

HIGHLIGHTS

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Kalamia Sweet Notes

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thanks all contributors.

MY FINAL EDITION

I have reflected on my 15 months at Kalamia and looked at my first Sweet Notes article of November 2015 to compare my initial impressions with those of today.

So much has changed, yet so much has stayed the same.

I have seen the effort that goes into a full crop year, probably more last year than most because of the drought, and understand more fully the challenges in the complexity of production, harvesting, scheduling, crushing, making of sugar, transporting, storage and the marketing of sugar, and the relationship of parties involved. I have observed the endeavours of people at every part of that process to do a good job. My observation in my first Sweet Notes about commitment and professionalism has been borne out.

I understand the importance of varieties, tonnage yield, CCS, the exchange rate and the ICE#11 price play in the determining your farm income and the role Forward Pricing can play in your income risk management. I am aware of the serious level investment in research and development to support the industry productivity and the often long gestation of commercialisation of the R&D.

I have noted the emerging significance of social licence considerations of meeting environmental requirements and end user assurance of ethical supply chains. I acknowledge industry's initial steps to meet these with programs like 6 Easy Steps, BMP SmartCane and Bonsucro, and the work yet to be done to satisfy the future standards that will be expected of you.

I have felt the good feelings of members



at the lift in prices and at the recent good rains.

All that having been said the challenge of the implementation of the Growers Choice legislation still confronts the industry. What was required at the end of 2015 is still largely unresolved. Cane Supply Agreements were to be negotiated and On Supply Agreements required to be made with any marketer not associated with the mill. At the time of writing this, with the 28 February close off for Forward Pricing for 2017 approaching fast there is still only one pathway available to members who wish to lock in on 2017,18,or19, and that is by accepting the Wilmar Individual Cane Supply Agreement and the Wilmar Pricing and Pooling Agreement. A Collectives Cane Supply Agreement is yet to be settled on and QSL has not been able to negotiate

terms of an On Supply Agreement that it is prepared to accept, and consequently may not be in a position to earn the rights to market sugar for your business.

For the majority of members, being those who have not signed Wilmar agreements, there is a need in the near future to consider your business requirements for Forward Pricing at least as far as 2017 goes. It has been indicated to BDCG that if QSL can get an agreement on an On Supply Agreement during February then they will look to offering Forward Pricing even without a concluded Cane Supply Agreement. Given the progress of negotiation to date that is no certainty of happening either. Members will need to be sure to keep up to date with developments in February to ensure they are able to take whatever decisions and steps they feel appropriate for their enterprise and family.

I leave with disappointment that I have had little influence on the unresolved matters between Wilmar and growers. It does the industry no good to be in a place where trust and respect of one or more of the parties, who must inevitably deal with each other, is so lacking between the growers and the miller. I hope that in time goodwill can be restored and growers and miller prosper together despite the natural push and pull of supplier/purchaser relationships.

I wish you well for the future and thank KCGOL Directors and Staff for the experience of having been the Executive Manager of Kalamia Cane Growers.

*Regards,
David.*

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GETTING READY FOR QSL MARKETING CHOICE



Rebecca Love, Burdekin QSL Representative

Late last year QSL wrote to Kalamia Canegrowers members and invited you to prepare for the implementation of QSL Marketing Choice for the 2017 Season by completing and returning a Registration of Interest (ROI) form.

By completing this form you are providing QSL with information that enables us to directly communicate with you regarding a range of topics, including:

- » the progress of our On-Supply Agreement (OSA) negotiations with Wilmar
- » QSL's 2017-Season products and pricing products
- » invitations to information sessions and workshops
- » daily market and price information

Being able to communicate directly with Kalamia Canegrower members will become even more important in the future, as Wilmar has made it clear that QSL must have a direct relationship with those Growers who choose QSL as their preferred

marketer for Grower Economic Interest in Sugar (GEI Sugar).

As you know, QSL has not previously had a direct commercial relationship with Growers and so we do not have all the individual information and data required to process pricing orders and to make direct payments to Growers. These details include basic tax information, farm production data and bank account details – all of which are currently held by Wilmar.

Should you choose to nominate QSL as your preferred GEI Sugar Marketer (once the necessary Cane Supply and On-Supply Agreements are in place), we understand Wilmar will provide your information to us. However, relying on Wilmar to provide this information to us may further delay the opportunity for you to choose QSL and to begin pricing for future seasons.

As such, we are seeking your assistance to streamline the collection and verification of your information, so that our team can update your details in our system and ensure you have a smooth transition to the new, direct relationship with QSL.

The easiest way to kick-start this process is to complete and submit the Registration of Interest form sent to you in December. You can return this document to QSL's Ayr office, either in person (we're next to the CBA on Young Street), by mail at PO Box 950, Ayr, or via email at info@qsl.com.au. QSL respects your privacy and will handle any personal details provided by growers in a manner consistent with the Australian Privacy Principles as set out in the Privacy Act (Cth) 1988. You can view our Privacy Statement on our website (www.qsl.com.au).

It's important to note that you will not be able to choose QSL as a GEI Sugar Marketer and start pricing with us until both a CSA and OSA are in place, and you have completed the necessary paperwork with QSL (a Grower Pricing Agreement of equivalent document).

Updates on the progress of this work are included in our weekly QSL Marketing

Choice Updates, available on our website every Friday.

In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact your local QSL representatives Carla Keith (p.0409 372 305/ carla.keith@qsl.com.au) and Rebecca Love (p. 0429 054 330/Rebecca.love@qsl.com.au) for further details on QSL's 2017-Season products and services and how you can best prepare to hit the ground running once QSL Marketing Choice is finalised for the Burdekin district.

QSL EXTENDS LONG-TERM KOREAN PARTNERSHIP

South Korea will continue being one of Queensland Sugar Limited's largest export markets following the successful negotiation of an extension to its long-term supply contract (LTC) with the country's three raw sugar refiners.

The new agreement between QSL and CJ Corporation, Samyang Corporation and TS Corporation is similar to the Korean refiners' existing LTC with QSL.

