



WELCOME TO 2023 ISSUE # 8 OF 'CANE NEWS'



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BOM DECLARES EL NIÑO - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GROWERS?

For Queensland, an El Niño event basically means lower than average rainfall. In the recent declaration by the BOM, the coming spring and summer months are anticipated to be warmer and drier than average over large parts of Australia.

For Proserpine growers the impact of an El Niño persisting through to the end of summer could mean less crop growth for the 2024 season during a very important time of the year (i.e., December to January). It also means that CCS could pick up towards the end of the current season and that harvesting conditions remain favourable to the end of the crush.

Interestingly, there have been 15 El Niño events recorded since the 1960's. Below is the total summer (Dec-Feb) rainfall data measured for the most recent six El Niño years at Proserpine Airport. These can be compared to the past 10 and 20-year average rainfall recordings over the same period at 776 and 857 mm respectively.

El Niño year	2015/16	2009/10	2006/07	2002/03	1997/98	1994/95
Summer rainfall (mm)	495	1,001	907	460	595	778

As shown, only half of the past six El Niño events gave less than the long-term average summer rainfall with 2002/03 and 2015/16 recording the lowest. Although an El Niño event has been declared, it may not necessarily guarantee lower rainfall, but growers are still urged to be prepared where growing cane in a region where some of the most variable weather in Australia will always have its challenges!

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www.canegrowers.com.au/page/insurance



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Info, new video & new PDFs to download & read

Members can access current and previous updates by logging into the member services section at www.canegrowers.com.au, using your CANEGROWERS membership number.

If you do not have your member number, please contact the CANEGROWERS Proserpine office on 4945 1844.

CANEGROWERS PROSERPINE INSURANCE: NOT JUST FOR MEMBERS & NOT JUST FOR FARMS!

At CANEGROWERS Insurance we offer our services to **everyone**, not just our members.

Whether it be your home, your boat, your car, your tools or even your business, we are here to assist you with any of your insurance needs.

Proserpine's Insurance Admin, Jess Harrison is in the office Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 2.45pm.

She's contactable by phone (4945 1844) or email: jess_harrison@canegrowers.com.au.



Are you looking for something interesting to listen to while you're in the tractor or car?

New CANEGROWERS podcasts are now available.

Podcasts can be heard by clicking the link below, or on any of these platforms:

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Closing date for classified advertisements is the close of business of the second week of each month.

Classifieds are free to CANEGROWERS members.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine does not necessarily endorse products or services advertised in, or associated with the newsletter.

Articles appearing in 'Cane News' do not necessarily represent the policies or views of CANEGROWERS.

SRA CENTRAL DISTRICT PRODUCTIVITY PLAN: FOCUSING ON KEY CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE REGION



Sugar Research
Australia

SRA's Strategic Plan prompted the development of District Productivity Plans across the State which aim to identify the productivity constraints or opportunities in each region and propose solutions or actions to address them. The plans were developed in consultation with industry stakeholders. In the Central District SRA has predominantly sourced valuable insights from the local productivity boards: Sugar Services Proserpine (SSP), Plane Creek Productivity Services Limited (PCPSL) and Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS).

The value of having a District Productivity Plan is that any key constraints that are specific to our region can be highlighted for further work or research. A good example of this for the Central region is soldier fly, which isn't widespread across the entire industry, but has made a significant impact in isolated areas throughout our district. Reports from local industry suggest that soldier fly is continuing to pop up in different areas and to continue to spread within known areas.

Earlier this year, SRA's research funding panel approved research work on soldier fly. Due to the small impact to the overall industry, support from District Productivity Plans has assisted in getting this project funded. It will be undertaken by SRA's entomology team, with assistance from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF). Locally, SRA will assist researchers with on the ground activities.

Equally of importance is the impact of ratoon stunting disease (RSD) to the district. While the symptoms may not be easily seen, the productivity impact is demonstrably real. RSD was identified as a constraint in the Central District Productivity Plan and in late 2021 SRA Pathologist Dr Rob Magarey discussed the importance of RSD at shed meetings organised by SSP.

Rob spoke about the preliminary work he was involved in where they had developed a method to test for RSD as the cane is delivered to the mill. The interest sparked from those shed meetings ensured that this work was supported by the Central District Productivity Plan. That project has recently received further funding to develop a system that could be easily deployed at any sugar mill. A recent proof of concept project in the Far North has allowed for the development of maps on farms showing where RSD has been detected, based on testing as cane was delivered to the mill.

