

# The Bundaberg District Canegrower

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## Top Five (5) Issues We Have Been Working On

1. Working through current milling issues to continue with crushing and achieve a fair and equitable outcome for growers
2. Providing feedback to the Burnett Regional Drought Resilience Plan roundtable
3. Assisting BAFFA with a submission to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee's Inquiry into the Impact of Climate Change on Queensland Agricultural Production
4. Finalising the Grain in Cane soybean season and payments
5. Continuing with preparations for AGM's and production of Annual Reports

## Chair's Update

**W**ow, how dry is it? There doesn't appear to be any reprieve in the near future. Ratoons are all stressing with some not shooting at all unless some irrigation has been applied. The dry has also slowed down the planting program of many growers. On the upside the CCS has been phenomenal with some near record tests achieved, the flip side to this of course is the reduction of estimates with a revised season estimate of 1,020,000 tonnes.

Current dry conditions in the region have brought a heightened fire risk and, as such, there has been a change to fire restrictions. At the time of writing (27 Sept) growers can light fires for standing cane, tops and trash only and only between the hours of 6pm and 6am the following day. Further information can be found on page 3.

Mill throughput has been very good this year up until 17 September when No. 1 Mill suffered a catastrophic failure, with a repair time of 2-3 weeks the decision was made to bypass No. 1 Mill and proceed with the crush. This has caused some extra problems with CCS sampling now being taken from No. 2 Mill following the relocation of the NIR. Our auditors were comfortable with sampling procedures, the NIR was recalibrated and payment was switched over to NIR on 24 September. We continue to monitor the situation and ensure cane sampling and analysis procedures are performed as per the Cane Analysis Program Agreement.

Michael Turner has been extremely busy processing and delivering one-eye setts with some really good uptake of new varieties. Matthew Leighton has been kept busy with a myriad of things including N&P Budgets. If anyone has any problems in calculating their N&P Budgets please give Matt a call.



The final payment for soybeans has been paid with a final average figure of \$789/tonne. The coming season looks very promising price wise with a prediction of \$800/tonne. Our biggest problem with growing the next crop of soys is the lack of soil moisture for ground preparation. Further information can be found on page 8.

A reminder that all groundwater users in the Coastal Burnett groundwater management area for Kolan - Burnett A, Burnett - Elliott A, Elliott - Gregory A and Fairymead A are required to have their water meter revalidated to ensure their water meter is compliant by 30 November 2023. This must be performed by an authorised meter validator and all meters must comply with the Departments' non-urban water metering standard. Non-compliant meters must be upgraded or replaced.

How good is this sugar price? The current pricing matrix has a final harvest pool estimate of \$783. Many growers have been active in forward pricing with the QSL Direct marketing app.