QSL's General Manager Trading and Risk Dougall Lodge said the agreement was a very positive and rewarding one for QSL and the Queensland millers and growers it represents.

"This contract proves QSL's relationship with one of our premium international customers continues to go from strength to strength, building on a very successful 40-year commercial partnership," Mr Lodge said.

"It is a vote of confidence for QSL and means the Queensland cane farming families and millers we represent will continue to benefit from the strong returns the Korean market currently provides."

DISCLAIMER: This article contains information of a general or summary nature. While all care is taken in the preparation of this article, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided is not guaranteed. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial, investment or product advice or a risk management strategy. You should seek your own financial advice. This article should not be taken to include representations as to future matters, and nothing contained in this article should be relied upon as a representation as to future matters. 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 report.

Wilmar Sugar Update



WEDNESDAY, 4 JANUARY 2017

DEAR GROWER

We've finally reached the end of the 2016 season, with Inkerman Mill crushing the last stick of cane about 10.20am yesterday (Tuesday 3 January).

This season has been a long and challenging one for all of our milling regions. We lost a significant amount of time to wet weather, pushing finish dates into December and the first week of January.

Average CCS levels have been about one unit lower than long-term averages but, on a positive note, the in-season rain produced a much larger than anticipated crop. We crushed a total of 16.86 million tonnes of cane at our eight mills - about a million tonnes more than the pre-season forecast. Only one of our milling regions ended the crush with a significant amount of standover. Plane Creek Mill was rained out in the final week of 2016, having crushed 95.5 per cent of the total crop. About 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes of cane has been stood over. There was a small amount of cane stood over in the Herbert and negligible amounts in Proserpine and the Burdekin.

The final amounts of cane crushed at our mills were:

- » Invicta - 3.25 million tonnes
- » Kalamia - 1.68 million tonnes
- » Pioneer - 1.89 million tonnes
- » Inkerman - 1.87 million tonnes
- » Macknade - 1.54 million tonnes
- » Victoria - 3.26 million tonnes
- » Proserpine - 2 million tonnes
- » Plane Creek - 1.34 million tonnes.

I'd like to sincerely thank all growers, harvesting contractors and mill employees for your cooperation and perseverance throughout a trying season.

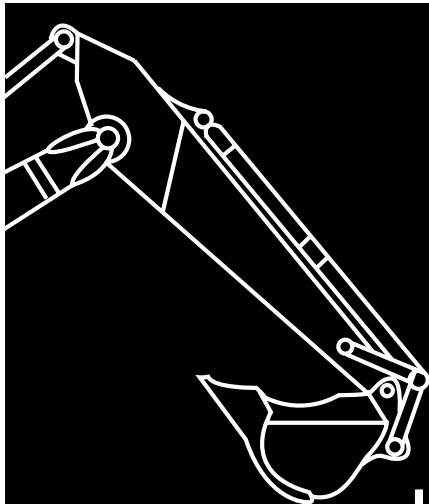
Over the coming months, we will be investing in an extensive capital and maintenance program at our mills. I will keep you updated on significant projects.

*Best regards, John Pratt
Executive General Manager
- North Queensland*



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Advances and payments by pricing category



2016 SEASON: HERBERT, BURDEKIN & PLANE CREEK

12 January 2017

		US Quota	Wilmar Managed Pool	FSP 2 - 2 Season Forward Pool	FSP 3 - 3 Season Forward Pool	Actively Managed Pool	Guaranteed Floor Price Pool	Harvest Pool	Totals & Averages
POOL PRICES									
Previous Net Pool Price Estimates	A/t IPS								
25 Mar 2016		\$683.12	\$461.45	\$467.72	\$482.58	\$466.35	\$430.06	\$450.12	
29 Apr 2016		\$690.61	\$440.38	\$469.34	\$485.51	\$477.02	\$434.61	\$456.50	
27 May 2016		\$678.06	\$472.58	\$478.59	\$494.70	\$523.84	\$455.59	\$501.29	
30 Jun 2016		\$668.04	\$470.14	\$477.97	\$497.80	\$556.89	\$466.45	\$525.41	
29 Jul 2016		\$669.99	\$470.40	\$475.44	\$493.92	\$541.85	\$456.79	\$508.86	
26 Aug 2016		\$664.97	\$471.00	\$476.47	\$498.09	\$558.88	\$464.76	\$527.68	
30 Sep 2016		\$662.94	\$475.33	\$477.92	\$502.37	\$579.97	\$470.25	\$551.07	
28 Oct 2016		\$663.86	\$478.16	\$478.20	\$501.03	\$575.51	\$469.46	\$545.03	
25 Nov 2016		\$670.75	\$479.19	\$479.66	\$497.30	\$561.70	\$465.58	\$522.10	
Current Gross Pool Estimate	A/t IPS	\$793.03	\$484.45	\$480.67	\$497.12	\$559.86	\$465.76	\$525.90	
Shared Pool Premiums	A/t IPS	-\$74.43	\$33.86	\$33.86	\$33.86	\$33.86	\$33.86	\$33.86	
Shared Pool Charges	A/t IPS	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	-\$33.83	
Net Pool Price Estimate 30 December 2016 Pool Reports	A/t IPS	\$684.77	\$484.48	\$480.70	\$497.15	\$559.89	\$465.79	\$525.93	
ADVANCE RATES	A\$/t IPS	% Advance	Status						
In-Season \$ Rates									
Initial	\$267.00	Paid	\$267.00	\$267.00	\$267.00	\$267.00	\$267.00	\$267.00	\$267.00
18 Aug 2016	\$326.00	Paid	\$326.00	\$326.00	\$326.00	\$326.00	\$326.00	\$326.00	\$326.00
20 Oct 2016	\$368.00	Paid	\$368.00	\$368.00	\$368.00	\$368.00	\$368.00	\$368.00	\$368.00
15 Dec 2016	\$383.00	Paid	\$383.00	\$383.00	\$383.00	\$383.00	\$419.02	\$383.00	\$383.00
Post-Season Differential Rates									
26 Jan 2017	80.00%	Scheduled	\$547.82	\$387.58	\$384.56	\$397.72	\$447.91	\$419.21	\$420.74
23 Feb 2017	82.50%	Scheduled	\$564.94	\$399.69	\$396.57	\$410.15	\$461.91	\$419.21	\$433.89
23 Mar 2017	87.50%	Scheduled	\$599.17	\$423.92	\$420.61	\$435.00	\$489.90	\$419.21	\$460.18
20 Apr 2017	90.00%	Scheduled	\$616.29	\$436.03	\$432.63	\$447.43	\$503.90	\$419.21	\$473.33
18 May 2017	92.50%	Scheduled	\$633.41	\$448.14	\$444.64	\$459.86	\$517.89	\$430.86	\$486.48
22 Jun 2017	95.00%	Scheduled	\$650.53	\$460.25	\$456.66	\$472.29	\$531.89	\$442.50	\$499.63
Final	100.00%	Scheduled	\$684.77	\$484.48	\$480.70	\$497.15	\$559.89	\$465.79	\$525.93
FORECAST RETURN FOR A 'DEFAULT GROWER' (i.e. A grower with no Forward Pricing or QSL Fixed Tonnage Pools)									
% Allocation to US Quota and Harvest Pools			2.55%					97.45%	100.00%
Advances to be Paid as from 26 January 2017	A/t IPS		\$547.82					\$420.74	\$423.98
Final Forecast Advances to be Paid	A/t IPS		\$684.77					\$525.93	\$529.97
% Paid Season-to-Date			80.00%					80.00%	80.00%