The District Productivity Plan allows for smaller projects to be supported locally such as:

- promoting low-cost irrigation control systems to increase the profitability and productivity from irrigation
- demonstrating a process for identifying paddocks that are likely to economically respond to the application of crop ripeners
- collecting data to assist in better understanding early CCS in recently released varieties and promising clones, and
- demonstrating the impact of Pachymetra on roots, comparing resistant and susceptible varieties.

The plan is flexible to the district's needs and growers are invited to give their feedback and input. The current version is available here: https://sugarresearch.com.au/sugar_files/2023/03/Central-District-Productivity-Plan-2023.pdf

Contact: Dylan Wedel, District Manager – Central, M: 0490 029 387, E: DWedel@sugarresearch.com.au

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WHAT TO DO ABOUT HIGH PRICES?

The sugar industry is fortunate to have a liquid futures market (ICE #11) from which all global trade can be benchmarked. This allows price discovery to send transparent signals to producers and consumers about forward demand and supply.

Compared to other agricultural commodity markets, the cane farmer is in an extremely fortunate position of having a choice of products to either actively or passively manage their ultimate cane price – up to four crops forward. At the time of writing, 2023 prices are trading above \$900/t, 2024 above \$800/t, 2025 above \$675 and 2026 above \$620.

Looking back a year and we were extremely happy to be finalising the 2001 Production Risk Pool above \$600/t. This year the 2022 Pool will finalise above \$690/t and the current season Pool is forecast above \$850/t.

So, what to do when the 2026 forward price is at \$620/t? Anyone who has been in our Production Risk Pool over the last couple of seasons has been a major beneficiary of handing over the pricing management to Wilmar. However, you are not going to know your expected return with a high degree of certainty until your crop is fully harvested. Growers who forward priced over the same period have enjoyed the certainty of their price outcome but have seen lower returns, on average, than if they had priced through the Pool.

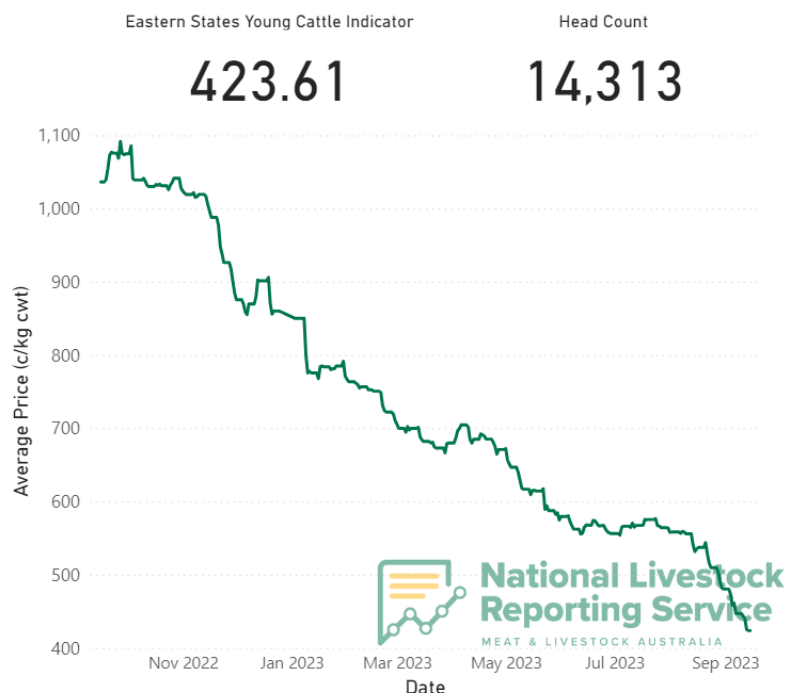
There is no simple answer to the question: Is \$620/t a good price to be locking in some 2026 price exposure? Every grower's circumstances and risk appetite is different. The trade-off of price certainty to opportunity loss through future price rises is not unique to cane farming. What is important, is that you have good information to base your decision on and this is where our global network of intelligence can assist growers.

Commodity markets are known to be mean reverting, as in they will move to extremes and then gravitate back to their longer-term average price. Sugar prices will be no different; it is just a question of how long before the market turns.

A recent nearby example of this phenomena is the cattle market, whereby prices have remained well above the long-term average for several years. However, if we look over the past 12 months, beef prices have dropped 60%. If the same was to happen with sugar, we would be looking at a spot price of \$360/t in a year's time. That is a price no one would like to consider selling at.

For any queries, please contact Proserpine Grower Marketing Consultant Shirley Norris on 0437 803 019.

