The Bundaberg District Canegrower

Volume 21, Issue 6
September 2026

In this Issue:

Chair's Update

How much drier can it get, with no real useful rain since April it is almost as dry as it gets.

Ratoon cane is all in need of moisture if you haven't already watered it twice, some growers have even opted to irrigate standing cane forfeiting some CCS but giving the next crop a good start. Planting has been somewhat fragmented with most blocks needing to be pre-watered before planting to achieve an acceptable seed bed.

All is not lost though with CCS going through the roof. CCS for week 16 was at 16.07. Looking at the past 4 seasons still suggests some upside yet before we see the peak. The Base CCS has been increased to 14.00.

Mill performance in the past month or two has been quite erratic with three weeks at 51,000+ tonnes, then a dismal 28,000 tonne week. We all agree that this is the time to be really getting into it with who knows what the weather gods have in store for us and the old saying "everyday is a day closer to rain".

Growers are reminded that any crushing-related issues, including siding problems, derailments, Delivery Advice discrepancies or CCS queries, can be referred to Bundaberg CANEGROWERS for investigation and support.

Planting of one-eye setts is underway. It has been a different growing season for them with the early planted seedlings struggling somewhat with the cool weather, onwards and upwards now though with the weather warming up and the days getting longer.

Sugar prices have moved in the right direction with some much more acceptable prices on offer for those looking at pricing themselves. The harvest pool has also seen some good increases in the last month.

The restrictions on fire permits has been lifted for the time being, however I think we will see them being applied again in the not-so-distant future. Only some widespread rainfall will help to alleviate the fire risk. Rural Fire Service Queensland has passed on their thanks to growers for their understanding and assistance, in particular with navigating recent permit suspensions.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd and Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited AGMs will be held at The Railway from 6pm on Wednesday 14 October.

Congratulations to Matt Leighton, President of Bundaberg Netball Association on receiving the Bundaberg Netball Association Senior Volunteer of the Year Award.

Mark Pressler
Chairman

Matthew Leighton pictured with his award from the Bundaberg Netball Association.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd Newsletter
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Email: bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au
Website: www.bdbcanegrowers.com.au

2026 Season Indicative Advances Program

Based on QSL reports 28 August 2026

The below schedule is the Bundaberg Supplier Specific Advance Program. This is not the QSL Standard Advance Schedule and does not apply to growers participating in QSL FlexPay. These growers should refer to their individual Advances Payment Schedule, available in their QSL Direct account.

Applicable From	Uncommitted Pool Advance (AUD/tonne IPS)		QSL Bundaberg Supplier Advance Rate
Payment Date	**Payment Change**	**To**	
Initial	**$0**	**$232**	**50%**
17-Jun-26	$0	$232	50%
15-Jul-26	$0	$234	50%
19-Aug-26	$0	$258	55%
16-Sep-26	$0	$290	55%
21-Oct-26	$0	$290	55%
18-Nov-26	$26	$317	60%
16-Dec-26	$26	$343	65%
20-Jan-27	$26	$370	70%
17-Feb-27	$26	$396	75%
17-Mar-27	$26	$422	80%
21-Apr-27	$26	$449	85%
19-May-27	$26	$475	90%
16-Jun-27	$26	$502	95%
By 31 Jul 27	$26	$528	100%

Notes:

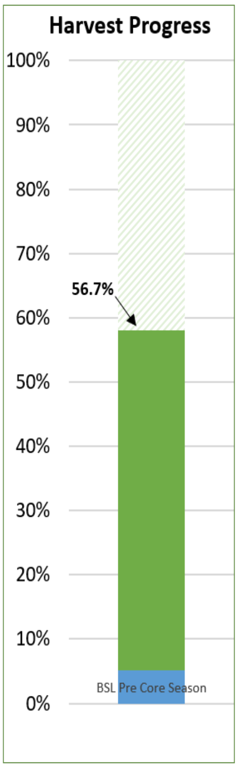
Under QSL's Standard Advances program, supplying growers and millers are paid a proportional amount of their current estimated final sugar pricing result.

