Update on Wilmar’s attempt to strip growers of their rights to access QSL

Private Members Bill to Amend the Qld Sugar Industry Act

Readers would be aware that Shane Knuth MP (Member for Dalrymple), has put forward a Private Members Bill titled Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015. The object of this Bill is to provide cane growers with the right to have real choice over who sells and prices Grower Economic Interest sugar and addresses the imbalance in market power between mill owners and growers. The Bill has been referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee for review. See front page story in canenews edition 17th July 2015 (click here).

The Committee invited written submissions on the Bill with a closing date of Monday 20th July. Canegrowers Burdekin responded to this invitation see separate story within canenews below.

In a very encouraging step CANEGROWERS Queensland held a positive meeting with Lawrence Springborg (Leader of the Opposition) on 11th August. Mr Springborg outlined to Paul Schembri (Chair QCGO) and Dan Galligan (CEO QCGO) during the meeting, his clear commitment to working proactively to develop legislation associated with delivering certainty for growers and resolving the current marketing issue.

Mr Springborg acknowledged that with the ongoing leadership of shadow Agriculture Minister, Deb Frecklington they will be working with their Liberal National Party colleagues and Katter Australia Party MPs to develop amendments to the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015 to bring about a single piece of legislation to resolve the marketing dispute.

This commitment is in line with the ongoing work by the LNP over many months, working on a legislative option to ensure equity and fairness for cane growers, and a dispute resolution mechanism when required.

The meeting ratified the intention to bring these issues to a resolution by the end of this year.

Going forward CANEGROWERS is currently preparing a strong presentation for the Agriculture and Environment Committee Public Hearing into the Sugar Industry

Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015

The Queensland Government Agriculture and Environment Committee as part of their review of the Private Members Bill put forward by Shane Knuth MP (Member for Dalrymple), titled Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Bill 2015, invited written submissions from interested parties.

Canegrowers Burdekin together with 23 other parties made submissions.

Continues pages 2
Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 2015 continued

We stressed the following key points in our submission:

1. The price growers are paid for their cane is directly linked to the market value of sugar. To be clear the price growers are paid for their cane is around 2/3rds of the price received for the sugar. Growers wear the greatest risk and therefore it is only fair and reasonable that Growers Economic Interest (GEI) be recognised and that Growers have the right to say who markets the raw sugar that impacts the price they are paid for their GEI.

2. We are not saying that Wilmar cannot compete to market GEI sugar but we are saying that Wilmar does not have the right to take control and to strip growers of their right to utilise QSL which is an Australian, not for profit, industry owned, marketing company that is heart of the sugar marketing system, a system which has faithfully served the needs of the Queensland cane industry for over 100 years.

3. The introduction of a pre-contract arbitration process provides a method to resolve deadlocks in regard to the CSA for ALL clauses not just marketing.

4. WSAustralia and WSTrading are separate legal entities. We understand that WSTrading is a privately owned, for profit, Singaporean based company. This separation may have a negative impact on the company that has responsibility to operate the mills and on the workers employed by that company. Also, Wilmar’s current proposal is for WSAustralia to sign a 15 year lock in contract with WSTrading, once this contract is in place Wilmar International could sell WSAustralia and therefore obtain the marketing rights without the need to continue to support the industry.

5. Even if a commercial resolution is reached today – this amendment to the legislation is still needed. As we know from Wilmar’s behaviour in this marketing dispute and the CBL growers Supreme Court legal case that even if something is agreed today – Wilmar will never be satisfied until they have everything – they will be back to take more before the ink is dry.

6. To grow this industry, whether for the production of raw sugar or to supply cane for the Government’s exciting biofuels mandate requires growers to have confidence. If an international company is allowed to strip Australian growers of their 100 year old rights this will also strip growers of their confidence.

7. A strong cane industry = a strong Burdekin economy and job security.

Wilmar Sugar ... Building more profitable cane farms

Wilmar took the surprising approach with their submission (click here) to the Agriculture and Environment Committee of calling it “Building more profitable cane farms”.

We feel it was a surprising approach as we have stressed to Wilmar time and time again that the effort and resources that have been spent in the marketing dispute would be much better utilised by working together to reduce growers input costs which would assist growers in their attempts to make a profit and to stay in business.

Wilmar appear to have treated their submission as their “last stand” and must have missed reading “How to make Friends and Influence People”.

From our perception they have threatened the Government with their statements that the implementation of this legislation would risk the future viability of the milling business and the future of their 2000 employees and saying the proposed changes would have implications under existing trade agreements and would have significant impacts on Queensland international reputation as a place to invest.

