Since the last issue of this newsletter there has been much action around the impasse between Wilmar and QSL negotiations for an On Supply Agreement for Growers Economic Interest Sugar.

Daily updates and media releases kept stressed out growers and communities informed as they rode the emotional roller coaster through to what now looks like a breakthrough with the announcement that an agreement in principle was reached between Wilmar and QSL last night. The QSL & Wilmar announcements have been reproduced in this issue.

After previously rejecting other offers of mediation the breakthrough was achieved after both parties accepted the State Government’s funded offer of a mediator (former Supreme Court Judge Richard Chesterman) to try and break the deadlock. This is consistent with the State Government’s position of preferring a negotiated outcome rather than any legislative amendments and is the first meaningful step taken by the Queensland Government to address what had become a most serious issue for the 4 regions where Wilmar mills are located.

Growers that wanted no more or no less than they previously received refused to accept Wilmar as a monopoly marketer and have their rights to choose taken away are to be commended for their resolve so as to now hopefully see that there will be a fair and reasonable outcome.

A very sincere appreciation and many thanks from growers and their representatives must go to the Hinchinbrook, Burdekin, Whitsunday and Dawson Members of Parliament plus other politicians, Leaders and Federal Government Ministers that answered the call of their constituents for assistance by organising and attending meetings to hear growers concerns plus receiving grower delegations. Any action that came out of these meetings and was followed through whether successful or not contributed positively in progressing towards breaking the On Supply Agreement negotiations deadlock.
2 March 2017

Dear Grower,

Wilmar is now satisfied that the three issues that were obstacles to the finalisation of a GEI Sugar Sales Agreement (GEISSA) with QSL are agreed in principle.

We are grateful for the assistance of Mr Richard Chesterman QC who mediated our negotiations today. Mr Chesterman was made available to us by the Queensland Government and has agreed to play a continuing role as required by the parties.

Wilmar and QSL have committed to concluding a formal agreement as soon as possible. Once a formal agreement is executed, we will be able to offer QSL as a marketer in our Cane Supply Agreement process.

In the meantime, you may wish to consider the interim arrangements provided by the Marketing Transfer Agreement. This would allow you to forward price while keeping open your future GEI Marketer options.

John Pratt
Executive General Manager - North Queensland

Good morning

I am sure by now you have heard that the Sugar Industry (Arbitration For Mill Owners and Sugar marketing Entities) Amendment Bill, introduced by the LNP Opposition on Wednesday night was defeated. This result occurred after a tense voting process that had many dramatic twists and turns. I wanted to take this opportunity to explain what happened in Parliament on Wednesday night as there has been a lot of rumour and innuendo as to what occurred.

At the end of the second reading debate, the Bill was supported on the second reading by the LNP, KAP, ONP and the Member for Cook. It was opposed on the second reading by Labor and the Member for Cairns. This was a curious result, as the Member for Cairns and the Member for Cook both voted a different way yesterday on the urgency motion.

The Member for Cook then took a matter of privilege and advised the Speaker that he had made an error and intended to vote with Labor, not with the LNP. The Speaker ruled that his vote would stand as it was and so the Bill stood agreed to at its second reading.

The parliament then considered the clauses of the Bill. At the end of this process, the Bill was voted on at its third reading. The Bill was supported by the LNP, KAP and ONP. It was opposed on its third reading by Labor, the Member for Cairns and the Member for Cook. This meant there was a tied vote. The Speaker has a casting vote in this situation. The Speaker voted with Labor.

As such the Bill failed to pass. I worked throughout the week to secure the votes of the crossbench MPs. I had secured the support of KAP and ONP and had an undertaking from the Members for Cairns and Cook that they would support our position. The Member for Cairns had publicly declared that he would vote with the LNP, but did not do so. The Member for Cook, having voted with the LNP in December 2015, switched sides on this occasion.

The debate was at times heated and the performance of the Minister for Agriculture, Bill Byrne, was nothing short of disgraceful. The Queensland LNP has done everything it possibly could to deliver this outcome in a timely fashion for cane growers in Queensland, including those in the Burdekin electorate. I reiterate my position that I will continue to fight for the best interests of Burdekin growers involved in this dispute.

Note: At the time of writing this email I have been advised that Wilmar and QSL have reached in principal agreement regarding this dispute and I am encouraged that we may finally have a resolution to this issue.

Regards

Dale
Harvest Management Group 2016 Season & 2017 Preliminary

The Group met yesterday for a post season review and to hear some of the improvements and enhancements that Wilmar have planned around cane supply.