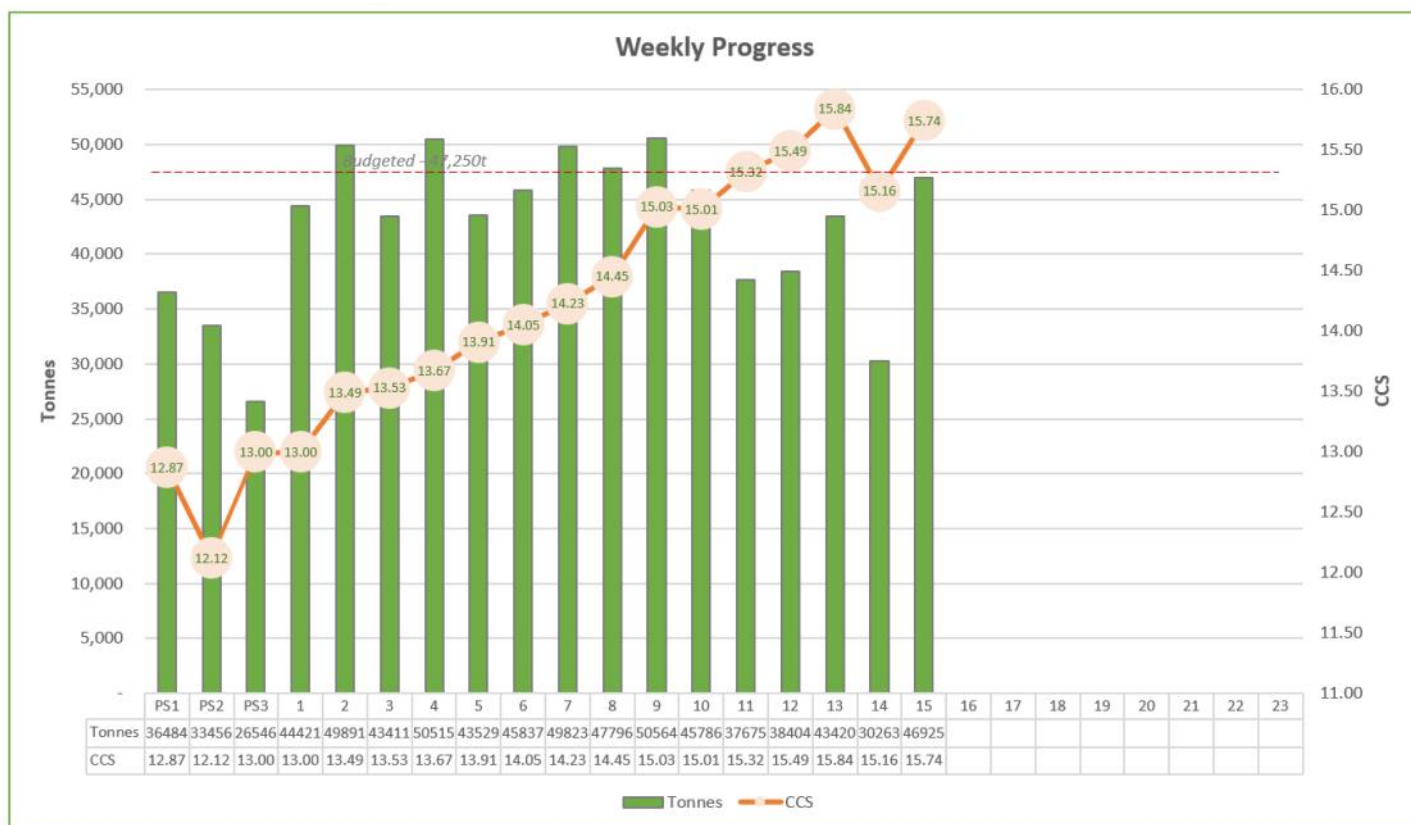
We are currently in discussions with Bundaberg Sugar regarding the 2024 start date for growers' cane with consideration being given to starting on the first Monday in June. If you would like to discuss this further and how it may impact or improve your farming system, please call me on 0414 593 105.

Reminder that the Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited and Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd AGM's will be held on Thursday 12 October from 6pm at Rowers on the River. The AGM's will be followed by a presentation from Greg Beashel, CEO of QSL. I hope to see you all there.

**Mark Pressler**  
Chairman



## Crushing Statistics – 2023 Season



## 2023 Season Indicative Advances Program

Based on QSL reports 25 August 2023

Advance Dates	Uncommitted Pool Advance (AUD/tonne IPS)		Target Price Advance Rates
Payment Date	Increase	To	
Initial		\$495.00	\$495.00
Initial QSL Updated	<b>-\$17.00</b>	<b>\$478.00</b>	<b>\$478.00</b>
20-Oct-23	\$70.00	\$548.00	\$548.00
17-Nov-23	\$19.00	\$567.00	\$567.00
15-Dec-23	\$40.00	\$607.00	\$607.00
19-Jan-24	\$19.00	\$626.00	80.0%
17-Feb-24	\$20.00	\$646.00	82.5%
22-Mar-24	\$39.00	\$685.00	87.5%
19-Apr-24	\$19.00	\$704.00	90.0%
19-May-24	\$20.00	\$724.00	92.5%
21-Jun-24	\$20.00	\$744.00	95.0%
Final	\$39.00	\$783.00	100.0%

## Notes:

1. The program above represents indicative advances payable by QSL to Bundaberg Sugar based on estimated pool returns, the marketing plan and forecast cash flows at the time. These indicative amounts will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated for changes in forecasts.