We also feel Wilmar appear to be showing the Committee disrespect by questioning the Committee for allowing Shane Knuth to have support in explaining the proposed Amendment Bill and perhaps Wilmar went over the top with their statement that the Amendment Bill is “heavy handed industry wide re-regulation that expropriates the raw sugar they manufacture in their sugar mills”.

Interestingly, Wilmar have continued pushing that in 2017 they own the sugar the plant manufactures ...once again forgetting that they have cancelled the very agreement that transfer title to them. Title is currently transferred to Wilmar under a short clause 6.3 of the CSA being “Title and risk in the cane shall pass to Wilmar Sugar immediately upon delivery of the cane to Wilmar Sugar at the Delivery point”. Wilmar have given notice and they have terminated the CSA effective from the end of the 2016 crush....effectively cancelling any ownership rights they may have held.

We also found it interesting that Wilmar feel that “raw sugar marketing was de-regulated in 2006 with the express intention that sugar millers would be able to determine how to market the product they make”. Our reading of the key principles of the deregulation reform Memorandum of Understand between the Queensland Sugar Industry (millers and growers) and the Queensland Government signed in October 2005 (click here) state that QSL would continue to be the industry’s preferred bulk raw sugar export marketing company. We also note that the Australian Sugar Milling Council state in the MOU that “all members of the ASMC remain committed to working with QSL to assist QSL to remain the preferred marketer by suppliers and customers of Queensland produced bulk raw sugar for export.”

Click here to view: The 24 submissions made to the Committee, The Draft Amendment Bill, The Draft Amendment Bill Explanatory Notes
Crush statistics

**BURDEKIN MILLS - 2015 SEASON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Ending</th>
<th>Rain Stops hrs</th>
<th>Week CROP CRUSHED</th>
<th>Season tonnes</th>
<th>Rain Stops hrs</th>
<th>Week CROP CRUSHED</th>
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Season: 8,270,000

**Burdekin Tonnes Cut Per Week**

**Burdekin CCS**

**Burdekin Dirt**
First for the Burdekin

Canegrowers Burdekin Director, Russell Jordan, is the first grower in this region to be accredited under the Smartcane BMP program by completing the three key water quality modules which cover:

⇒ Soil health and plant nutrition management;
⇒ Pest, disease and weed management and
⇒ Drainage and Irrigation management.

Russell didn’t have to change a thing about the way he farms; he just had to prove what he was doing.

The process resulted in Russell gaining a much greater understanding of the functions provided from his GPS to assist with record keeping, but his trustee old exercise book was also an important record keeping tool.

Russell said some mornings he would put in 30 minutes or so over coffee before he started the day and he found the local Smartcane BMP Facilitator Terry Granshaw (0437 553 149) to be of great assistance.

The Smartcane BMP program is a voluntary, industry led, government supported best practice system for cane growing across Queensland. CANEGROWERS secured funding for the development and delivery of the program in partnership with the Queensland Government and the Australian cane industry.

In recent years, the cane industry has been layered with regulation – meaning farm management practices were being dictated by others.

Growers, like Russell, understand that the community wants to know that their iconic sugarcane industry is doing the right thing. The Smartcane BMP not only is about productivity, profitability and sustainability for farmers, but will also fill this important function.

The Smartcane BMP will help Australia maintain its competitive edge in the increasingly competitive world market. Being able to show that Australian growers are productive and sustainable producers of quality raw sugar is becoming increasingly important to the international buyers, and the Smartcane BMP is the way to show just that.

Wilmar crush update - 12 August 2015

The continuation of ideal harvesting conditions has seen excellent crushing progress made in all regions in the past fortnight. Last week saw the Burdekin mills achieve their third-highest weekly throughput total ever, with almost 427,700 tonnes crushed. The Herbert mills’ total of 226,548 was the highest recorded in seven years.

All mills continue to perform well. So far this season there has been a significant improvement in factory crushing rates and sugar recovery - the strongest performance in both of these areas in several years. This has been achieved while also maintaining or improving factory reliability. Our challenge is to continue this performance for the remainder of the season.

More than 40 per cent of the Burdekin crop has now been crushed. As at 8am today, the mills had crushed a total of 3.48 million tonnes of cane for the season. The CCS average for the season is about 13.96.

The Burdekin mills are currently more than half a million tonnes ahead of our technical budget for the season. This has been achieved through consistently strong performances from all sectors.