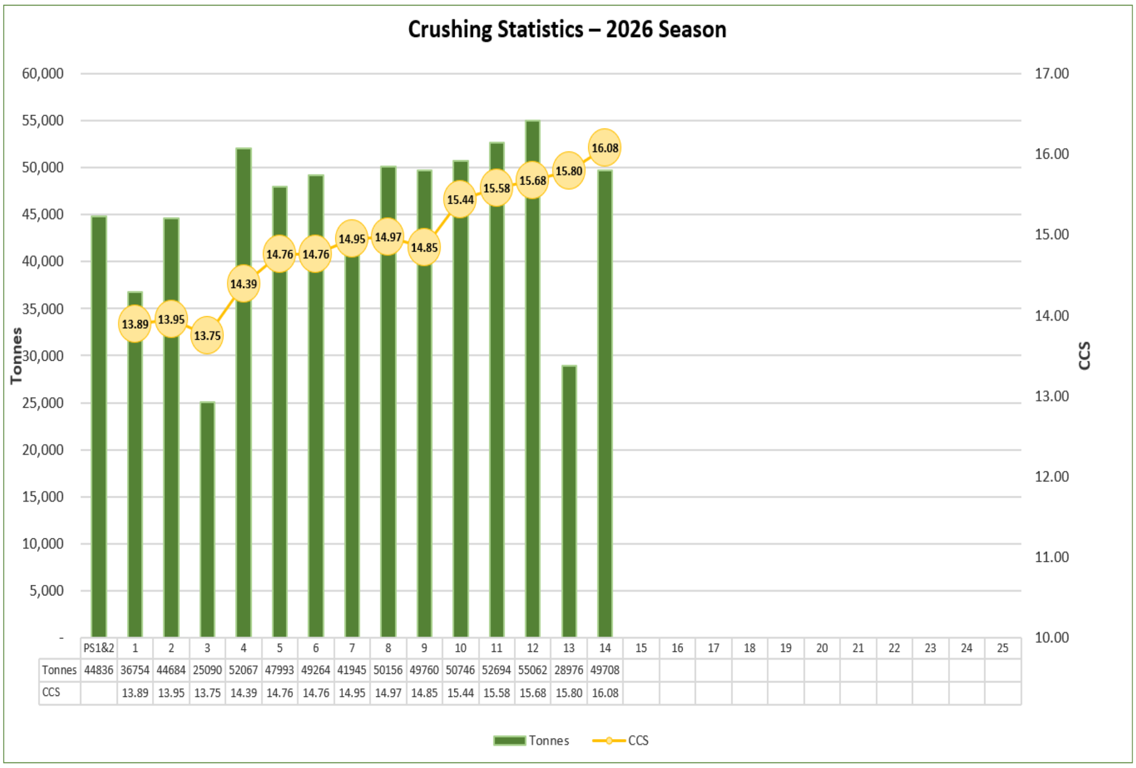
The program is indicative only and may change during the season. It should not be taken as a commitment by QSL regarding Advance payment rates or timing. The QSL Board reviews the program periodically and may approve or amend scheduled increases, taking into account factors such as marketing and shipping plans, sugar price and currency movements, cash flow timing, and suppliers' pricing elections.

The figures below are estimates only, based on the default QSL pricing position of 98% Harvest Pool and 2% US Quota Pool using pool values at the specified date. Pool values may change as the season progresses. Estimated payments exclude GST, allowances, deductions, and any other grower or miller adjustments. Based on indicative pool values, with an estimated combined QSL Harvest and US Quota pool value of $528/t IPS as of 28 August 2026.

Note: The 'Applicable From' payment dates listed below may differ from your own payment dates due to your local milling arrangements and bank processing times.

*The QSL Standard Advance Rate Default Payment incorporates a weighted average Shared Pool and finance allocation. Shared Pool and finance costs applied to grower payments vary by grower due to regional costs, region-specific Advances programs, and any customised Advances arrangements under QSL FlexPay. QSL Direct growers can access their individual Shared Pool and finance cost details in their QSL Direct account.