Notes to Advances Program

Forward Pricing pools

In addition to the above pools, many growers have undertaken pricing via Wilmar's Forward Pricing program, namely under the Target Price and Call Pool pricing mechanisms. The final returns from these pools are subject to the same Shared Pool adjustment as for the ICE No.11 pools referred to above.

Shared Pool Element

The 'Shared Pool Premiums' and the 'Shared Pool Charges', as shown above, together comprise the 'Shared Pool Element' as defined in the Forward Pool and Pricing Agreement (FPPA).

General information

Advances are quoted EXCLUSIVE of GST. All advances are subject to QSL Board approvals, final returns for each price category, Wilmar's final sugar production for the season and tonnage allocations to various pricing methods. All growers who have used any form of Forward Pricing will have different advances depending on their price outcomes and tonnages fixed.

Grouping application guidelines for 2017 season



FORMATION OF GROUPS FOR HARVESTING

Harvesting groups consist of one or more growers who group together to harvest their cane in an economical and efficient manner.

Harvesting groups should be formed, where possible, on the basis of general proximity to each other within each line or scheduled delivery runs.

To permit Wilmar and growers time to plan

harvest and transport operations in an orderly and efficient manner, proposals by growers to change grouping arrangements must be submitted, in writing, to Wilmar by the end of February each year.

Harvesting Groups will be taken to be the same as the previous season except where an application to vary grouping has been agreed to by Wilmar.

Some of the issues that Wilmar will consider in regard to a grouping proposal are included in the table below. These issues should be discussed with the relevant Wilmar Logistics team prior to lodging a grouping application.

Grower Representatives should be involved at all stages of the grouping process to ensure the best outcome.

Issue	Wilmar will usually agree if...	Wilmar may agree if...
Grouping of growers across mill areas.	There is no intermill grouping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It can be demonstrated that a harvester moving from one mill area to another will not impact on allotments for other harvesting groups at either mill, eg a strict mechanism to utilize an existing group's allotment at the each mill. » AND Wilmar does not incur extra transport costs.
Grouping of growers on different lines or loco runs.	Grouping contained within loco run.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It can be demonstrated that proposal does not impact on delivery size or times for other groups » AND Wilmar does not incur extra transport costs.
Siding capacity and design.	Current siding capacities and design match proposed group size, roster & mode of operation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Agreement can be reached regarding sharing of cost of modifications » AND suitable time has been allowed for planning, design, easements, regulatory approvals and construction – 2 years is recommended.
Siding sharing.	No sharing of siding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It can be demonstrated and agreed that the siding has enough days available each year for all harvesting groups that wish to use it. » AND a shared siding agreement can be negotiated for the siding. » AND the proposed group has a designated home siding.

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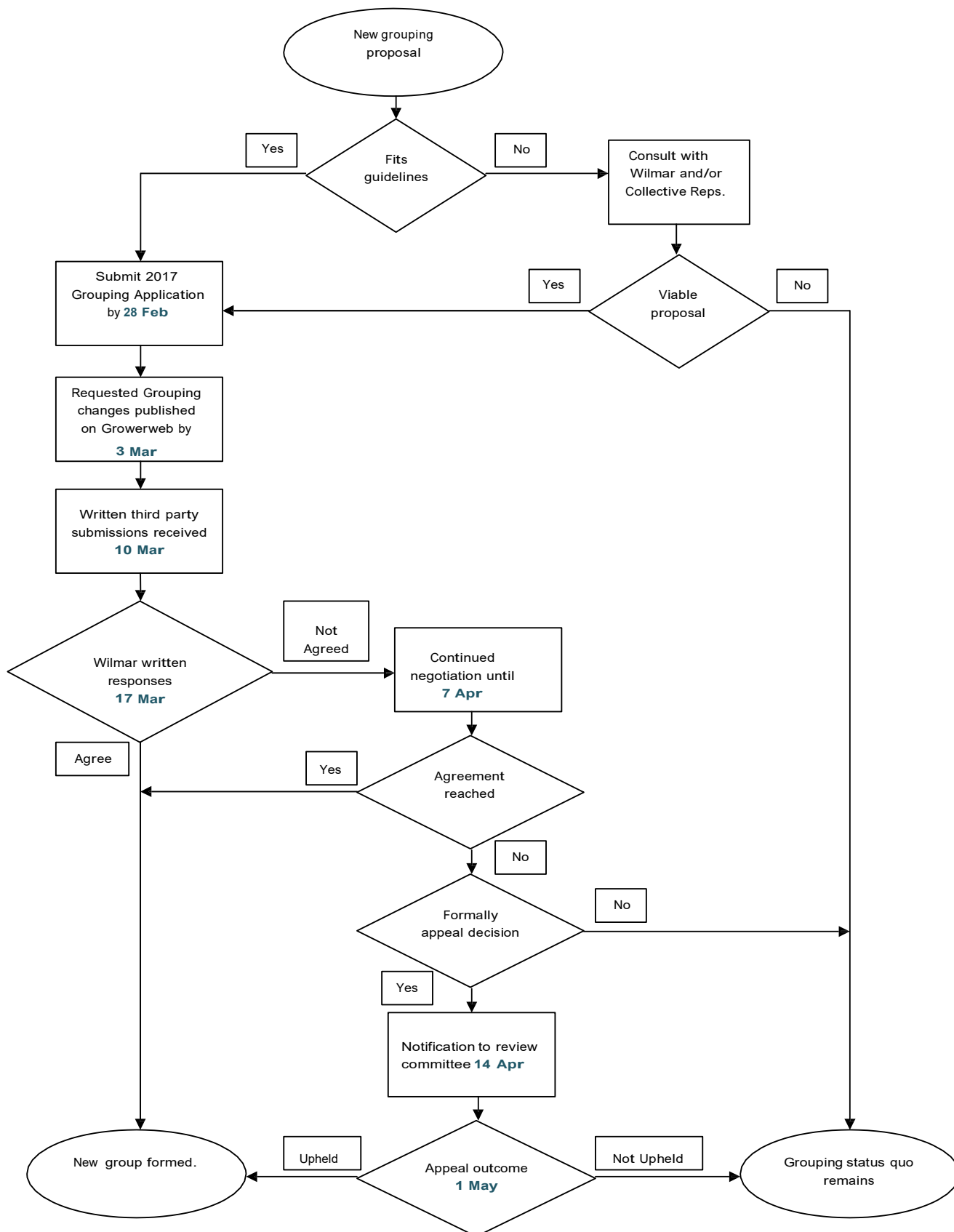
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Grouping application guidelines for 2017 season