**Advances highlighted in bold in the table above have been approved by the QSL Board.**

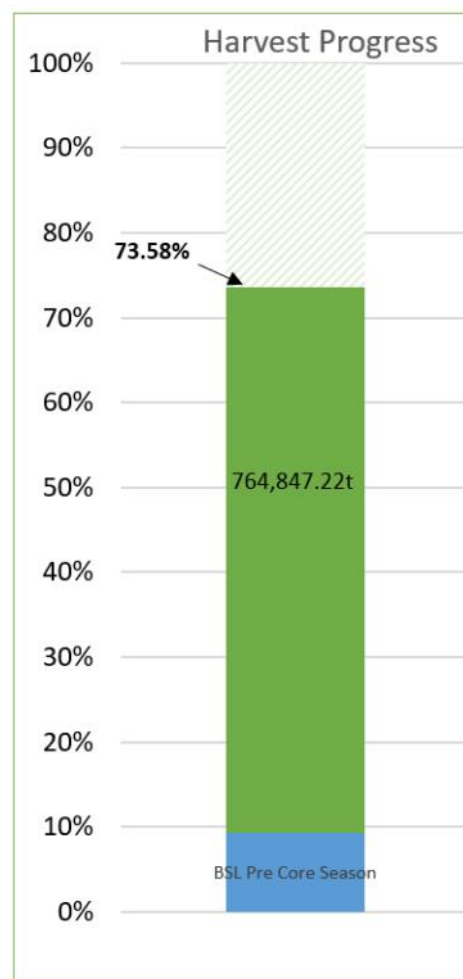
2. This program is indicative only and should not be taken as a commitment by Queensland Sugar (or Bundaberg Sugar) with regard to the estimated pool return, advance rate or date of increase. The program may change during the season depending on movements in a number of factors including the marketing plan, sugar price and currency movements and timing of cash flows.

3. The advance rates are GST exclusive.

4. The net adjustment, for the estimated US Quota and

QSL premiums & costs, to be added / (subtracted) to / (from) ICE No.11 and Foreign Exchange pricing results for the Committed Pools (e.g. Target Price Contract) is **\$34.58**.

**Disclaimer:** This report has been prepared for general information only. It does not have regard to the specific circumstances of any individual or group who may read it. It is not intended as an offer to buy or sell commodities, futures or options, nor is the accuracy of the report content guaranteed. However, as market circumstances can change quickly, Queensland Sugar Limited and Bundaberg Sugar Ltd disclaim any responsibility or liability for decisions or actions of any individual relying in whole or in part on information contained herein. Individuals contemplating decisions relating to any material discussed in this publication should take appropriate financial advice.



## Reminder to follow all fire permit conditions

Growers are reminded of the need to follow all the conditions of the fire permit or the Cane Firing Notice to be compliant and covered from potential liability issues in case an incident occurs. There was a recent article about burning times for cane fires which has since had some variations of the burning times to later in the day due to an increased risk of fire escaping from the planned burn area. The other part of ensuring compliance is by contacting Firecom on 1800 354 621 on each and every occasion growers burn cane, tops or other vegetation.