Sugar Market Lessons: averaging up to manage pricing risk

Many of the ideas mentioned in this article comes from the grains industry and an article by Andrew Whitelaw from Episode 3.

With sugar prices recently falling below the cost of production and short sharp periods of price rallies before it moves back lower, there is always the temptation to want the best price and therefore wait longer before pricing any sugar. This unfortunately leaves growers exposed as the short rallies often fall as quickly as they rose and growers miss the opportunity to do any pricing. Even the experts can't predict how long or how high a price rally will last, and whether any drop is just a correction before it goes higher again or just continues to fall back to previous lows. The problem is nobody knows when the prices will recover or when that recovery might occur.

A grower is often focused on the production of the crop, rather than the pricing of the crop so it is hard to keep up with all the pricing information to make the best decision. One way to mitigate this risk is to ensure that the pricing is done in smaller parcels with a range of target prices already in the forward pricing system. This ensures that when a target price is achieved, the order happens automatically.

Averaging allows sugar to be marketed as the price improves, without requiring the grower to decide when the best time is to price or predict when the market will reach its peak. Recent movements in sugar prices have seen rallies lasting between one day and a week depending on production updates from other sugar producing countries, the oil price, interest rates and global conflicts.

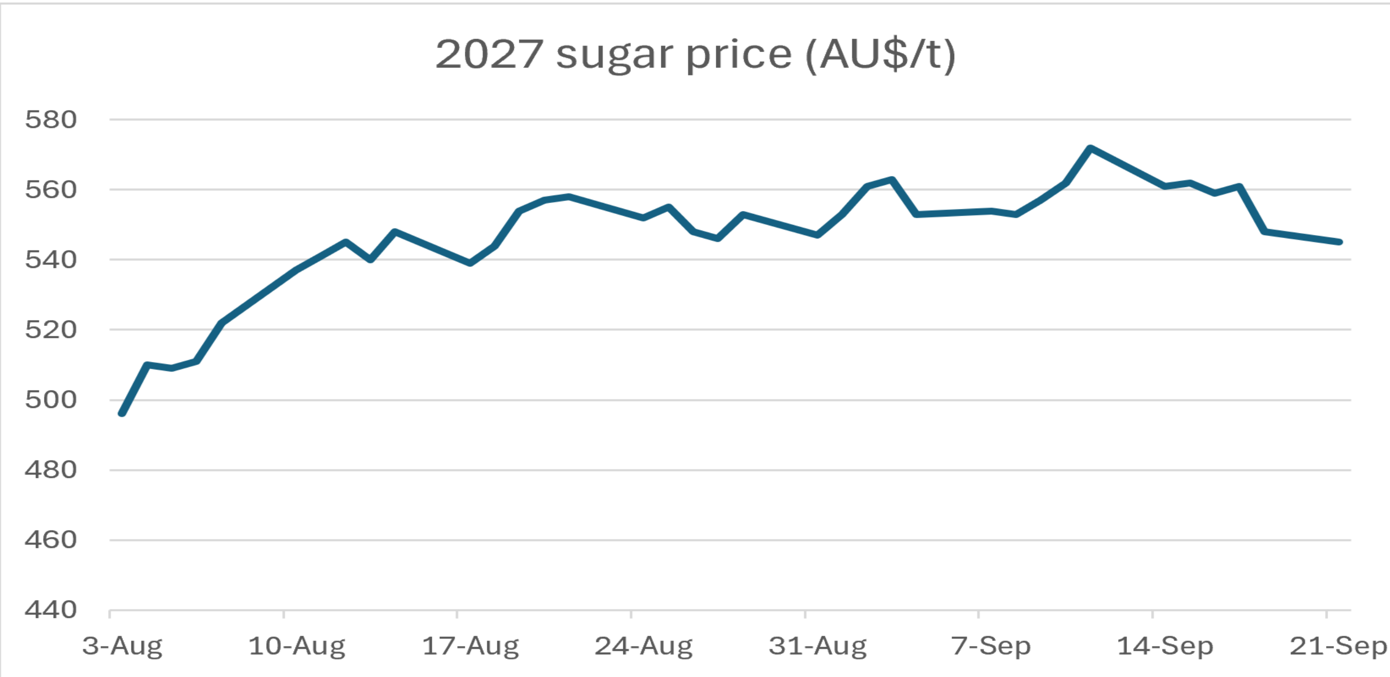
A benefit of this method is that not all of the sugar sells at one point and price. Growers are able to price progressively such that if the market moves upwards again, there is still some sugar tonnes available to market on the next round of rallies. If the market falls, at least some pricing has already occurred at a higher price, improving returns.