2017 Grouping Process Flowchart



Grouping application guidelines for 2017 season



Transport Operations Manager
Cane Supply – Burdekin Mills
PMB 6
TOWNSVILLEMAILCENTREQLD4810

DATE: _____

Dear Sir,

Changed Grouping Application for 2017 Season

I/We (Farm No and Name) _____ wish to
advise that the growers listed below have been notified of my/our release from the harvesting group
(Name & Number as known in the 2016 season)

Option A:-

FARM NUMBER	GROWER'S NAME	GROWER'S SIGNATURE

Option B:- Current Group Spokesperson has been made aware of my/our intentions to leave this
harvesting group.

Group Spokesperson

Option C:- Relevant Cane Collective Manager has been made aware of my/our intentions to leave
this harvesting group.

Cane Collective Manager/Representative

Grouping application guidelines for 2017 season



I/We (Farm No and Name) _____ wish to advise that the growers listed below are in agreement with my/our inclusion in harvesting group (Name & Number as known in the 2016 season)

FARM NUMBER	GROWER'S NAME	GROWER'S SIGNATURE

N.B. Completed forms must arrive at Wilmar's Burdekin CS&T office before 28th February, 2017.

Yours faithfully

Applicant/s

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MEMBERS INFORMATION NOTICE BOARD

Cane Pays

For the record the Final KCGO CCS is 13.52.

This is an increase of 0.12 units over the Interim CCS of 13.40 set by the KCGO Board and used for payments to date.

Mill Performance Payments will be determined, if applicable, in early February after Steve Postma returns to work.

Grouping Applications

Grouping Applications (as shown on pages 7 & 8) for the upcoming Crushing Season is available at the Kalamia Cane growers office.

Website

Members are encouraged to register to use our new website at:
www.kalagro.com.au - Kalamia Cane Growers information hub.

To register, click on the member's login button, then click on the register drop down tab. Fill in the necessary details required and approval to view Kalamia's Exclusive Member's Information will be updated and available within 24 hours.

Member Email Changes

Kalamia member's emailed information has changed where clicking on the link in your email will link you directly to the website without a login process for easy access to daily information:

- Daily Kalagro Fuel Prices, Loadings, Sugar Prices
- QSL Weekly Updates
- What a Sweet Life monthly magazines
- Upcoming sugar industry events
- Kalamia Member information updates

Please Note: Registration is still required to browse the website without these direct links.