Firecom and due to phone calls from concerned people, either the red or yellow trucks have turned up at the fire for no reason. There are situations where growers or their insurance companies can be charged a call out fee from the fire brigade as well as fines for not following directions on the permit or Notice. While growers may have contacted Firecom at the start of the harvesting season, it is good practice to contact them prior to lighting a fire so that they know if a permitted fire is occurring. **The contact number for Firecom is 1800 354 621.**

restrictions to enable the best outcome from a public safety point of view as well as enabling growers to carry out their business. At the time of writing **both cane fires and burning of trash can occur between 6pm of one day and 6am the following morning.** This means there is a 12 hour period where burning is **NOT** permitted during the majority of daylight hours due to the risk of fire escaping. This is a negotiated outcome and failure to comply would lead to more severe restrictions, especially given how dry the landscape is.

Recently there have been several cases where a fire occurred without notifying

In relation to burning times there have been some adjustments to previous

**Please contact the office on 4151 2555 if you require further information. ■**

## Be Finance Ready workshops

Bundaberg - 18 October

Engaging with your preferred lender can be, at times, a daunting process. The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) in collaboration with the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) Southern Queensland are holding Be Finance Ready workshops in Bundaberg on 18 Oct to help primary producers be better prepared for when they apply for financial assistance.

These workshops aim to help primary producers learn about what 'finance ready' means, help them understand how well they know their business, what information to prepare, how lenders use their information and what options are available if things don't work out.

**18 October, 9.30am – 12pm**

**Young Australian Hotel,**

**59 Perry Street, Bundaberg**

**Registrations - <https://bit.ly/3LtwuAm>**

## Compliance with Reef Regulations

Growers are reminded that Compliance/Audit Checks from DES staff are due to begin soon.

To date we are aware of only one (1) compliance check occurring in the district however we expect to see more towards the end of the harvest and into 2024.

This will be to check records from previous years as well as check to see where growers are up to with the Nitrogen and Phosphorus Budget for their farm.

If any member receives notification about an upcoming audit please contact Matt Leighton for assistance in preparation for the audit as well as being on farm while the audit check takes place. ■



**Completing this book assists Growers to meet their record keeping obligations as part of the Reef Regulations.**

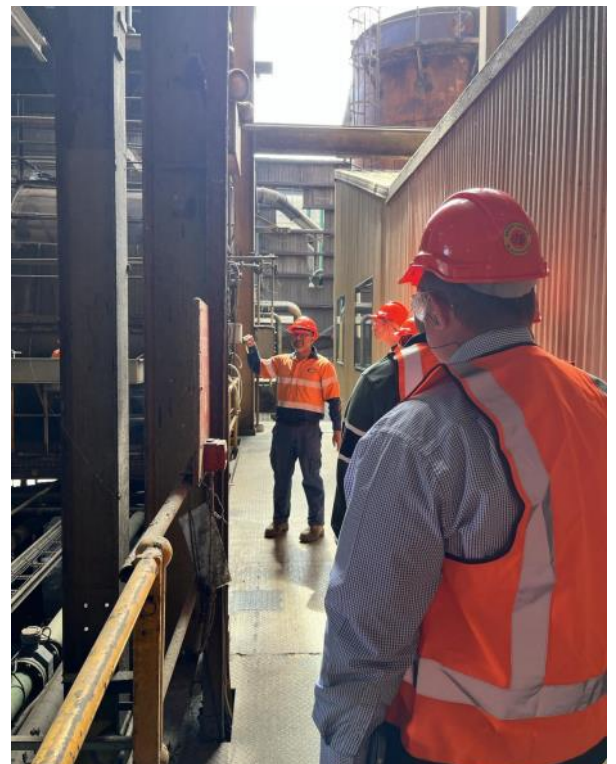
**To collect a record keeping book call into the office or contact us on 4151 2555.**



## Kepnock Student's Mill and Lab tour

**K**epnock Year 12 Chemistry students recently attended a lab and mill tour organised by Bundaberg CANEGROWERS and Bundaberg Sugar Ltd. It was good for students to see first-hand how the laboratory is run and how tests are performed as well as tour the mill to observe the process of extracting sugar from the cane. We are fortunate in Bundaberg to have a team of well trained auditors who provide a vital level of independent oversight in the cane payment process.