Selecting the size of the sugar parcel to sell is up to the grower. It could be sold as 10 tonnes of GEI sugar, approximately 120 to 150 tonnes of cane; parcels equal to 10 percent of total expected sugar production or 20 percent of the total expected sugar production. Smaller sale parcels create more pricing options leading to a higher chance of selling the sugar. Larger pricing parcels offer less chances to sell the sugar but can result in a higher average if the parcels sell. The downside of this, or any forward pricing option, is that if the pricing is unrealistically high no sugar is sold, leaving the grower relying solely on the harvest pool.

A practical example of this is the 2027 daily sugar price as announced by QSL for August and to 21 September as graphed below. The price started at $496 per tonne on 3 August, went as high as $572 per tonne on 11 September and on 21 September it finished at $545 per tonne. A grower able to price every day would have achieved an average price of $546 per tonne. If a grower priced every day only when the price was over $550 per tonne, they would average $557. If a grower priced their sugar at the prices of $550, $560 and $570 and received the final price for each day the price initially passed through the target price, they would average $562 per tonne of sugar. While every method is valid, the easiest one for a grower to manage is selecting a realistic pricing target and placing an order with QSL.

The final method does not require any market knowledge, however takes advantage of a rising market without knowing where the top will be. It also allows more pricing to occur if the market increases again later and captures some higher pricing if the market falls away and does not reach these levels again.

The idea of forward pricing is not making one perfect call, but a series of marketing decisions that spread risk while taking advantage of pricing opportunities when they occur. It enables pricing to occur without knowing what will happen in the markets overnight as prices rise and fall across the grower pricing timeframe.



Burning and fire permit update

Current situation

As at the time of writing (21 September) all fire permits are able to be used for burning cane and trash however the regional fire risk remains heightened, due to the dry conditions. The burning times have been reduced to 5pm on one day until 6am the following day so that the winds are lighter and there is slightly more humidity.

Reminder on Fire Permit Responsibilities

Growers are reminded as part of either their fire permit or while using the Cane Burning Notice that all parts of either must be met for growers to meet their obligations. While Bundaberg CANEGROWERS frequently reminds growers of the requirement to contact Firecom on 1800 354 621, this is not the only obligation. Other obligations include roadside Smoke Hazard signs and notification of neighbours prior to lighting a fire.

Roadside Smoke Hazard signs need to be erected at any time smoke is expected to cross a road and impact the visibility of those driving vehicles along the road. These signs need to be erected prior to the burn and remain in place until all smoke has finished blowing across the road. They are available from Fire Wardens or from the QFES Rural Fire Bundaberg office. Please contact the brigade office by phone on (07) 4154 6120 to arrange to collect the signs.

The notification of neighbours has become more important since the farming landscape has changed from all cane to a mixed cropping farming system that have small crops and tree crops included.

Macadamias are particularly sensitive to fire due to the large amount of oil in their leaves which can burn or scald without direct impact from fire.

The forgotten tree crop around the district are the pine timber plantations which neighbour several farms around the district. Due to the fire risk HQ Plantations, which own the pine trees, have a camera that has visual and thermal imaging that is scanning the entire district for fires every 5 minutes. As a long-term industry in the region they understand cane fires are a part of the cane farming system and generally pose no threat to plantations.

