tonne Ian Richie tipper bin. Good condition. Mackay Area. \$25,000.

**Ph: 0418716043**

2001 Case Mx210, 7900 hours, power shift, 40k box, cab and front suspension, 3-point linkage, front weights, good condition. \$42,000 plus GST, ONO. Mackay area.

**Ph: 0447 240 415**

Massey Ferguson 1105 in good working order and 100 in Howard rotary hoe with crumble roller.

**Ph: 0413 656 963**

Claas Ares 567 ATZ 4WD tractor coupled with Ian Richie 6t side tipper \$39,000 + GST.

**Ph: 0428 115 456**

## FARM CLEAN-UPS

Will collect old machinery and scrap metal. No job too big/too small. Mackay/Sarina areas.

**Ph: 0407 638 381**

## SALE OF PROPERTY

Two Mackay cane farms on 4 lots; one farm 113.62 ha with total area 74.67 ha CPA and second farm 126.57 ha with total area 82.17 ha CPA. Farms have a common boundary.

**Ph: 0415 881 092**

## WANTED TO LEASE

Cane farm to lease Marwood/Balberra/Sunnyside location.

**Ph: 0408 011 983**

## WANTED TO BUY

750 x 20 in steel rims x 2.

**Ph: 0438 421 217**

Massey Ferguson 4WD tractor: low to reasonable hrs; 170-200 hp; wide tyres.

**Ph: 0417 542 783**

Rear tractor tyre: 20.8 38 in Radial or a 520-85 38 in Radial.

**Ph: 4954 1174**

Stool splitter with fertiliser box.

**Ph: 0419 503 293**

## LOOKING TO DIVERSIFY?

Instant income, long established Indoor Plant Hire business, broad customer base, easy to run.

Consistent profits over \$120,000/yr. \$250,000 + SAV.

Ph: 0415 543 469

## Got a great story for The Billet?

Let the Editor know by 5 March 2021. Email: [Christine\\_Walker@canegrowers.com.au](mailto:Christine_Walker@canegrowers.com.au)

Next issue: 1 April

Your ad HERE!

The best place to sell/buy farm machinery in Mackay/Plane Creek.

CLASSIFIEDS CLOSE:

Wed 24 March 2021

Ring 07 4944 2600

## New load control tariff 34

CANEGROWERS lobbied for this tariff structure which is a win for those irrigators willing to work with an infrequent interruption to their power for a short period.

Trials in Bundaberg and on the Tablelands showed power supply interruptions were rare. Power was interrupted just ten times over the three-year trial period. The most likely times for power interruptions, if they occur, is on very hot days between 4 pm and 8 pm.

**T34 charge structure:** Daily fixed charge = \$1.18081 per day ex GST. Usage charge = 17.295c/kWh ex GST.

QCA identifies indicative annual savings for typical users as:

- \$768 for T62 moving to T34
- \$1,116 for T65 moving to T34
- \$2,487 for T66 moving to T34

**More information:** Brian Elmer, Energy Queensland Phone: 0467 774 409.

## BRANCH MEETINGS

AREA	SECRETARY CONTACTS	VENUE	TIME	UPCOMING DATES
ETON	Michael Attard 0429 416 738	Eton Fire Shed	7.30 pm	6 Apr/4 May/1 Jun/6 Jul/3 Aug
FINCH HATTON	Jim Peoples 4958 3169	Catholic Church Hall	8.00 pm	30 Mar/27 Apr/25 May/29 Jun
HAMPDEN	Trevor Burns 0423 713 736	Mt Blackwood RFB	7.30 pm	15 Mar/19 Apr/17 May/21 Jun
MARIAN	Joseph Borg 0427 504 118	Marian Rural Fire Shed	7.30 pm	17 Mar/21 Apr/19 May/16 Jun
RACECOURSE	Ross Williams 0429 157 820	Boomerang Hotel	8.00 pm	1 Apr/6 May/3 Jun/1 Jul/5 Aug
PLANE CREEK	Chris Currie 4950 3776	Koumala QCWA Hall	8.00 pm	30 Mar/27 Apr/25 May/29 Jun

# Trespassing - a grower's rights

Racecourse Branch has asked that *The Billet* publish information on farmers' rights regarding trespass, for the interest of all growers.

## Legal options

Entering onto land in possession of another without lawful justification is regarded as trespass. It may be both a civil wrong and a criminal offence depending on the circumstances.