An analysis of the 2016 season production and throughputs was presented to the group the details of which are in the table included with this article. The significant decline in reliability or availability season to season of Invicta and Inkerman Mills attracted considerable attention of the grower representatives attending the meeting.

As Wilmar’s Burdekin Production Manager Paul Turnbull was an apology for the meeting any questions regarding mill performance were unable to be addressed.

Wilmar have committed to attending grower information meetings in the coming weeks where they will be addressing any questions regarding last season’s performance and the capital and maintenance plans in place for the current slack season.

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Grower Web Enhancements

Wilmar’s Peter Pattinson advised the group that the Gower Web was being enhanced to address grower concerns with the system. Some proposed enhancements include:
- Users will be able to customise field book and rake report layout
- Users will be able to setup reports for automatic distribution by email
- Users will be able to reset their password without having to ring the help desk

Continues next page
Harvest management meeting continued

Harvest Management System Upgrade

Peter also addressed the group regarding the Harvest management system upgrade for implementation in 2017. User Acceptance Training being carried out at the moment has highlighted a few issues that are being worked through. The upgrade will provide the capability for more information on maps.

A harvesting reference group has been formed to get feedback from harvesting operators (who are also growers) on how best to use GPS and mapping data.

Estimating timelines

Wilmar Transport Operations Manager Peter Luke advised the group that the estimating process would be completed towards the end of April 2017 and that Wilmar’s preliminary estimate is 8.03 million tonnes. A request was made from the group to provide an earlier start date meeting so arrangements for contracting business (e.g. work crews) can be finalised and growers can plan their dry down periods in preparation for harvest. Wilmar said that the start date meeting is to be held as soon as possible after the estimate is complete.

Changed Grouping for 2017 Harvest

The Grouping Applications for 2017 were presented for review and discussion with each Mills logistic representatives reporting on the progress to date. The majority of grouping requests can be accommodated however there are ongoing discussions with growers and contractors regarding some requests yet to be resolved.

It was noted that some grouping changes could result in siding access issues which need to be resolved prior to the commencement of the 2017 crush.

The list of Grouping Applications list are available on the Grower Web and can also be viewed by clicking here. The application guidelines provide for any third party submissions or objections to be received preferably by the 10th March.

Wilmar’s response to the grouping applications are to be posted on the 17th March.

Any other requests that are of a siding nature will be worked through with the affected parties.

Next Meeting

A date is to be organised for the next meeting with the agenda to include the 2017 start date and an after action review of how to improve future meetings.

QSL Board changes following appeal decision

QSL’s Board will no longer feature Industry Directors following an appeal judgement by the Federal Court in Brisbane this morning.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on 5 July 2016, QSL Members approved changes to the QSL Constitution in relation to the appointment process for Industry Directors.

An application to the Federal Court (single judge) by Queensland sugar millers Bundaberg Sugar, Isis Central Sugar Mill and Mackay Sugar (BIM) confirmed the validity of these changes on 3 October last year, and three Miller Directors and three Grower Directors were subsequently appointed to the QSL Board, attending their first meeting in November 2016.

Wilmar appealed this Federal Court decision to the Full Court of the Federal Court, with the appeal heard on 2 December 2016 and the judgement announced today, Thursday 2 March 2017.

The Full Court of the Federal Court upheld Wilmar’s appeal, deeming the constitutional amendments passed at the QSL EGM on 5 July 2016 were oppressive and unfairly prejudicial to Wilmar.

The judgement stated that Wilmar and BIM must confer and file, within seven days, proposed orders for the deletion of the 5 July 2016 amendments from the QSL Constitution.

Subject to any potential appeal by BIM, the QSL Constitution will revert to the Constitution originally in place before the Industry Director constitutional changes were put to the EGM last July, and as a result, Industry Directors will exit the QSL Board.

QSL Chairman and Independent Director Guy Cowan said that while he was disappointed by today’s decision from the Federal Court, QSL remained in safe hands.

“Although our Industry Directors have only been in place for the last three Board meetings, their involvement has brought added industry experience and perspective to the Board,” Mr Cowan said, “and so I’d like to thank these individuals – Miller Directors Guy Basile (Bundaberg Sugar), Peter Hawe (Isis Central Sugar Mill) and Peter Gill (Mackay Sugar), and Grower Directors Steve Kirby (Burdekin), David Lando (Burdekin) and Paul Schembri (Mackay) – for the contribution they have already made to our business.”

“We will miss this additional industry support around the boardroom table, but it’s important to remember that prior to the recent introduction of Industry Directors, the QSL Board had functioned successfully with an Independent Board of Directors since 2009.