Delta Hotel Truck



Delta Hotel, Queen St Ayr



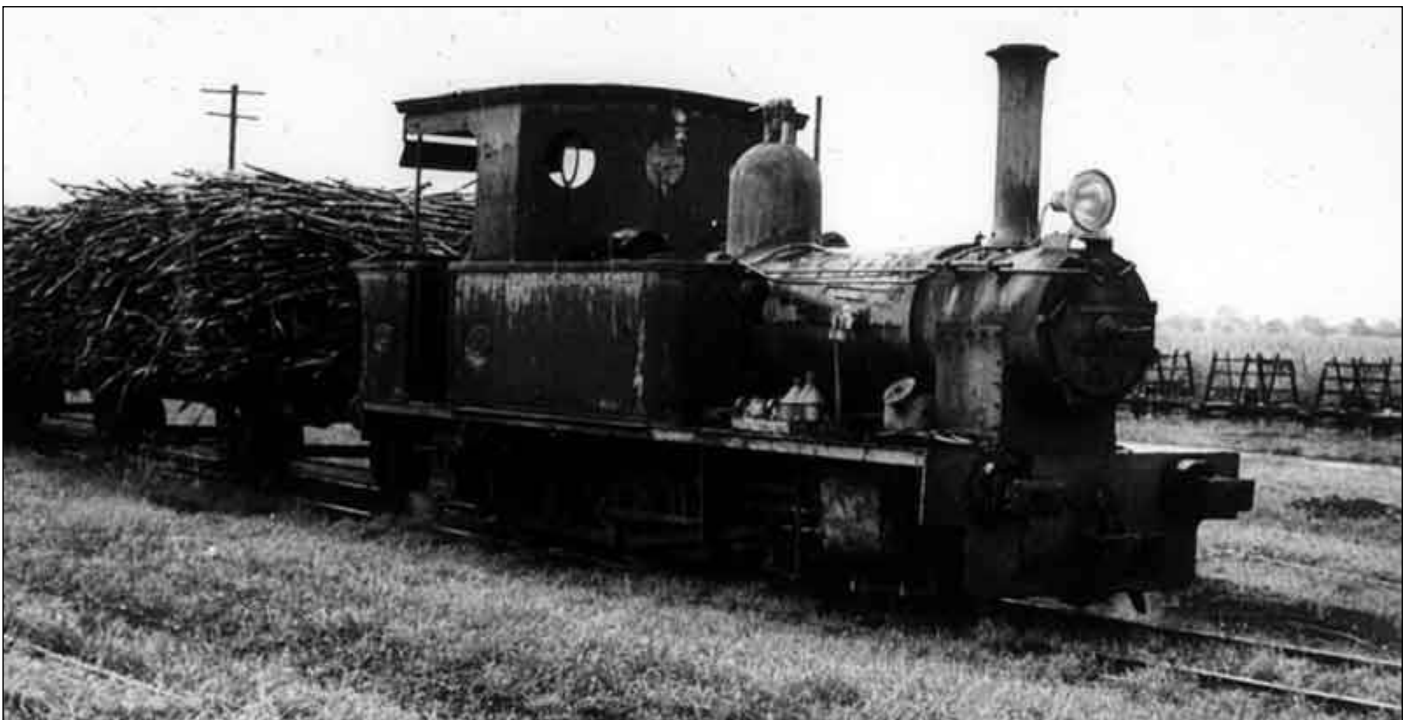
Queen Street



Delta Hotel, Queen St Ayr



Rail Motor 1956



Pioneer Mill Loco

Sweet Industry News

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM ACROSS THE DITCH AS AUSTRALIA STRUGGLES WITH FARM LABOUR WOES

NT Country Hour – www.abc.net.au/rural

By Lisa Herbert

As the backpacker tax saga is finally laid to rest, the problem with Australia's seasonal labour force remains. Simply, there is more work than workers.

Getting skilled and reliable seasonal workers has long been one of the biggest challenges facing Australia's horticultural industries.

Australians do not want the work, which is the reason most of Australia's seasonal farm labour comes from overseas, be it in the form of backpackers on a working holiday visa or the Seasonal Worker Program (SWP).

New Zealand has similar farm labour needs, yet Horticulture NZ, which represents 5,500 growers, estimates that 50 per cent of labour there is sourced locally.

Chief executive Mike Chapman said the sector employed 60,000 people.

"We're always a bit short of workers and we have predicted that over the next few years we're going to need 2,000 to 5,000 additional seasonal workers," he said.

"We're constantly looking at ways to increase our permanent and our seasonal workforce."

Many New Zealand farmers utilise the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE)

policy that allows the horticulture and viticulture industries to recruit overseas workers.

Similar to the SWP in Australia, New Zealand's RSE policy allows recruitment from eligible Pacific countries including Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The number of available places varies each year depending on the forecast of New Zealanders available, and industry demand. The current cap was increased by 1,000 to 10,500 RSE workers for the 2016/17 season.

"The RSE scheme accounts for 16 per cent of our workers," Mr Chapman said.

NEW ZEALAND WORKER SCHEME SUCCESS

The chief executive said there were two things that made the scheme work so well.

"Each employer who becomes entitled to bring in Pacific Island workers must have very high employment standards," Mr Chapman said.

"Not only for the RSE workers, but for everyone they employ, including subcontractors.

"There is active auditing maintained to ensure they do.

"In addition to that, for the Pacific Islanders and for New Zealanders who travel to work, they are offered very high pastoral care



Photo: Benefits provided to the workforce in New Zealand result in them being more motivated. (ABC News: Simon Cullen/file)

standards.

"[This is] where the workers are looked after with appropriate accommodation, assisted with transport, and, in the case of Pacific Islanders, when there is downtime, they're offered training and skills that aren't related to horticulture, such as welding, house-building – skills they can take back to the Pacific Islands."

Mr Chapman said the benefits resulted in the workforce being incredibly motivated.

"There are four wins out of this: the New Zealand economy, the New Zealand growers, the Pacific Island workers and the Pacific Island communities," he said.

TREATMENT OF WORKERS UNDER SCRUTINY

But Mr Chapman admitted New Zealand was not perfect when it came to the treatment of farm workers who had travelled from overseas.

"We work really hard to lift the standards of our employers," he said.

In Australia there are regularly reported cases of worker exploitation.

Henry Sherrell, research officer at the Development Policy Centre at Australia National University, said the backpacker tax "disaster" had resulted in workers and employers manipulating the taxation system.

"There are anecdotal effects of people accepting lower rates of pay so that they didn't have to pay tax on it or get involved in



Photo: Mangoes, unable to be harvested because of a lack of pickers, lie under a mango tree south of Darwin. (Supplied: Tou's Garden)

Sweet Industry News



Photo: Estimates suggest up to 40,000 backpackers contribute to Australia's horticultural workforce. (ABC News: Eliza Rogers)

the tax system," he said.

"[It's not] conducive to a long-term sustainable solution for employers in the horticultural sector.

"Those are short-term measures which create instability and they're bad for everyone."

LOCAL WORKERS A COSTLY YET INTEGRAL PART OF NZ LABOUR FORCE

In New Zealand, 50 per cent of the horticultural seasonal labour force is provided by locals.

At times, this comes at great expense to employers.

Mr Chapman said much effort went into ensuring those NZ workers were given education incentives, which were facilitated and funded by their employers.

"If you're going to get unemployed people ... you need to do some preparatory work with them in terms of life skills and then training around what they're going to do," he said.

"So when they start working they have the skills and the confidence to do the job properly.

"With the skills, the confidence and the good support, the likelihood is they will stay with the job and progress on with the job

"It's about training them in a different environment where they're nurtured and cared for so that they work well.

"It's not easy. It is frustrating and hard and it doesn't work in some cases, but it's what we've got to do to ensure we get the labour we require at those peak times."

Mr Chapman said there was some government support available to employers.