Despite the prolonged dry conditions, the crop is holding well and we expect the pre-season estimate of 8.27 million tonnes to be achieved. Provided the mills continue to perform well and there are no significant weather disruptions, the season should be finalised in the first half of November.
Dual herbicide sprayer ready for growers to trial

After a successful display at the recent Sugar Innovation Expo in Brandon, the new 6 row Dual Herbicide Sprayer is waiting for growers to collect and trial on their cane paddocks.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) extension officer Brock Dembowski said: “The sprayer was developed by DAF in response to cane growers’ requests for a simple, inexpensive spray system that could apply glyphosate (Roundup®) and other non-residual herbicides to the inter row and pre-emergent herbicides to the row instead of the usual mix of more expensive cane herbicides over the whole paddock.”

The sprayer prototype has already been successfully used in cane paddocks across far north Queensland for the past two years. Its development is part of the Queensland and Australian government’s commitment to Reef Plan and improving water quality to the Great Barrier Reef.

In essence, the dual herbicide sprayer is a non-shielded, banded sprayer that is particularly useful for controlling difficult weeds that occur in the inter row. It has been known to lower production costs by reducing the amount of newer, more expensive, pre-emergent herbicides required to effectively control weeds.

“DAF staff would like to encourage farmers to take the rig to their farms and give it a try. We are really keen for you to let us know how it operates under Burdekin conditions,” Mr Dembowski said.

The Dual Herbicide Spray rig can be collected from the SRA farm off Sayers Road. For further details about collection, transport, set up and operation contact Brock Dembowski, Extension Officer, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Phone: 0467 819 592.

Growers support a good CORES

Cane farmers across the Burdekin are contributing to ‘save a life’ with the half a cent could save a life CORES voluntary levy deduction.

COMMunity Response to Eliminating Suicide (CORES) is a local not-for-profit organisation trying to prevent suicide by giving locals the knowledge to see and understand the signs before it’s too late and lives are lost.

Ten percent of CANEGROWERS Burdekin members are contributing via the levy deduction with Wilmar matching the grower deductions processed through cane pay dollar for dollar.

Earlier this year Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) donated $1000 to this worthy cause.

CORES have obtained DGR (deductible gift recipient) status which means donations can be claimed as tax deductions. Growers can still donate via voluntary deduction by completing the deduction authority form available here.

If you would like to speak with CORES Ross can be contacted on 0427 455 313.
Lower Burdekin Catchment Development Project

The Board of Canegrowers Burdekin met with Geoff Croke from PSI Delta at their meeting held on Tuesday.

Geoff has been engaged by the Queensland Government to undertake Part 1 of a seven part project titled The Lower Burdekin Catchment Development Project.

This is a Queensland Government project that has been developed in response to the growing demand to access water from the Burdekin Falls Dam and associated water distribution systems for the purpose of enabling appropriate and sustainable economic development and growth. This includes water (surface and groundwater) associated with the Burdekin Falls Dam, Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme and Lower Burdekin Water.

The aim of the project is to identify how the existing water infrastructure and water resources can be better used. Existing water allocations will remain unchanged as the focus is on identifying opportunities to make better use of water resources by increasing water allocation holder participation in the water market.

Geoff’s focus in Part 1 is on Demand and Market Assessment and the entire project is due for completion by early 2016.

Geoff was interested in obtaining Directors views, as irrigators, on the following questions:

- Why is percentage of total allocation traded in any year relatively small compared with other Australian systems?
- Why is percentage of temporary (seasonal assignment) traded in any year also small?
- What are grower sources of information on temporary and allocation water prices?
- Cane price increases (AUD) and sugar price (US$lb), & duration of price increase to stimulate water investment?
- How might markets for water be improved?
- Three most productive infrastructure upgrades across region?

The seven parts of this project are:

1. Demand and market assessment
2. Source of Water – Surface water and groundwater available
3. Water quality assessment – Surface and groundwater quality and environmental impacts from the using more water
4. Distribution infrastructure and supply capacity analysis -Engineering and costing
5. Infrastructure and regulatory/management options - improving efficiency and expanding water availability
6. Financial and economic analysis – an assessment of the commercial viability of development
7. Water development options - Integration
Rural Water Use Efficiency – Irrigation Futures update

The Rural Water Use Efficiency – Irrigation Futures (RWUE-IF) program is a partnership between the Queensland Government and major rural industries. It helps irrigators to better utilise their irrigation water through efficient system design and management. CANEGROWERS, is one of the six main industry groups partnering with the Queensland Government on RWUE-IF. Locally BPS has been contracted to provide on-the-ground activities.

In the Burdekin the RWUE-IF program has three components: the provision of extension support; a financial incentives scheme; and targeted dewatering activities.

Extension

The RWUE-IF extension officer is available to provide extension support to all growers on aspects of irrigation management. This can include, but is not limited to, assistance with irrigation scheduling, calculating water application volumes, pump flow testing and irrigation management plans for BMP. A number of extension tools are also available on the BPS website, such as, weekly crop water use; options for managing reduced applications; and calculators to determine how much water is being applied.