“QSL will revert to this format, with the revised QSL Board to be comprised of the three continuing Independent Directors (Guy Cowan, Sarah Scales and Craig Doyle) and Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Greg Beashel.

“I am confident that the mix of commercial, finance, trading and sugar industry expertise amongst this experienced group of Directors, together with our continuing commitment to actively seek industry input, will keep QSL on the right track and ensure we continue to maximise the value delivered to the industry we serve.”
Lower Burdekin Catchment Development Project Final Update

Readers will recall that the Queensland Government commissioned the project 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. The project was to be completed by February 2016.

The project comprised of the following parts:

- Part 1 Demand and Market Analysis
- Part 2 Source of Water
- Part 3 Water Quality Assessment
- Part 4 Distribution Infrastructure and Supply Capacity Analysis
- Part 5 Infrastructure and Supply Capacity Analysis
- Part 6 Financial and Economic Analysis
- Part 7 Synthesis Report.

The Department of State Development released the final update last week almost twelve months on from the original target date. View the final update.

The response from government is that the project has identified that:

- further investigation is required into the impact of water quality issues and rising groundwater in the Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme on agricultural production in the region
- impacts on the surrounding Bowling Green Bay RAMSAR wetland and the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) should also be assessed.

Given the nature of these issues, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) will now lead an investigation with input from other government agencies.

DNRM will provide updates on the progress of these investigations. Enquiries can be directed to DNRM at waterinfonorth@dnrm.qld.gov.au

Further information on the Lower Burdekin Catchment Development project is available on the Department of State Development’s website.

Enquiries regarding the Lower Burdekin Catchment Development project may continue to be directed to the department at lowerburdekinenquiries@dsd.qld.gov.au

Wilmar interference with QSL Board rules growers

A court decision removing industry directors from the QSL Board is further evidence of the extent to which Wilmar Sugar is going in its bid to control the Queensland industry.

"QSL is a not-for-profit, industry-owned marketing organisation," CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said. "In 2014 Wilmar decided to separate from the whole-of-industry marketing arrangements and separate from QSL and ever since they have tried everything they can to encourage growers to do the same.

"To go to court to challenge an industry-backed board restructure under these circumstances was another tactic in a campaign for control by Wilmar and the court ruling in Wilmar’s favour is regrettable.

"Wilmar is interfering in a company it sees as a threat to its plans – this is about control and not performance."

Yesterday’s Federal Court decision removes three grower and three miller directors from the QSL board. They had been appointed in November 2016 to add industry experience and perspective to QSL’s leadership in a time of increased competition in sugar marketing services – competition that Wilmar Sugar has opposed.

"The grower directors are collateral damage in Wilmar’s big picture objective to remove other Queensland milling company directors from QSL’s Board," Mr Galligan said.

"Rather than work with growers and within the competition and choice framework of the industry as other millers are doing, Wilmar is trying to undermine QSL and diminish the capacity of other milling companies in Australia to determine their destinies."

Wilmar lost its bid to control the marketing of all sugar from its mills when the Queensland Parliament added grower choice and provision for marketing competition into the Sugar Industry Act at the end of 2015.

"Wilmar has spent the best part of a year in legal, political and public relations battles, yet it has still not secured cane supply for the impending 2017 season and has left growers in limbo," Mr Galligan said.

"While we are disgusted at Wilmar’s persistent treatment of our industry as a corporate plaything, we are confident that QSL will continue to be a strong and reliable marketer for the industry, capably led by the remaining independent directors.

"Throughout this saga they have maintained a steady hand at the boardroom table and we urge them to keep their eye firmly placed on the core business of selling high quality Queensland sugar to our customers across the world on behalf of the millers and growers of this state."
Parliament sinks sugar industry arbitration bid

CANEGROWERS is disappointed the Queensland Parliament has failed to pass amendments to the Sugar Industry Act to allow for arbitration if negotiations and mediation don’t produce a workable contract between Wilmar Sugar and QSL for the 2017 sugarcane season.

Representing the majority of the 1,500 family farmers left out on a limb by their protracted negotiations, CANEGROWERS is supportive of all efforts to help move the parties towards an On-Supply Agreement.

“Our members need that On-Supply Agreement to be in place before they can finalise Cane Supply Agreements which guarantee them a choice of sugar marketer,” CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said. “Yet the parties have been negotiating for over a year and have been unable to reach a conclusion.

“We appreciate the leadership the Liberal National Party has shown on this issue and the support of the Katter’s Australian Party and One Nation MPs who backed the amendment bill. However the Independent MPs sided with Labor to defeat it.