"But employers have to bear the burden of working with New Zealanders to get them to be fit for purpose," he said.

About a third of the New Zealand labour force is made up of backpacker labour, who are employed under special working holiday agreements that allow young people aged between 18 and 30 (or 35 in some cases) the opportunity to travel around New Zealand and work temporarily.

In most cases, eligible people will be issued with a 12-month visa.

While some of the agreements allow working holiday makers to work for any one employer for a maximum of three months, about 75 per cent of working holiday visa holders in New Zealand are allowed to work for a six-month period with a single employer, or have no work restrictions.

BACKPACKER TAX IN NEW ZEALAND

Backpacker labour is taxed at the same rate as New Zealanders pay.

"Up to NZ\$14,000, they pay 10.5 per cent, between NZ\$14,000 and \$48,000 they pay 17.5 per cent," Mr Chapman said.

He admitted the backpacker tax saga in Australia had left him "amazed".

"We really felt for our compatriots in Australia, the growers and the farmers," he said.

"We couldn't understand what the Government was trying to achieve.

"Seasonal workers add to the production and the growth and the financial success of industry."

In the Northern Territory, farming lobby group NT Farmers Association said there had been a noticeable reduction in backpackers available to work on farms in 2016. With the significant decline in the availability of backpackers for the harvest, NT farmers increased their uptake of SWP labour from the Pacific Island and Timor Leste by about 33 per cent.

But the uptake of the program remains low and backpackers remain the largest source of seasonal labour in the Northern Territory.



Photo: Seasonal workers add to the production and growth of the horticulture industry, an expert says. (ABC Rural: Emma Brown)

Sweet Industry News



Photo: Mariano Da Costa Alves and Calisto Dos Santos from Timor-Leste worked on a Top End mango farm as part of their first visit to Australia under the seasonal worker program. (ABC)

NT FARMERS' PLAN

In a bid to solve the long-term farm labour problem, NT Farmers has put two proposals to the Federal Government.

Workplace planning coordinator Aisla Connolly said the association had suggested the Federal Government implement a policy that would see Northern Territorians allowed to take leave from their full-time employment to become seasonal farm labour.

"They could take time off, similar to community service leave, for the harvest season," she said.

"It would allow them to keep their permanent position but assist in what needs to be done on the farm.

"We've also provided suggestions on improving the Seasonal Worker Program for our employers."

Ms Connolly said SWP applications from farmers to be approved had been taking up to 18 months.

"It's also an administration burden on employers," she said.

Three Federal Government departments – the Department of Employment, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – facilitate the SWP.

"The red tape is not easing. Every farm situation is different, so farmers don't fit in a box for the full program," Ms Connolly said.

"One farmer, for example, may have a problem supplying accommodation for his workers because of the location.

"These things need to be looked at on an individual basis."

SEASONAL WORKER PROGRAM COST 'PROBLEMATIC'

Mr Sherrell's research at ANU focuses on migration and labour mobility, and he believes Australian legislators could learn a lot from the success of New Zealand's RSE policy.

He estimates about 35,000 to 40,000 backpackers now contribute to Australia's horticultural workforce.

"These workers are transient, they move around a lot, they don't come for a second season, they're only here for one reason and that's to get another visa," he said.

"A more sustainable option is seasonal workers.

"The major benefit of it is that the same workers can come back year after year and they don't require training in their second year, because they already know what they're doing.

"There are indirect productivity gains to that." Mr Sherrell said the initial cost outlay needed to be part of the program was problematic.

"You need to become a sponsor, which you don't for backpackers. You need to pay fees and charges, and you're responsible for the pastoral care of the workers, so that upfront cost is a deterrent to employers," he said.

"But the benefits come in the long term when you've got a worker who comes back several times, and that becomes a solution to your labour market issues."

He also said the Federal Government's "top down" approach was one of the reasons Australian farmers had not yet embraced the SWP.

AUSTRALIA V NEW ZEALAND

Comparing the SWP to the RSE, Mr Sherrell said one of the big drivers to the success of the New Zealand program was farmer involvement from the initial stages of the program's development.

"It was created from the bottom and it was fed in over a long period of time from feedback and working alongside industry," he said.

"In Australia, perhaps we got off on the wrong foot. It was more of a top down approach from governments.

"As the program evolves there is more input from employers to make it a better reflection of what their needs are."

Mr Sherrell said the program was improving in terms of how employers could engage with it.

"They've [the Government] made a number of changes which have made it easier," he said.

"But there are still concerns about the costs and accommodation of the seasonal workers and pastoral care responsibilities."

He said sharing the cost burden between the migrants who wanted to work in Australia and the employers who wanted to sponsor them was another area needing attention.

"Also I think there is an onus on the Government to promote this program and help employers through the process," he said.

"Many farmers don't know this program exists. They view it as too complicated.

"But the 70 or so Australian employers, contractors and labour hire firms who use the Seasonal Workers Program know the benefit of it and returning workers."



Photo: The cost of the Seasonal Worker Program is a concern for employers. (ABC Rural: Clint Jasper)

Sweet Industry News

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP: GOVERNMENT 'FLAT OUT' TO REVISE TPP DEAL WITHOUT DONALD TRUMP'S SUPPORT

By political reporter Henry Belot – www.abc.net.au/rural



Photo: Malcolm Turnbull and Steven Ciobo remain committed to the TPP deal. (ABC News: Adam Kennedy)

The Federal Government will seek a revised Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal without support from US President Donald Trump, claiming it will still bring “tremendous” benefits to exporters.

KEY POINTS:

- » Donald Trump won't ratify TPP agreement, White House confirms after inauguration
- » “The gains we have achieved absolutely warrant hanging on,” Steve Ciobo says
- » TPP shows Australia's commitment to free trade while negotiating new agreements, Barnaby Joyce says

A White House statement issued soon after Mr Trump's inauguration confirmed he would not ratify the agreement, which he has previously described as a “potential disaster” for the US economy.

Trade Minister Steve Ciobo conceded the trade deal – which included 12 Pacific Rim countries – would need to be revised without the support from the world's largest economy.