Financial Incentives Scheme

The financial incentives scheme is open to growers within the Burdekin Groundwater Management Area and Millaroo, Dalbeg and Leichhardt. It provides funding to assist growers to implement improvements to their irrigation systems and management to reduce the loss of water to deep drainage. So far, 13 growers have received funding under the program for projects ranging from irrigation scheduling tools to pipelines and automation. Approximately $353,500 in funding has been allocated to these projects.

Dewatering

Dewatering bores are being installed in strategic areas where there has been an accelerated rate of groundwater rise. It is hoped that groundwater levels can be stabilised or reduced by pumping the groundwater and reusing it for irrigation. These activities are being managed by the technical working group which is responsible for determining the target area and identifying suitable sites.

The first five bores were installed in Mulgrave in 2014. These have now pumped a combined total of 667 ML and an increase in the depth to groundwater is being seen in some of the monitoring sites close to the bores. In 2015, another three bores are being installed in the Upper Haughton. These sites all have promising yields and we hope to see similar results to Mulgrave in this area.

For more information on the RWUE-IF program, contact the RWUE extension officer, Marian Davis on 0428 927 079 or 4783 1101.
Pricing information

Growers can monitor QSL pool performance via the Price Pool Matrices published on the QSL website (www.qsl.com.au). This information is updated regularly and provides a sense of how the QSL-managed pools are performing over the current season.

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<th>2015 Season Advances &amp; Payments</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 August 15</td>
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<td>Final Payment</td>
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* paid

The Advance Program is a guide only. CANEGROWERS Burdekin takes no responsibility for its accuracy. It only applies to growers who did not forward price for 2013 (the default method). Growers who have forward priced for 2013 will be paid the same percentage of their final expected proceeds. For individual advance rates check your grower forecast on the Wilmar website.

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Waterfind Burdekin Haughton WSS Water Market Summary

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<th>Temporary Market</th>
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<th>Lowest Sell Order</th>
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<table>
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<th>Highest Buy Order</th>
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<td>Buyers Wanted</td>
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<th>Region</th>
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<td>96%</td>
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<th>Dam</th>
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<td>1,252,679</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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The above information is provided by Waterfind. The information provided is of a general nature only and must not be relied upon in substitution for professional advice. Waterfind accepts no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or timeliness of any information provided. For more information click here.
DATES TO REMEMBER

Renewable Energy Event, Friday 14 August, 4-6pm @ Metropole Hotel, 81 Palmer Street, Townsville

Harvest Management Meeting, Tuesday 25 August, Ph Wayne on 4790 3604 if you have any issues you would like raised at the meeting.

Energy Savers workshop, Tuesday 8 September, 2pm-4pm @ DAF 343 Old Clare Road, RSVP to 3851 6439

CANEGROWERS weather

The CANEGROWERS website features a weather section that by typing in your postcode will provide you with a seven day forecast for your desired postcode along with a 12 month rainfall outlook, SOI information and sea surface temperatures. To see the latest forecast for your postcode click here. This outlook is for Home Hill.

Is your cane farm for sale?

Why not advertise it in canenews for just $25.00 per week

Phone Tiffany on 4790 3600 for more information
QFF & NFF Updates

CANEGROWERS is an active member of National Farmers’ Federation (NFF) and Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF), a partnership through which we have been able to concentrate and leverage influence in areas of importance to the cane industry. As part of a range of services, NFF & QFF provides a range of information, including weekly cross-commodity updates.

Trans-Pacific Partnership Update

The NFF has restated its support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact despite failure to reach agreement during the latest round of talks in Maui, Hawaii. While Ministers from the twelve participating nations made significant progress, there appears to be a number of sticking points yet to be resolved.

NFF recognises the hard work of Trade Minister Andrew Robb and the government officials in what has been a challenging round of negotiations, and remains a firm supporter of the TPP as a platform to driver increased trade and investment across the region. For more, see our statement here.

Farm Trespass Roundtable

Federal Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce and State Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair jointly hosted a roundtable discussion in Camden on Monday to discuss the serious issue of farm trespass.

The roundtable was attended by key stakeholders across Australia, including NFF, NSW Farmers, RSPCA NSW and NSW Police. The NSW Government has developed and released a policy on the issue, the NSW Farm Incursions Policy. The NFF will continue to work with the roundtable to pursue a nationally coordinated approach to this important issue. More details to come.