Cattle prices have fallen significantly since November last year:



UNDER FIRE? DON'T FORGET THAT CANEGROWERS HAS YOU COVERED!

Whether caused by a lightning strike, runaway fire or machinery spark, members can lodge a fire perils insurance claim through their QCGO and CANEGROWERS Proserpine membership.

It's not something we like to think about, but fire damage to crops is a very real possibility and our office usually assists with a number of fire perils claims most years.

Currently, QCGO provides \$35/t cover for members, with CANEGROWERS Proserpine providing an additional \$5/t cover, giving members a total benefit of \$40/t to help get your crop back on its feet after a fire has run through your property. In some cases, additional costs may also be claimed, and this is always discussed when a claim is lodged.

The CANEGROWERS Proserpine and Sugar Services Proserpine teams will support you through every step of the claim process, from the initial damage inspection to the claim outcome, even assisting you with completing the required paperwork.

So if you have a fire, pick up the phone and give the CANEGROWERS Proserpine office a call on (07) 4945 1844.



Make a better marketing choice



- > Access our market-leading pools
- > Receive \$5/t pre-payment as early as January 2024
- > Tap into a global network of sugar market intelligence

There's still time to change

Nominations for the 2024 season
close 31 October 2023.



Get in touch

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wilmar

SRA: NEW RESEARCH TO DELIVER OUTCOMES FOR AUSTRALIAN SUGARCANE GROWERS & MILLERS



**Sugar Research
Australia**

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has announced three new research projects to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers. The new projects add to the extensive portfolio of SRA's research investments designed to keep the sugarcane industry competitive through innovative research and product development.

stakeholders.

Shaun Coffey, SRA's Interim Chief Executive Officer, said the three new research projects were identified as part of the SRA Board's approach to targeted investment and after consultation on research priorities with

"These investments focus on research on pest and disease risks and threats, and on advancing technological solutions through machine learning. We are ensuring that our new investments address the research gaps and requirements identified in our Strategic Plan," Shaun said.

"These projects were chosen as part of a considered selection process and confirmed by the Research Funding Panel and the SRA Board based on the positive outcomes they will deliver for our growers, millers and industry."

Canegrubs are the major pest in the sugarcane industry. Canegrub damage to cane roots causes profit losses for growers and millers due to reduced yield (tonnes of cane per hectare) and reduced Commercial Cane Sugar – the commercially recoverable sugar content in sugarcane (CCS).

"A new project will investigate the potential of new biocontrol agents to control the canegrubs in Australia's sugarcane regions, by growing populations in the laboratory for study," Shaun said.

Soldier fly is another root-feeding pest of sugarcane that causes productivity losses in some sugarcane growing districts. However, there is limited knowledge about the soldier fly species and the extent to which each species impacts production.

"The second new project will identify those soldier fly species in Australia's growing regions, where they are located and the relative impact they are having on sugarcane crops."

"The tiny larvae of the soldier fly species burrow deeply into the cane roots and remain immobile while feeding. There is currently no chemical or biological control available for soldier fly and the development of effective controls is limited by the lack of an artificial diet. This prevents scientists from breeding populations of soldier fly in the laboratory for study. Our researchers will develop diagnostic tests for key species and an artificial diet to enable researchers to better evaluate what control agents can be used to control soldier flies."

In several sugarcane growing districts, the cane supplied to mills consistently records high levels of extraneous matter (such as cane tops, roots and leaves - EM) and shorter billets (125 to 150 mm) in harvested green cane. The EM and billet size reduces the overall sucrose content, impacts on the efficiency of the milling process and increases milling costs.

"By developing a machine learning system to measure the EM and billet length in each cane consignment, the industry will be able to identify where harvesting practices need to be improved, and where promotion and adoption of Harvesting Best Practice (HBP) will deliver increased CCS per tonne and efficiencies for growers and millers."

RESEARCH MISSION	Project Title	Research agency	Chief Investigators	Investment agencies
RM 2 22/016	Viruses to aid biological control of major root-feeding pests of sugarcane	The University of Queensland	Prof. Michael Furlong & Dr Kayvan Etebari	SRA and DAF Queensland
RM 2 22/004	Soldier fly diagnostics, distribution, and development of an artificial diet	SRA	Dr Kevin Powell	SRA and DAF Queensland
RM 1 22/012	Use of machine learning to determine the extraneous matter and billet length in cane consignments	QUT	Prof. Ross Broadfoot	SRA and DAF Queensland

These projects are funded by Sugar Research Australia and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. SRA acknowledges the financial contribution of the Queensland Government to these projects as part of the Sugarcane RD&E Grant. The full portfolio of SRA's research investment is available via the SRA website: <https://sugarresearch.com.au/current-research>



We'd love to share how our members are filling their days, new technologies or methods being used, photos of our beautiful area and any feel good or funny situations that you find yourselves in, but we need your help!