## Civil action

Being a civil wrong, growers may take their own civil action and sue the trespasser in the civil courts. Growers can seek a Court order that requires a person to stop trespassing and to never trespass again (this type of order is called an injunction). The Court can also order that the person trespassing pay compensation.

## Criminal action

Trespass is also a crime as it is an offence in some circumstances under the Summary Offences Act to enter or remain on agricultural land without lawful excuse. It is also an offence under the Nature Conservation Act to enter on any landholder's land without their consent for the purpose of taking any wildlife. It is up to the Police, following a formal complaint, to take the necessary criminal prosecution action. Fines of over \$1,000 and imprisonment for up to six months are possible for persons who without lawful excuse enter or remain on land used for agricultural purposes or open and leave open any gate on enclosed agricultural land. Fines for breaches of the Nature Conservation Act can be over \$19,000. Police will take a number of factors into consideration in determining whether to prosecute:

- identifying an offence has been committed

- sufficient evidence, and
- public interest.

## Practical options

In some cases the legal approach may not be appropriate. Civil action can be expensive, time consuming, stressful and uncertain in outcome. Police may be reluctant to investigate. Alternative action might be considered. Options include, where possible, direct discussions with the trespasser (and their parents, if they are children). Other alternatives include community awareness programs in schools and throughout the community generally, and media coverage. A local group comprising representatives of various interested bodies including growers, Police, local council, community leaders and educators might be formed which could develop and implement local programs intended to inform and reduce the frequency of trespass.

## Protecting your property

You can eject a trespasser from your property. Under the *Queensland Criminal Code* it is lawful for a person in possession of land to use such force as is reasonably necessary in order to prevent any person from wrongfully entering or in order to remove the person from the land provided that no bodily harm is done to the person. It should also be remembered that it is an offence under the Criminal Code to set a trap intended to kill or inflict grievous bodily harm on a trespasser.

Self-help options may be a good idea. The trespasser could be asked to leave the premises. If the situation looks as if it might get out of hand, though, the Police should always be contacted. Try to make a record of the

trespasser's details, including name, vehicle description, date and time of trespass, with photos/video if possible.

## Liability for injury

Whether a grower will be liable for an injury suffered by a person trespassing on the grower's land will always depend on the circumstances of each case. Just because a person is a trespasser does not mean that they could never recover damages if they are injured whilst trespassing.

The issues of liability will be determined by the law of negligence.

## Limiting the risk of liability

The best approach is to act reasonably. What will be reasonable will depend on each grower's own circumstances.

The practical options mentioned previously should be considered to reduce the prevalence of trespassing and thus reduce the associated risks.

## Warning signs

A common option to combat trespass and reduce liability is to place warning signs and signs designed to limit a property owner's liability e.g. Enter at Your Own Risk or Private Property – Keep Out. Whilst such signs may be a good idea they do not often provide a proper defence to an action brought against the landholder by a person who is injured.

The basis of the defence is that a person is entitled to waive one's legal rights. That is, the person can be said to be assuming and accepting any risk by entering the property. If a person enters the property after perusing an appropriate sign, then it can be argued that that person entered the property under the condition that the person's rights were waived,

acknowledging that the property owner did not owe that person any duty of care.

However, it must be shown that the person entering the property consented to waiving their legal rights. The Courts are reluctant to uphold this defence unless the evidence clearly establishes the case.

To rely on the defence, it must be established that the person entering the property was aware of the warning notice. For example, if a notice is erected on the front gate and someone enters the property via another entrance then unless they were actually aware of the entrance and of the sign and its contents (perhaps by previous visits) then the person will not have "voluntarily" assumed any risk.

Moreover, it has been stated by the Courts that a warning would only give complete protection to an occupier if the danger was present to the mind of the plaintiff and fully appreciated by him when entering the property.

Therefore, a sign such as Enter At Your Own Risk, even though read by the plaintiff may not be sufficient to raise the defence if the plaintiff did not realise and appreciate the nature of the risk involved. If, however, the plaintiff had previously frequented the property and was aware of the possible risks involved then the defence would have a greater chance of succeeding.

## Insurance

There are no easy answers to this issue of trespass and liability for injury. Ultimately every grower should ensure that they hold adequate liability insurance to cover the risk of injury to persons on their land.

**For more information: call CANEGROWERS Legal Adviser, Chris Cooper, for free initial legal advice on (07) 3864 6224.**

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