HQ Plantations just ask that if a farm neighbours their plantations that you notify their local manager Steve Dobson on 0429 490 469 prior to lighting the fire so they do not allocate resources to preparing their fire teams as not all of them are based in Bundaberg.

Steve is also a fire warden for the areas around their plantations so is aware of all the permits issued in that fire warden zone.

Sunwater Pricing Rebate - The implications of not applying

Growers have had the opportunity to apply for a 15 percent rebate to their Sunwater irrigation bills since July 2025. While there are some growers who have applied for this rebate, information from Sunwater indicates that there are still a large portion who have not applied to date. Growers need to have applied and been approved for the rebate before 30 June 2027 for two reasons.

The first reason is to access the cash rebate available by applying through QRIDA. The second reason that growers need to apply for the rebate is that from 1 July 2027, those growers who have applied and been approved for the 15 percent rebate are eligible for the prices set by the government, known as regulated prices. If you are NOT approved as an eligible irrigator, you will NOT be eligible for the 15 percent rebate from 1 July 2027 and will NOT be eligible for regulated prices.

At this stage no one is aware what the water prices will be for the unregulated pricing, however it can be assumed to be a minimum of 15 percent higher than the regulated pricing and possibly higher.

What to do

All members who are Sunwater customers and have not completed an initial application for the current 15 percent rebate should do so as soon as possible to assess their eligibility for the rebate and to receive some money back from Sunwater bills dating back to July 2025. Applications can be completed online or via a paper application which is available at reception of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS.

Information such as copies of the Sunwater invoices, proof of payment such as bank statements, two forms of ID of which one must be photo ID such as a vehicle license or a passport and a Medicare card need to be added to the initial application, as well as completing a statutory declaration declaring you are a farmer using the water for irrigation purposes.

Tanya Howard and Matt Leighton can assist growers in completing the application form and sending the application to QRIDA.

SUGAR SERVICES

SUGAR SERVICES NEWS

Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited Annual General Meeting

The Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited Annual General Meeting will be held on 14 October 2026.

Under the BSSL constitution one (1) Grower Elected Director must retire at each Annual General Meeting. To be a Grower Elected Director you must be a member of the company or representative of a corporate member, at least 18 years old, a grower, and a supplier to the Millaquin Mill.

To be eligible for election as a Grower Elected Director the person or some member intending to nominate the person must give notice in writing signed by the nominee giving consent to the nomination.

To be valid the notice must be received at our registered office by close of business Monday, 12 October 2026.

Anyone interested in nominating is requested to contact Company Secretary Tanya Howard on 4151 2555 for further information.

Council backs "Check the Science" Campaign

Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance Ltd (BAFFA) is running a Check the Science campaign calling for a Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) review of the science behind major policy decisions which it says are devastating the State's core primary industries of farming, fisheries and forestry.

BAFFA sought local government support through the Bundaberg Regional Council's Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee, which was established following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Council and local industry bodies.

In response, Bundaberg Regional Council Mayor Helen Blackburn introduced a Mayoral Minute at an Ordinary Meeting to formally endorse BAFFA's campaign. The motion passed with unanimous support from all sitting councillors.

Following the council's resolution, Mayor Blackburn officially wrote to both State and Federal Ministers. The formal correspondence requests an immediate, comprehensive review of the compliance requirements currently placed on farmers throughout the Bundaberg region.

Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee

The Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee was established following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU formalises a commitment by Council to consult with Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance Ltd (BAFFA) and Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers Limited (BFVG) on Council issues likely to impact the production of food, fibre and agricultural produce in the region.

Primary Production Exemption and Land Tax

Land tax is an annual state tax that has been in effect since 1915. It's calculated on the freehold land you own in Queensland at midnight on 30 June each year. The tax rate that applies depends on what type of owner you are, the total taxable value of all your land and if any exemptions apply.

Land tax is collected to provide government services and infrastructure for Queenslanders.

Different rates apply depending on this total value and what type of owner you are. You may be liable when the total taxable value of your land is:

- $350,000 or more - for absentees, companies and trustees of trusts and superannuation funds
- $600,000 or more - for individuals and trustees of special disability trusts.