“This vote does not in any way affect those parts of the Sugar Industry Act which guarantee growers choice in marketing services,” Mr Galligan said. “We will continue our efforts to ensure all growers in Queensland can exercise that right.

“Provision for arbitration in the case of Cane Supply Agreements is already written into the Act and we had been assured that the inclusion of a mechanism for arbitration to break deadlocked On-Supply Agreement negotiations would have no impact on agreements reached in other milling districts.”

A commercially negotiated agreement remains the quickest way to achieve a result for growers in the Wilmar Sugar areas of Plane Creek, Proserpine, Burdekin and Herbert River.

CANEGROWERS notes that QSL and Wilmar have continued to negotiate and have agreed to meet with a mediator who was appointed by the Queensland Government on the day the LNP introduced its amendments into parliament.

“CANEGROWERS understands that there remain only a few sticking points and we urge the parties to resolve them as soon as possible,” Mr Galligan said.

“Every other milling company in Queensland has successfully negotiated supply agreements with QSL, only Wilmar Sugar has been unable to do this.

“There is a high level of anxiety in the Wilmar milling areas as growers watch their crop grow without a contract in place to realise its value as raw sugar.

“Local economies in many sugar-dependent towns are suffering as growers put off spending because they are unsure of their income for 2017.

“Growers and their communities need the certainty that will come from a speedy resolution to this process.”

CANEGROWERS Directors have an intimate knowledge of local and regional needs.

CANEGROWERS Directors are growers, just like you, doing demanding work for little monetary return.

They understand your needs.
Succession planning and transfer of family farm made easier

The State Government has recently made changes to the concessions and exemptions from government transfer duty for inter family transfer of family farms (click here for media release).

Water assets including water licences and allocations, will now be entitled to the same transfer duty exemption and conditions as apply to the farm.

This change will be a significant benefit to irrigators who are wanting to transfer the family farm within the family. Water assets can be very valuable and the transfer duty on these assets can be substantial and in impediment to sensible succession planning and family farm transfer arrangements.

This change follows on from further changes made in July 2016 which extended the definition of family members entitled to receive the benefits of transfer duty exemption.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact CANEGROWERS legal advisor on freecall 1800 177 159.

### BPS shed meetings

Burdekin Productivity Services will be holding shed meetings next week covering the following topics:

- YCS research update
- Chemical management and weed control
- 2016 productivity data and reports
- Plating, managing legume trash and nitrogen
- New variety information

BBQ will be served at 8am/1pm with meeting to commence 8.30am/1.30pm.

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### QFF things to know

1. Water & agriculture are naturally linked. This is why QFF President Stuart Armitage called for agricultural water to join Queensland’s agriculture ministerial portfolio in his latest QCL column HERE.

2. QFF has welcomed the federal government’s second round funding for the $2 million Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE). Small businesses and farmers are encouraged to apply. QFF comment HERE. PASE details HERE.

3. Ergon Energy has announced tariff trials to help farmers better understand business electricity needs and demands in regional Queensland. QFF statement HERE. Ergon Energy trial details HERE.

4. QFF industry member CANEGROWERS is working with behavioural psychologists as part of its ongoing work to improve the industry’s impact on the Great Barrier Reef. Listen to the ABC Radio National feature HERE.

5. The federal government is improving access to safe and effective agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals, with $2.5 million in grants approved for priority uses, including for citrus fruit, field peas and dairy cattle. Details HERE.

6. The state government has approved an additional $50 million for concessional loans through the QRAA’s Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme (PIPES). Statement HERE. Details HERE.

7. The ATO has noticed that some agricultural businesses have been claiming the R&D incentive incorrectly. Get the latest ‘tax alerts’ for advice on claiming and be sure to double check the R&D Checklist HERE.
Ergon Energy tariff trials announced

The Queensland Farmers’ Federation (QFF) has welcomed the state government’s announcement for a trial to help farmers better understand business electricity needs and demands in regional Queensland.

The trial will give farmers the chance to test off-peak and demand-based electricity tariffs under the Regional Business Support Package. QFF and industry members CANEGROWERS and Cotton Australia have been involved in planning the trial.

QFF President Stuart Armitage said that the rising cost of electricity continues to be the number one concern for the intensive agriculture sector, with many farm businesses experiencing unsustainable price increases.

“The sector hopes this tariff trial will provide some of the information needed to determine what the real impacts of load controlled and seasonal demand tariffs are, as current agricultural tariffs are phased out,” he said.

While the trial should start to inform some of the knowledge gaps, a more holistic and comprehensive transition package is still needed.