We extend our thanks to Rob Zahn, Salesesh Kumar and Rav Deo for taking the time out of their day to host the tour, and Mr Brandon and Mrs Munro for allowing students to attend. The tour was well received by all attendees. ■



## Suscon Maxi Intel update

**B**undaberg CANEGROWERS recently received an update from Nufarm that they would be withdrawing Suscon Maxi Intel from the market due to the use of microplastics in the controlled release of the active ingredient and the potential impact of those plastics on the environment in general.

The information provided is that Suscon Maxi Intel will be available for sale over the next two (2) years as it continues to manufacture the product. That is, it doesn't have all the product stacked up in a shed and as it manufactures the product it will supply it to the chemical

resellers on a pro rata basis using their recent sales history.

This means that there may not be stock at your reseller right now although there may be some arriving in 2024 and 2025.

What this does not mean is that liquid imidacloprid products are being removed from the market yet. These products will still be available for purchase to control cane grub through application at planting or in the ratoons based on monitoring of grub numbers.

With the move to a liquid only chemical in the near future it places greater pressure to ensure that the product is

applied according to the label and placed at a depth between 100-150mm in a slot that is closed over once the chemical mix is applied. Imidacloprid is a highly water soluble product and if not applied correctly can move to the rivers and creeks and has been identified in the Queensland Government chemical monitoring of waterways that potentially affect the reef and its inshore receiving waters.

**For further assistance please contact Matt Leighton on 4151 2555. ■**

## New research projects

**S**ugar Research Australia (SRA) has announced three (3) new research projects to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers. These projects will:

- investigate the potential of new biocontrol agents to control canegrubs

- develop diagnostic tests for key species of soldier fly and an artificial diet to enable researchers to better evaluate what control agents can be used to control them, and
- seek to develop a machine learning system to measure the extraneous matter and billet length in each cane consignment.



These projects are funded by Sugar Research Australia and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

**For further information please contact Lisa Devereaux, SRA Southern District Manager on 0456 590 497. ■**



## SUGAR SERVICES NEWS

### New Staff Member

**B**undaberg Sugar Services Limited would like to introduce you to Josh Marychurch. Josh has taken on the role of Field Officer alongside Michael Turner and began work on Tuesday, 3 October.

Josh is a Bundaberg local who has experience with farming operations, is hardworking and enjoys the outdoors.

If you see Josh out in the field, please introduce yourself and welcome Josh to the industry.

**Josh can be contacted on 0429 334 553 or by emailing jmarychurch@sugarservices.com.au. ■**







CANEGROWERS

## Representation on Your Behalf

*The Chairman, Elected Members and Staff of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS represented cane growers on a number of occasions. Executive members also attended many Branch meetings and other engagements in their own time.*

DATE	MEETING	PURPOSE	FOR MORE
16.08.23	QSL Review and Feedback	To receive update on roll-out of QSL Direct	Tanya Howard
18.08.23	Review of Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994	To receive progress update	Tanya Howard
21.08.23	Regional Business HQ Board meeting	To represent members	Tanya Howard
22.08.23	QCGO District Director Briefing	To receive update	Mark Pressler Tanya Howard
29.08.23	Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance Board meeting	To represent members	Dale Holliss Tanya Howard
05.09.23	Evolution Mining Mt Rawdon Pumped Hydro	To represent members and irrigators	Mark Pressler Dean Cayley Dale Holliss Tanya Howard
06.09.23	Energy Qld Customer Council	To represent irrigators	Dale Holliss
14.09.23	Bundaberg Regional Ratepayers Association	To represent members	Dean Cayley Tanya Howard

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➤ **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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## Electricity Bill Check Service

If you are an irrigating farmer, chances are you receive a pretty big electrical bill each month or quarter. It's part of the cost of doing business and it's a big cost. Electricity bills hurt, yet finding a way to reduce them never seems to be at the top of our to-do lists. Checking that you are on the best tariff for your usage needs is one way to make sure that you are not paying any more

than you need to be.