If all or part of your land is used solely for the business of primary production, you may be eligible for a land tax exemption.

Eligibility

The primary production exemption is available if the land is used for the following activities:

- maintaining animals to sell them or their bodily produce, including their natural increase
- cultivating land to sell produce
- propagating or cultivating plants or mushrooms to sell them or their produce
- planting or tending trees in a plantation or forest to sell the trees or their produce
- another activity that is agriculture, dairy farming or pasturage
- an activity that is directly related to and supporting a primary production activity and carried on for the same business.

You may claim the exemption for multiple parcels of land using the one application form (Form LT11) as long as the land is used for a primary production activity and is carried on for the same business of primary production (e.g. separate application forms are required if you run your own cattle on 1 parcel and grow sugarcane on another and want to claim exemptions for both).

Eligible owners

The exemption will only apply if the land is owned by:

- an individual (other than a trustee or absentee)
- a relevant proprietary company
- a charitable institution
- a trustee of a trust if all beneficiaries of the trust are persons mentioned above.

Running a primary production business

To be eligible for the exemption, you must be conducting a primary production business. To determine this, we consider if the primary production activity:

- is a commercial enterprise in the nature of a going concern
- is being carried on for the purpose of profit on a continuous and repetitive basis
- is conducted in an organised and systematic manner rather than on an ad hoc or haphazard basis
- conforms with established commercial principles for the operation of that type of business
- uses a system or systems, as well as record keeping.

A business may be conducted even if profit is limited or when a loss is made.

Primary production activities that are token, trivial or more like a hobby will not be eligible for the exemption.

For further information visit https://qro.qld.gov.au/land-tax/relief/primary-production-exemption.

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION, LEADERSHIP AND SERVICES, AND PROMOTE UNITY IN THE INTEREST OF GROWERS

A new resource for the next generation of Queensland agriculture

The Queensland Farmers' Federation has released the Careers in Agriculture magazine - a free guide packed with real career stories, industry pathway guides and study options across Queensland's food, fibre and foliage industries.

We'd encourage you to share it with your networks and help connect young Queenslanders with the opportunities our industry has to offer.

Download it free at www.qff.org.au/projects/careers-in-agriculture-magazine.

Strong industries require strong leaders

That's why CANEGROWERS is investing in the next crop of young leaders through the Next Ratoon Mentoring Program.

The program connects eager and aspiring young growers with experienced and knowledgeable mentors from both inside and outside the industry. Participants build strong connections, as well as networking, negotiation, decision-making and leadership skills. They accumulate a wealth of knowledge that will help them contribute to a profitable and innovative sugarcane industry.

Expressions of interest for the 2027 mentee positions are now open, with the program scheduled to commence in February 2027.

If you would you like to be part of CANEGROWERS Next Ratoon Program visit the CANEGROWERS website.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd

Representation on Your Behalf

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 INFORMATION CONTACT
26.08.2026	QFF Water & Energy Policy Committee	To represent irrigators	Tanya Howard
02.09.2026	Sugar Research Australia	To represent members	Tanya Howard
03.09.2026	Sunwater Introduction to Irrigation Pricing	To receive update	Tanya Howard
07.09.2025	QCGO People Community & Culure Committee meeting	To represent members	Tanya Howard
08-09.09.2026	QCGO District Manager's Workshop	To receive update	Tanya Howard
08.09.2026	Burnett Mary Regional Group Reefwise Consortium Meeting	To receive update	Matt Leighton
16.09.2026	QCGO Farm Productivity and R&D Investment committee	To represent members	Tanya Howard
17.09.2026	QFF Water & Energy Policy Committee	To represent irrigators	Tanya Howard
21.09.2026	Regional Business HQ Board	To represent members	Tanya Howard
24.09.2026	Coastal Burnett Groundwater Advisory Committee quarterly meeting	To represent irrigators	Matt Leighton Tanya Howard

Training Opportunities

The SmartAg Queensland project continues to go from strength to strength having delivered training to more than 1000 farmers across Queensland since June 2024. QFF, alongside peak body members and delivery partners Cotton Australia, CANEGROWERS and Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, have delivered priority training to the cotton, cane and horticulture sectors across Queensland.