“Across Queensland there are over 42,000 regional customers that will be transitioning to cost-reflective (demand) electricity tariffs by 1 July 2020.”

“Industry remains concerned that there is still a prevailing disconnect with government messaging with impending electricity tariff and price changes.”

“A large number of farm businesses remain unaware of the changing tariffs and how this will impact their business post 1 July 2020.”

“Many customers currently on transitional and obsolete tariffs are facing price increases of over 50 per cent when they move to cost-reflective tariffs in 2020. This will further challenge the viability of many farm business customers.”

“QFF and its industry members will continue to work constructively with government to ensure our sector is ready for the tariff transition in 2020. It is however, unacceptable that the energy debate has become a vexed political issue when practical long term solutions are needed to ensure electricity affordability.”

Interested farmers are encouraged to contact Ergon to participate in this trial so we can better understand tariff charges impacts on agriculture.

Further information is available from agriculture industry bodies, Ergon or online at: ergon.com.au/agtarifftrial.

Electricity tariff reforms excerpt from an update provided by Ergon

Ergon provided draft network tariffs for 2017-18 to the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) at the end of last year (the same time that they were published online and major customers were updated).

The QCA has now released its draft determination on regional Queensland’s regulated retail electricity prices (24 February). Remember, network tariffs are only one component of the retail bill. The QCA also looks at the retail costs of supplying electricity.

As part of the process of setting retail prices for regional Queensland, the QCA are planning to hold workshops to discuss their draft determination from 13 March 2017 in Bundaberg, Cairns, Toowoomba, Townsville, Brisbane, and other locations, depending on interest. If you are interested in attending, you can register here.

The Australian Energy Regulator has just approved the revised Tariff Structure Statement for tariffs to 2020, which has been at the centre of much engagement. The next step is for Ergon to submit their final network tariffs for 2017-18 to the AER for approval.

These final network prices will be provided to the QCA at this time also to allow them to finalise regional Queensland’s regulated retail tariffs, which will come into effect on 1 July 2017, by the end of May.
State Government calls for innovators to help the Great Barrier Reef

The Government is offering a multi-million dollar incentive to attract innovative ways of helping improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

Minister for the Great Barrier Reef Dr Steven Miles said he hoped the government’s $3.2 million “cash carrot” would “have a lasting effect” on reducing the nutrients, sediments and pesticides in water flowing into the reef.

“I’m calling on innovators in water treatment system technology, agricultural management practices and ecosystem repair to come forward to help the Palaszczuk Government better protect the Great Barrier Reef,” Dr Miles said.

“We’re looking for innovative approaches and technologies that will deliver real improvements for the reef”.

Dr Miles said the call for expressions of interest was an action that came out of the response to the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce recommendations—a $9 million Reef Innovation Fund to support the development of new technologies and approaches to improve reef water quality.

“The Palaszczuk Government is looking for proposals that will trial new technologies and practices that, once proven, can be adopted more widely,” Dr Miles said.

“A total of $2.25 million is earmarked to run trials in reef catchments of water technologies that are new or have been successfully used elsewhere in agriculture, industry or urban settings.

“Water treatment systems such as wetlands, bioreactors and algae treatment will be considered to reduce nutrients and pesticides in agricultural run-off.

“A further $950,000 is available to support the development and trialling of innovative farming practices, new tools and technologies and novel ecosystem repair methods (e.g. for streambank restoration or gully remediation).

“The expressions of interest are open to all individuals and groups and will require proponents to offer matched funding (in-kind or cash) equivalent to the department’s contribution,” he said.

One of the key objectives of the Reef Innovation Fund is to double Queensland’s $9 million commitment by matching the investment with private, philanthropic or other government funds to increase the number of options explored.

The Innovation Fund is one of a number of initiatives being implemented through the Government’s additional $90 million investment into reef water quality over four years.

Expressions of interest can be submitted electronically to the Queensland Government QTenders website from tomorrow (27 February) until Friday 7 April 2017.

Cane growers protecting and respecting our reef
... the greatest reef in the world

Price increase turns Wilmar Sugar Division around

Asian agriculture giant Wilmar reported a jump in profits, as rising sugar and palm oil prices increase its revenue.

Wilmar reported a jump in its core profit to $589.50m, up 70% year-on-year in the last three months of 2016.

The rise in profits was driven by better performance across the company, particularly in sugar and palm oil, as well as a one-off tax recognition from the company’s Indonesian operations.

Company revenue grew 27% year-on-year, to $11.95bn, which Wilmar ascribed to “higher commodity prices and stronger sales volume”.