Vision for a Science Nation: Submission

The NFF has lodged its submission-in-reply to the Federal Government’s Vision for a Science Nation – Responding to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics: Australia’s Future consultation paper. NFF has issued a call to Industry Minister Macfarlane to engage more closely with farm organisations about how agriculture can best capture value from our nation’s science efforts and foster innovation partnerships.

The NFF also says that Australia’s science industries need to keep pace with leading scientific nations through the development of a long-term science investment strategy that spans 20 years, with a recurrent budget protected in real terms. The pay-off will come from commercialising research breakthroughs. This also means taking a more coordinated approach to innovation with effective partnerships between industry, research and government. For more, see our release here.

PC Draft Report – Workplace Relations Framework

The NFF has welcomed the release of the Productivity Commission’s draft report on the Workplace Relations Framework, saying it is another step toward reframing the workplace relations debate in Australia. The NFF submission to the inquiry calls for changes to the current framework to improve efficiency on farms, while retaining fair pay and conditions for employees. Key outcomes for the NFF include recommendations to:

· replace the “better off overall test” with a no-disadvantage test
· abandon the 4 yearly modern award review
· limit compensation in unfair dismissal and general protections matters
· waive non-compliance with technical requirements during bargaining
· limit the frequency of union visits for discussion purposes
· make it easier to deal with protected action tactics and deductions from pay;
· improve the individual flexibility arrangements (IFA) regime.

The Productivity Commission has also raised the prospect of a new, opt in “enterprise contract”, to bridge the gap between common law contracts and enterprise agreements. For more, see our release here.

Horticulture Code of Conduct

The Federal Government has today released an issues paper to inform the independent review of the mandatory Horticulture Code of Conduct, which regulates trade in horticultural produce between Australia’s growers and traders. The review will examine how the code could be improved, and the issues paper gives stakeholders the opportunity to have a say on a range of issues affecting the trade in Australian horticulture produce. Submissions close on 18 September 2015. For more information, please contact Tony Mahar.
Quad bike report released

The long awaited UNSW research report into quad bike safety and stability has finally been released. Members are encouraged to go online and view the YouTube video of research done during the project, including crash test dummy experiments clearly highlighting dangers inherent in quad bike rollovers. Key findings of the report deal with both safe use and safe design, including a Star Safety Ratings system for quad bikes. A copy of the NFF submission to the NSW Quad Bikes Coronal Inquest responds to many of these findings – see here.

The Queensland Coroner also released its quad bike inquiry findings this week, recommending mandatory licensing and helmet use, standardised training and a ban on children using adult quads.

Westpac Farm Innovation Challenge

Applications are open for the ‘Westpac Innovation Challenge’, an opportunity for start-ups and agribusiness entrepreneurs to develop new ideas to revolutionise Australia’s agricultural sector. A $40,000 prize will be awarded to the entrepreneur that creates the most useful and digital solution for Australian agricultural producers and agribusiness. For more info, or to apply, please see here.

QFF 10 things to know

1. QFF together with DAF and Ergon Energy, are conducting three free energy saver workshops for primary producers this week. Tuesday at Applethorpe, Wednesday at Dalby and Thursday at Gatton. RSVP today.

2. The two-year-long coronial inquest into quad bike deaths has concluded with a number of recommendations for the Government to consider.

3. QCA has published its Final Report on Industry Assistance in Queensland, taking extensive note of QFF’s submission, but not budging on its draft recommendations.

4. Thankfully, the Queensland Government has already ruled out implementing any recommendations “that would stifle growth opportunities or leave regional Queensland worse off.”

5. Our attention now turns to the next battle - submissions close on Friday 28 August for the Agriculture and Environment Committee’s review of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme (DRAS).

6. An issues paper for the much-anticipated Horticulture Code Review has now been released with submissions closing at 5pm, Friday 18 September.

7. Queensland’s sustainable champions still have time to meet the 14 August deadline for the 2015 Premier’s Sustainability Awards with categories including rural, communities, young achievers and innovation.

8. Despite Trans-Pacific Partnership trade talks stalling over the weekend, our sugar and dairy industries are continuing to apply pressure to end US protectionist behaviour.

9. Queenslanders Robert & Jennie Reardon won the Cotton Grower of the Year award, at last week’s 2015 Australian Cotton Industry Awards.

10. The next Conservation Farming Group Field Day will be held at Jimbour on Wednesday, 26 August and will be based on technologies, spray rigs and weed management technologies along with some research work done on legumes.

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Burdekin Cane Auditors—Workplace Coordinators

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canenews is read by the majority of Burdekin cane farmers and their families in the Burdekin. Copies are also circulated to all CANEGROWERS Offices, businesses, industry, politicians, Government Agencies and members of the community.

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