Course	Date	Subsidy
Forklift Training (Strategix)	13 October	25%
Forklift Training (ASTA-Formal Course Work)	12 October 22 October 12 November 24 November 14 Deccember	25%
Work Safely at Heights (ASTA)	21 October 18 November 14 December	25%
First Aid (ASTA)	22 October 3 November 10 November 26 November 9 December 21 December	50%
Pilot/Escort Training	TBC	25%
Chemical Safety Training	TBC	25%
Truck Training and Licensing	Contact Bundaberg CANEGROWERS	75% off MR, HR, HC 50% off MC
Remote Pilot License Training	Contact Bundaberg CANEGROWERS	25%

To apply for one of the types of training listed above, visit www.qff.org.au/project/smartag and complete the Safety Training Request form. Please note that applying does not mean you are guaranteed approval and that applying on behalf of a group of interested participants will take priority over requests for training for 1 individual. Training requests are subject to available funding and can take up to 30 days for QFF to review.

CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted:
Double 6T tipper bin with or without tractor.
Phone - 0428 535 385.

CLASSIFIED & JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

As a free service to financial members, small suitable classified and employment advertisements of up to 30 words only will be printed.

Advertisements will be accepted from non-members, charged at $11 per 7-word line or part thereof.

Contact:
Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Office on telephone 4151 2555 or fax 4153 1986. or email bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au

Grower Services Officer

Bundaberg, Queensland | Full-time

Bundaberg Sugar Limited is seeking a motivated and technically capable Grower Services Officer to join our Cane Supply team.

This is a varied role combining grower engagement, cane supply operations and GIS technology. The successful applicant will work closely with growers, harvesting groups and internal teams to support effective communication, harvest planning and informed decision-making across the cane supply network.

Reporting to the Cane Supply Manager, the role would suit an agricultural professional with GIS capability or a graduate or near-graduate looking to apply their GIS training within the sugar industry.

Key responsibilities

- Build strong working relationships within the sugar cane growing and milling environment.
- Act as a key point of communication between growers, harvesting groups and the Cane Supply Department.
- Observe and report on harvesting performance, production rates, equipment performance, quality control and cane losses.
- Record and analyse information to support timely responses to grower enquiries, including CCS variations.
- Assist the Traffic Office by managing and sharing cane supply information.
- Use GIS tools to map and analyse farm blocks, harvest progress and spatial productivity patterns.
- Expand GIS information into an intradepartmental user portal.
- Coordinate grower estimates, harvest rosters and the annual Harvesting Group Safety Forum.
- Identify opportunities to improve planning, information sharing and decision-making through GIS, technology and AI.

BUNDABERG SUGAR

About you

To be successful in this role, you will ideally have:

- Agricultural experience in cane production or a related field.
- A current driver's licence.
- Experience using cane supply chain operational databases or software.
- Strong Microsoft Office skills.
- Confidence using AI tools in a workplace environment.
- GIS training from a Queensland university or equivalent, either as a graduate or near-graduate.
- Experience using GIS software for data capture, management, modelling and map visualisation.
- An understanding of spatial analysis, remote sensing and image processing.
- Exposure to web mapping, geospatial processing or GIS programming and automation.
- The ability to apply GIS knowledge to practical agricultural and operational challenges.

You will also be an effective communicator who can build positive relationships with a broad range of stakeholders. You will be organised, curious and innovative, with high standards and a practical "can-do" approach.

This is an opportunity to apply agricultural knowledge and emerging technology in a role that directly supports growers, harvesting operations and the broader Bundaberg sugar industry.

To apply, please submit your resume and a cover letter to gjharris@bundysugar.com.au outlining your relevant experience and interest in the position. All applicants will be contacted regarding the status of their application.

The Bundaberg District Canegrower

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PRIORITY

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