Wilmar’s sugar business reported a 68% increase in pre-tax profits.

Kuok Khoon Hong, Wilmar’s chairman and chief executive, said “the strong performance in the fourth quarter enabled the group to overcome the losses incurred in the second quarter of the year and achieve satisfactory performance for the full year.”

“The milling business delivered an outstanding set of results, helped by higher sugar prices as well as the season extension for milling activities, which led to higher volume of cane crushed.”

The overall Sugar results included a US$33.5 million impairment charge on the refinery assets in Australia. Excluding this impairment charge in 4Q2016, pre-tax profit for FY2016 improved by 88% to US$158.8 million (FY2015: US$84.3 million).

A news release containing more detail of the 2016 4th quarter and full year results can be viewed by clicking here.
Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has added expertise and capacity to its sugarcane breeding program with the appointment of experienced plant breeder, Dr Jason Eglinton.

Breeding new and improved sugarcane varieties for the Australian industry is the single biggest area of research investment that SRA makes on behalf of SRA investors, delivering varieties that are suited to local growing regions and that meet the requirements of growers and millers.

SRA CEO Mr Neil Fisher said that SRA continued to strive for innovation within its plant breeding program and to learn from other crops and industries.

“The SRA breeding program is continually seeking ways to increase efficiency in selecting for the economically important traits in sugarcane by using existing germplasm, and introgression of new traits from other germplasm,” Mr Fisher said. “Dr Eglinton’s expertise will greatly contribute to finding innovative ways to modernise and improve the breeding program through the use of modern genetic tools such as genome sequencing, molecular markers, and high throughput phenotyping.

“Dr Eglinton is based at Meringa near Cairns, which is where early-stage crossing and selection begins for creating new sugarcane varieties,” Mr Fisher said. “He will work with Dr Bert Collard, who is SRA’s Leader for Optimally Adapted Varieties, Plant Breeding and Release, and with our experienced team of plant breeders and technicians across the Australian sugarcane industry.

Dr Eglinton said he looked forward to working with the SRA plant breeding team and the Australian sugarcane industry.

“Varieties are a foundation of profitability and productivity for sugarcane growers and millers,” Dr Eglinton said. “I’m enthusiastic to work with the highly-skilled team at SRA to continue to accelerate genetic gain and deliver improvements to the Australian sugarcane industry through new varieties.”

Dr Eglinton was formerly the Barley Program Leader at the University of Adelaide, where he led the development and commercialisation of new feed and malting barley varieties.

Taking some of the legwork and guesswork out of choosing the right fertiliser

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has developed a new tool for sugarcane growers to help select the right fertiliser blend that matches the nutritional requirements of their paddocks.

The tool is called FertFinder and is available via the SRA website, www.sugarresearch.com.au. It is aimed at assisting sugarcane growers and advisors to filter through the hundreds of fertiliser products available on the market.

The tool was developed by SRA Adoption Officer Mr Gavin Rodman, who said FertFinder had been tailored for use in all regions of the Australian sugarcane industry.

“The current practice used to find a fertiliser that will meet your crop’s nutrient requirements relies on experience, multiple calculations, plenty of time and sometimes a little bit of luck. Trawling through fertiliser product cards from your local suppliers can take time, particularly if your crop requires multiple nutrients,” Mr Rodman said.

“Finding a fertiliser blend that has each of these nutrients in the right proportion can also be frustrating, as you may find something that meets your crop’s nitrogen and potassium requirements, but not the phosphorus, for example.

“The development of this tool will make this task simpler by highlighting fertiliser blends that are available in your region and that meet the nutritional requirements of your crop.”

Soil testing and choosing the right fertiliser are crucial aspects of the SIX EASY STEPS approach to nutrient management, which continues to be validated by SRA across a range of soil types, farming systems, and climatic conditions.

SIX EASY STEPS is a science-based nutrient management tool that enables the adoption of best practice nutrient management on-farm.

It is acknowledged as industry best-practice for nutrient management to optimise productivity and profitability without adversely influencing soil fertility or causing off-farm effects.

Mulgrave district grower, Mr Jeff Day, said that he farmed on a diverse range of soils including red volcanic, heavy clay, and sandy clays, which also meant that he required a range of fertiliser rates based on soil tests and use of the SIX EASY STEPS.

“Based on the soil tests, I then follow the recommendations for the required nutrients. Quite often I require a custom blend, so that does cause me to wonder if that impacts the price of my fertiliser,” Mr Day said. “A tool like this would really help with decision making in terms of choosing the right blend, and shop around for the best price.”
ManUp! To tackle prostate cancer

Women in Sugar Burdekin are hosting a prostate cancer education session on Wednesday March 15, 3pm at the CANEGROWERS Building, 141 Young Street, Ayr. All welcome to attend.