Comparing tariffs yourself can be confusing and time consuming. This is why we've created an Electricity Bill Checking Service for our members, where you just send us your bills and we'll tell you if you could potentially save by changing tariffs.



Save time trying to compare tariffs yourself. Contact **Bundaberg CANEGROWERS** on 4151 2555 for more information on how to get started.■

## 3G Closure, signal bars & coverage equivalence

... by QFF Corporate Partner - Telstra



A lot has happened since the October 2019 announcement to close the 3G network in June 2024.

As part of the announcement, Telstra committed to expanding their 4G coverage so that it will be equivalent to the 3G coverage provided today, by the time 3G closure occurs. As they continue to complete planned upgrades to increase the 4G footprint you may notice some changes to the signal bars on your phone. It is important however to note that fewer bars does not mean you are receiving a lesser service.

Signal bars differ between technologies and mobile devices, therefore they are not always a good indicator of coverage and performance. Almost every device is different when it comes to this as there are currently no standards

uniformly shared across all manufacturers. Comparing bar readings between different devices could be like comparing apples to oranges.

Similarly, when it comes to different technologies there is no direct correlation between bars and user experience on one technology compared to another. As you can see in the picture below, where they've measured the same device in the same location – the only difference being whether it was on the 3G or 4G network. The left results show 3G receiving higher bars, but a far lesser overall experience in both download and upload speeds compared to the 4G service on the right.

Because 4G is a newer, more efficient technology it is essentially meaningless to compare signal bars between what it

delivers and what 3G delivers.

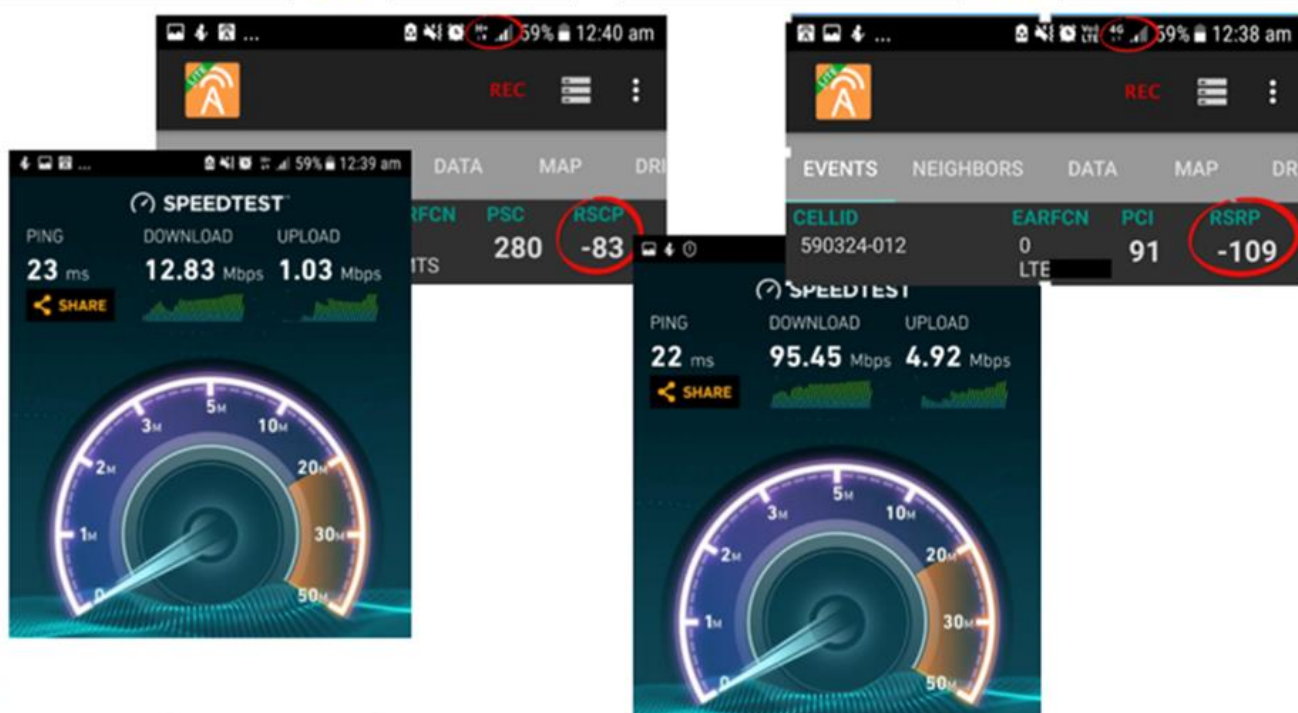
### Coverage equivalence between 3G and 4G by 30 June 2024