“It may come to pass – and certainly it appears to be the case – that the US won't ratify the TPP but the gains we have achieved absolutely warrant hanging on,” he told the ABC.

“Access to the US market was no doubt an incentive for a lot of countries.

“But there is also a tremendous amount of benefit [that has] been able to be achieved under the agreement that countries don't

want to let go.”

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has pronounced the TPP as “dead in the water”, claiming Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's pursuit of the deal is “a waste of time”.

But Mr Turnbull today said the Government was “looking at every opportunity to expand the markets for Australian exports”.

“We are working flat out to find more opportunities for Australians to sell their services, their goods, their produce because that drives employment here,” he told Melbourne's Triple M.

AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORT FOR TPP WON'T BE AFFECTED: CIOBO

In November, Mr Ciobo said a TPP without the US would “fundamentally alter” the agreement but raised the prospect of Mr Trump reviving the deal in later years.

It's been referred to as ‘the dodgiest deal you've never heard of’ and now, Fact Check answers your questions on the TPP.

The Trade Minister has spent the weekend speaking with business leaders in New York and told the ABC that Australia's support for free trade would not be altered by Mr Trump's comments.

“Now, there will be some countries [that] don't want to be part of that global value chain but that's not Australia's future – that's not where we need to be,” Mr Ciobo said.

“Part of the reason we have had 26 years of continuous economic growth is because

we have been willing to embrace these opportunities for new markets and for Australians exporters.”

Labor's trade spokesman Jason Clare said there was no evidence the TPP would have a significant impact without the US.

“I asked the Government for any economic modelling on what an agreement without America might look like, and they've come back and said they haven't done any,” he said.

“We don't know how many jobs it would create or how it would improve economic growth in Australia.”

Mr Ciobo said it was unreasonable for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to not have economic modelling on the impact of a US withdrawal from the TPP deal.

“It's frankly a little unreasonable to expect institutions like the World Bank and others around the world to have raced out and modelled something on a hypothetical,” he said.

AUSTRALIA'S MADE TRADE INTERESTS WITH EUROPE CLEAR: JOYCE

Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said ratifying the TPP would show Australia's commitment to free trade while negotiating new bilateral agreements.

TRUMP TO COMPLICATE CHINA RELATIONS?

“It's a clear indicator of our intentions and as we go into bilateral trade agreements, which no doubt will take place – it's an indicator that this is something that has taken the world forward,” he said.

Mr Joyce, who is in Berlin for a meeting of world agriculture ministers, said Australian diplomats had made their interest in trade deals clear with European counterparts.

“These things are by their nature sometimes convoluted and the more high level meetings that you have to progress this issue, ultimately lead to a better return for Australia,” he said.

Mr Joyce also said the Coalition Government remained committed to its renewable energy target despite criticism from some Coalition MPs.

“We don't sign agreements to pull out of them. I think Australia is known as an honourable party in this,” he said.

Sweet Industry News

AUSTRALIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY HOLDS OUT HOPE US WILL NOT LEAVE TRANS PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

QLD Country Hour – www.abc.net.au/rural

By Kallee Buchanan

Cane growers say they will be disappointed if the United States pulls out of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which gives them new access to a lucrative market.

The future of the massive 12-nation trade agreement has been questioned as President-elect Donald Trump prepares for his inauguration.

Mr Trump has vowed to tear up the agreement on his first day in office.

As it currently stands, the TPP represents a small but important toehold for the sugar industry into the American market, almost doubling the 65,000 tonnes already being sent.

Canegrowers chairman Paul Schembri said it was a market that Australia hoped to expand.

"The United States is unquestionably one of the most lucrative markets for sugar," he said.

"We'd be disappointed if TPP falls over because of the potential that it might give the Australian sugar industry in terms of increased access.

"The immediate downside would be probably a loss of around \$13 million, but it's more the future that we had our eye on."

US MARKET OFFERS PREMIUM ABOVE WORLD PRICE

Some analysts have suggested a plan B option could be a renegotiated agreement led by China, which Mr Schembri said did have some merit.

But with 90 per cent of Australia's sugar already headed to Asia, an agreement without the United States would not provide the same market expansion opportunity.



Photo: The TPP would more than double the amount of Australian sugar exported to the United States. (ABC Rural: Charlie McKillop)

"In this export game of sugar you need to open up as many export opportunities as possible," he said.

"To open up an opportunity in the United States would have been tremendous for us because it certainly pays a price which is a substantial premium over and above the world price."

WAIT AND SEE APPROACH

Mr Schembri said the global trend towards protectionism was concerning, and would present challenges for the sugar industry.

"Invariably if that [protectionism] were to come into effect, Australia would get caught in a trade crossfire," he said.

"That won't be helpful to us because we need to rely on accessing so many markets

over and above our domestic market."

Despite the sentiments, Mr Schembri was quick to point out no-one really knew what Mr Trump's ascendancy would mean for global trade.

"Let's just wait and see whether his utterances at a microphone during a campaign actually translate into US administration policy," he said.

"I think it's far too early to say that everything that has been gained will be lost under a Trump regime."

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Sweet Industry News

NORTH QUEENSLAND CANE GROWERS THREATEN TO STRIKE AS SUGAR MARKETING DISPUTE CONTINUES

QLD Country Hour – www.abc.net.au/rural

By Mark Jeffery and Lara Webster

Some North Queensland cane growers are considering withholding their crop this year if a marketing agreement with sugar miller Wilmar is not reached.

The threats come ahead of One Nation Senator Pauline Hanson's meeting with Wilmar executives in Brisbane, to see if a deal can be reached.

However, the chair of Canegrowers Burdekin Phil Marano said the move to go on strike would be seriously considered.

"There are a lot of growers saying that it would appear they have no option because they know if we lose this battle we have lost for all time," he said.

"It could be that growers do not supply cane this year for the crush; the feeling is that strong out there amongst growers.

"I have never seen so much anger from growers towards the mills and it has never been this bad."