ManUp! is a registered not for profit organisation. In 2017 ManUp! is conducting an awareness and educational campaign in rural and regional Queensland. They are committed to reaching men in these areas as men in these communities have a 34% higher prostate cancer mortality rate than men in capital cities. An awareness and educational program is vital in these areas if we are to save the lives of a significant proportion of the population.

Some prostate cancer facts
⇒ 1 in 5 Queensland men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.
⇒ Prostate cancer claimed more than 3,440 lives last year.
⇒ More men die from prostate cancer than women die from breast cancer.
⇒ In the early curable stages of prostate cancer there are usually no symptoms.

To register your interest phone 47903600 or email womeninsugarburdekin@hotmail.com
Executive comment

✓ Progress on developing a paper to resolving funding options for industry good activities around trade and nutrition.

✓ Meeting with CGU Insurance to discuss the products and services made available by the CANEGROWERS insurance service.

✓ Meeting with the Director General of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to discuss ways in which we as an industry body can work with the Department on key priorities for growers.

✓ Meeting with National Farmers Federation President and CEO to update them on industry issues that have national implications.

✓ Informal meeting with the CEO of the North Qld Bulk Ports to discuss the state of the industry and possible future dynamics and trade and investment.

✓ Meeting with the National Farmers Federation Workforce productivity committee to discuss such matters as quad bike safety, minor wage determinations, labor hire certification schemes and an online tool under development for farmers to load up potential job vacancies specific to agriculture.

✓ A meet and greet with the new Qld Farmers Federation Biosecurity Liaison officer who is working between industry and Government to held better explain the Qld Biosecurity legislative framework.

✓ Roundtable with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to discuss with them their current development of a new Australian Government Foreign Policy White Paper. The White Paper which will be the first for 14 years will be developed for consultation as a draft by the end of the year. A white paper is designed to set the high level policy direction for Government and its engagement on foreign policy and trade and sets the priorities around such things as regional, versus European engagement and aid versus development funding. It is important that our trade requirements are considered within this broader context of foreign policy and that the needs of our industry are not discounted for the sake of what may be higher profile issues such as immigration and defence.

Trade

✓ CANEGROWERS prepared and lead an ASA presentation to the eight strong team from China’s Ministries of Commerce, Finance, Agriculture and Customs visiting Australia as part of their investigation into the impact on their domestic industry of an alleged surge in Chinese imports of sugar.

⇒ The Chinese team has clearly formed a view that their domestic sugar industry is in crisis and that something needs to be done about it.

⇒ The thrust of our presentation was that the Chinese domestic industry problems are not caused by a surge in imports. Rather the growth in imports was a reflection of the significant structural difficulties faced by the Chinese industry and that the introduction of a short term safeguard mechanism was not an appropriate solution to the problem.

✓ We are working with DFAT and colleagues the Brazil sugar industry to coordinate a response should the Chinese investigation team choose to implement sugar safeguards.

✓ CANEGROWERS hosted Japan’s Consul-General Hidehiro Hosaka in a visit to the industry in Mackay. The visit provided an opportunity to brief the Consul-General on the longstanding trade between our two countries spanning more than 50 years. It also provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of the JA-EPA in ensuring the future viability of the trade once the technical issues associated with that agreement are overcome.

Marketing

✓ CANEGROWERS provided advice to the LNP for consideration in the drafting of its proposed legislative action to introduce pre-contractual arbitration as a mechanism to break deadlocks in the negotiation of on-supply agreements in the Sugar Industry (Arbitration for Mill Owners and Sugar Marketing Entities) Amendment Bill 2017.
CANEGROWERS Queensland … taking up the fight continued

Electricity

✓ CANEGROWERS presented the Sapere electricity analysis to the National Irrigation Council (NIC) meeting.
   ⇒ The CANEGROWERS-Sapere report findings that Ergon’s TSS is not cost reflective and it, along with the AER draft decision, are not backed by evidence were publicly released in Brisbane on Wednesday, 15 February.
   ⇒ The launch was well attended, including by politicians from the LNP, KAP and One Nation and by growers and grower representatives from the Tableland, Burdekin, Central and Southern districts as well as officials from DEWS and Qld Treasury.
   ⇒ The failings Sapere identified are systematic, set to affect all Queenslanders and call into question the way the national electricity market is regulated and how network prices are determined.