If you have something to share on the CANEGROWERS Proserpine facebook page – Proserpine Director, Bessie Orr, wants to hear from you!

Need a little help taking some photos to share or putting together your story – no trouble – we'd love to help.



Email your stories, photos etc to Bessie at: proscgmedia@gmail.com or phone Bessie: 0437 538 044.

18 September 2023



Grower Benefits Program


QSL Pricing Managers can now access a range of discounts and special offers via the new QSL Grower Benefits section of the QSL App.

Accessing grower benefits:

QSL Pricing Managers who open the QSL App will automatically be issued with an email containing a one-time activation code to unlock their new Grower Benefits account. They will be prompted to enter this code when they first visit the Grower Benefits section within the app.

You can find the new Grower Benefits feature via the BENEFITS button in the bottom right corner of every screen within the QSL App.

New discounts are added weekly, so don't forget to check the App regularly for the latest offers.



Grab a hotel deal

Get exclusive discounted rates on both domestic and international accommodation with HotelPlanner.com.au

Head to the BENEFITS section of the QSL App to find out more.

QSL Graduate Program

QSL is on the hunt for graduates looking for a challenging role which not only builds their skills but makes a real difference to the industry we serve. Over a period of 18-24 months, our graduate program offers a rotation through various sectors of the business, empowering graduates with a comprehensive understanding of QSL and the industry we serve. Contact us for more information on the program, including how to apply.

QSL Daily Price

Subscribe to the Daily Prices Tracker in the QSL App to stay up to date with daily market movements. Don't have the QSL App? Head to the 'Tools' section of the App, select 'Daily Prices Tracker' and hit the 'Subscribe' button at the bottom of the screen. Just make sure you have notifications switched on in your phone's settings. For assistance, contact your local QSL team.

Key Dates 2023

20 September 2023:

- Last day to price 2023-Season Target Price Contract tonnage before the pricing window is automatically extended and roll adjustments apply.
- Last day to achieve or roll pricing allocated to the October 2023 ICE 11 contract through the Individual Futures Contract or Self-Managed Harvest Contract.

31 October 2023:

Last day to nominate QSL as your sugar marketer for the 2024 season.

For more information, please contact your local representative:

Disclaimer: The information in this document does not constitute financial advice. Growers should seek their own financial advice and read the QSL Pricing Pool Terms in full (available at www.qsl.com.au) before making any pricing and pool selection decisions. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this document.

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Corporate Health Insurance

Working together with CANEGROWERS, we are excited to offer you a healthy corporate discount on your health insurance under the CANEGROWERS Corporate Health Plan. Experience the Queensland Country difference with:

- ✓ **Healthy savings**
A 6% discount* on your annual policy premium.
- ✓ **A dedicated Corporate Partnership Manager**
Kim Anderson, your dedicated Corporate Partnership Manager will be happy to help you with any questions you may have.
- ✓ **Easy to understand products**
Our products are easy to understand and provide our Members with great value for money and peace of mind.
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We're here to help. Our commitment to helping our Members is second to none with fast and friendly service both face to face or over the phone.
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Our benefits help promote a healthy lifestyle and based on direct Member feedback, are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain competitive.
- ✓ **Easy claiming**
Claim easily anywhere, anytime through our Mobile App by simply uploading a photo of your receipt or via our Online Member Services portal.

If you have any questions or for more information contact Kim today!



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* The corporate discount is provided under the CANEGROWERS Corporate Health Plan and is applied to the gross premiums at the chosen level of cover. Queensland Country Health Fund Ltd ABN 18 086 048 237

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get 6 Weeks Free
on eligible hospital and
combined policies***



 **Queensland
Country
Health Fund**

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*Offer available for new policy owners who purchase Better Hospital (Silver+) or Vital Hospital (Bronze+) with or without extras cover between 4 September - 30 September 2023. Offer does not apply to existing members or those who have previously received a 1 month free or 6 weeks free offer from Queensland Country Health Fund in the last 18 months. Applies to the first 6 weeks of premium. Full terms and conditions available queenslandcountry.health Queensland Country Health Fund Pty Ltd ABN 18 086 048 237