While 3G has been important in delivering the current mobile coverage to 99.6 per cent of the population and 2.6 million km<sup>2</sup> of Australia, the rollout of the more advanced 4G technology is rapidly approaching this coverage, reaching 99.4 per cent of the population today and an area of over 2 million km<sup>2</sup> of the country. Telstra is continuing to grow the 4G coverage and will be providing equivalent 4G coverage before the closure of the 3G network in June 2024.

Read more about Telstra's 3G closure [here](https://www.telstra.com.au/support/mobiles-devices/3g-closure) <https://www.telstra.com.au/support/mobiles-devices/3g-closure>.■

3G

4G



## Planning for soybeans (or other break crops)



After a recent run of wet seasons and the mill crushing into December in 2022, this year looks the complete opposite and all going well the crush will be finished around mid November due to the continuing dry weather. This means that there will be time to prepare the ground for soybeans if we get some storm rain to make ground preparation easier. To make sure growers are ready to plant when the time comes the following provides some advice on a range of topics.

### Ground preparation

Soybeans can be planted through trash blankets however this works best if the cane rows are around 1.8m as the wet harvest last season can make it hard planting into the stool area. This is because the stool profile is narrow due to the cane harvester and haulouts. Minimum tillage of the stool area or full cultivation are standard practices

however can leave the soil drier than normal.

### Varieties, other crops

The two (2) main soybean varieties grown in Bundaberg are A-6785, best planted in December, and Hayman, best planted in January. If anyone wants to plant a later crop, Kuranda can be planted in February, though there may be limited seed availability.

Given the forecast dry summer ahead those with limited water for irrigation who still want to plant a legume crop for the soil health and nitrogen benefits may wish to consider cowpea or lablab. Cowpea varieties vary though most of the black seeded varieties are more tolerant of wet season diseases than the traditional brown/red seeded varieties.

Lablab grows a large biomass but does have the issue of hard seed that can last for many years before germinating making control before it flowers the highest priority.

### Weed control

Regardless of being grown for grain or green manure, weed control is important for a variety of reasons. Volunteer cane carries cane pest and diseases from one crop to the next and can be controlled in the legume

crop with Verdict or something similar. Grasses can be controlled via pre emergent herbicides like Stomp and Dual Gold or knock downs like Verdict.

Broadleaf weeds are more of a challenge although can be controlled as a pre emergent herbicide such as Spinnaker or Valor or with knockdowns such as Spinnaker or Blazer. There may be issues with plantback for some herbicides so growers should talk to agronomists for advice.

### Planting, Seed, Harvesting

While there is reasonable supplies of soybean seed there may be some specific short term shortages due to transport logistics if the seed has not been arranged prior to planting. For those without a soybean planter there are planting contractors who are able to plant the soybeans. The same when it comes to harvesting.

### Prices

Currently soybean prices are the same as they were at this time last year with contracts available for \$800 per tonne for edible 1 quality. Due to a shortage from last season there are higher prices for delivery of uncontracted out of season soybeans. If the weather conditions stay dry especially on the Darling Downs and Northern NSW, there may be some upside in the prices come harvest in 2024. ■



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The Bundaberg District Canegrower

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