✓ CANEGROWERS finalised its submission to the Finkel Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market

Reef Regulations

✓ QCGO has been made aware that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) will be releasing a Reef Regulations “high level discussion paper”. We are advised that the paper will contain suggested strategies and regulations for meeting water quality targets from within the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan) and the Queensland Government Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) target.

✓ The main focus / target of the Governments initiative is to reduce DIN and by 50% by 2018 and 80% by 2025. From what has already been reported by Government we know that proposed regulations will extend to all commodities and all natural resource management (NRM) regions adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef.

Reef Alliance Project

✓ QCGO participated in the Reef Alliance Project Management Committee teleconference. Discussion focused on project implementation, reporting, communications, innovation strategy and database development.

Reef - Reef Plan partnership committee

✓ CANEGROWERS attended the Reef Plan partnership committee meeting which included industry, Australian Government, Queensland Government and NRM groups. Updates were provided on the Scientific Consensus Statement, Reef Plan 2017 review, water quality targets and Reef Trust program.

Cane Changer Project

✓ The Cane Changer project was announced by Environment Minister Stephen Miles in Cairns last Wednesday. Joe Marano and Dr John Pickering were at the announcement and met with the Minister on the project.

✓ The program is designed to value growers and their role as custodians of the land. It will develop grower lead strategies to understand the day-to-day challenges that growers are facing in their ongoing efforts to adopt farming practices that help their business and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

✓ The project focuses on the Wet Tropics and the Minister has indicated he will travel to Innisfail to meet with growers on some of the strategies being developed.

Rural Jobs Skills Alliance (RJSA)

✓ CANEGROWERS attended a RJSA meeting. The intent of RJSA is to influence public and private sector interest and support for members (CANEGROWERS, AgForce, Growcom, QFF, Cotton Australia, Queensland Chicken Growers Association) needs to attract, develop and retain workers and the funding to do this. The initial stages are focused on collecting evidence to support the needs. One of the issues which is in the process of being developed is extension officer training and mentoring.
Request for an internship as a sugarcane farm worker

Dear Madam / Sir,

Good morning. I am currently studying in the south of France at Montpellier in an engineer agricultural school called Montpellier SupAgro. The school is specialised in the development of agriculture in hot spots.

In the middle of June, I need to do an internship for a period of 6 weeks as a farm worker. I am really interested to do it on a sugar cane farm in the north of Queensland.

Since I am Mauritian, I have some experience in sugar cane production. I did an internship of 8 month in a Mauritian company in the south of the island and saw all the cropping system over 1785 hectares of sugar cane. I did an internship of 9 weeks in Reunion Island on a 100% mechanised farm (181 hectares of sugar cane). I also went in the Kwazulu Natal in South Africa with my school and worked in partnership with Cane Growers on a small-scale growers program during two weeks.

For the viability of the internship, it is important that the farm transforms its production (transforms his own sugar, chocolate or jam for example).

My dream farm in the Queensland would be one that can produce sugarcane, and also horticultural (fruits or vegetables, or both). I am really interested to work with a farmer with a sustainable vision, always tracking for the best innovative systems.

I am writing this letter because I sincerely hope that you can help me to find the best farm for my internship and give me contacts.

I am really motivated to discover and learn about your sugar cane world and remain at your disposal for any further information if necessary.

Yours Faithfully
Alexander De Rosnay
alexandrederosnay@gmail.com
Pricing information

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### 2016 Season Advances & Payments
as at 9 February 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$/tonne IPS</th>
<th>% estimated return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>$267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 August 16*</td>
<td>$326</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October 16*</td>
<td>$368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 16*</td>
<td>$383</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January 17*</td>
<td>$423</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 February 17</td>
<td>$437</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 March 17</td>
<td>$464</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 April 17</td>
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<td>90.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 May 17</td>
<td>$490</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 June 17</td>
<td>$504</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
<td>$530</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* 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 2016 (the default method). Growers who have forward priced for 2016 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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### Wilmar Indicative Future Sugar Prices
as at 3 March 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross</th>
<th>$/Tonne IPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$562</td>
<td>$542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$533</td>
<td>$513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$508</td>
<td>$488</td>
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### Estimated QSL Pool Prices
As at 10 February 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$/Tonne IPS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QSL Harvest Pool</td>
<td>$526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSL Actively Managed Pool</td>
<td>$561</td>
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<tr>
<td>QSL Guaranteed Floor Pool</td>
<td>$466</td>
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<tr>
<td>QSL US Quota Pool</td>
<td>$774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSL 2-season Forward Pool</td>
<td>$479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSL 3-season Forward Pool</td>
<td>$499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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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