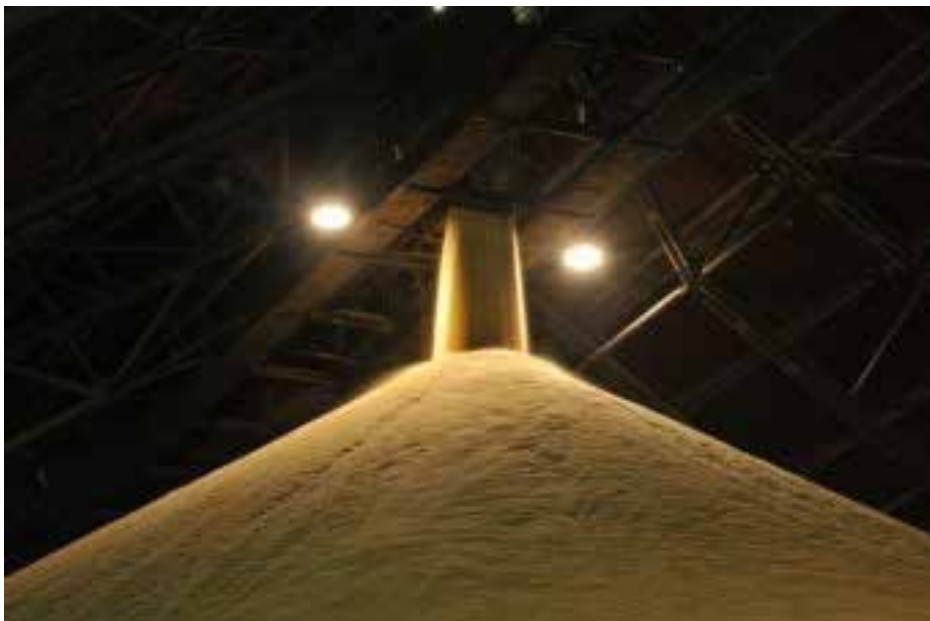
Canegrowers Queensland chairman Paul Schembri said he hoped Pauline Hanson would be able to help end the long-running stoush over sugar marketing.

Sugar miller Wilmar and growers have been unable to reach an agreement on sugar marketing for nearly three years and very few growers have signed what has been put on the table.

Mr Schembri said he hoped Senator Hanson could put pressure on the multi-national company.

"If she has involved herself to see if she can bring it to a resolution, I can see only good coming out of the conversation," he said.

"We will just have to wait and see what comes out of the meeting."



DEVELOPMENT IN SUGAR MARKETING WAR

Meanwhile the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has made a draft decision to allow Canegrowers Queensland to play a role in negotiations for the on-supply agreements.

From now on, the organisation will be able to play a role in negotiations between Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) and Wilmar on their growers' behalf.

CEO Dan Galligan said he hoped that decision would lead to a resolution for all parties involved in current negotiations.

In fact, Canegrowers Queensland has invited Wilmar Sugar and QSL to a three-way meeting in the first week of February.

"With harvesters set to fire up again within 20 weeks, it is time for us to step in and this draft determination from Australia's

competition watchdog shows we have a legitimate role to play," he said.

While Wilmar Sugar declined to be interviewed before the meeting with Senator Hanson, a spokesperson confirmed senior executives had accepted the invitation to meet with her today.

They went on to say they welcomed the opportunity to discuss Queensland's new sugar marketing arrangements with the Senator and any ongoing efforts to bring cane supply negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion.

ABC Rural contacted Pauline Hanson's office but was told she would not be making any comments until after her meeting with Wilmar.



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Sweet Industry News

MIXED RESULTS FOR QUEENSLAND RICE PLANTINGS THIS SUMMER

QLD Country Hour – www.abc.net.au/rural
By Lara Webster and Mark Jeffery

There have been mixed results for Queensland rice plantings following heavy rainfall in the north.

The late finish to the cane harvest in Mackay has hit farmers hard, with no summer rice crops grown in the region this season.

Cane farmers have, over time, been growing rice throughout the region on a small scale to supplement their income and as a break crop from cane.

Tony Crowley, director at agronomy service Farmacist, said he expected around 100 hectares to be planted during December, but the prolonged cane harvest put a stop to that.

"Because the harvest did not finish until early January, the fallow paddocks were not indicated early enough to make the call [to plant rice]," he said.

"What we have found with the rice we have

planted is that you have got to plant it at the right date, at the right timing to get the maximum yield at the end and that is where the dollars come in."

With standover cane left in the paddocks, rice crops would have helped to compensate for a small part of the financial losses growers have suffered.

"They have suffered a minimum loss of say, 10 per cent of their gross income, so that would have compensated a little bit for that if they had rice in the ground," Mr Crowley said.

"We also didn't get soy beans or some of the other pulse crops in the ground, which is another income stream."

The rotational crops are also planted because of their soil health benefits and without them in the ground, cane crops will not receive the extra nutrients.

"That will force us into a plough-out, replant situation... there are a lot of ramifications from a late finish to the crushing"

PLANTING GOES AHEAD FURTHER NORTH

Meanwhile rice growers in the Burdekin and Tully districts have reported they are on

track for planting this year, even in the high rainfall area of Tully.

Brian Dore grows cane and rice on two properties just south of Tully.

He said he still intended to plant on time this season, despite heavy rains and a late cane season.

"At this stage, all of our ground preparation is pretty much done and we aim to start planting from January onwards," Mr Dore said.

"There was a dry period there where could turn around and get the paddocks ready for rice."

While it is the wet season for north Queensland, Mr Dore was not too concerned that predictions of more rain could set back planting.

"Our planting window opens from now on [so] for the next month or so, I am optimistic we will get a crop in," he said.

"Everything is prepped and ready to go so we should get it [the crop] in in a timely manner."

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MAHATAMA GANDHI



JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: What did the janitor yell when he jumped out of the closet?

A: "Supplies!"

Q: Why did the painting go to jail?

A: It was framed.

Q: Why did the ants dance on the jam jar?

A: The lid said, "Twist to open."

WORD OF THE MONTH

quondam

adjective [kwon-duh m, -dam]

former; onetime.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- » Did you know a crocodile can't stick out its tongue
- » Did you know China manufactures 70% of the world's toys
- » Did you know a shark's top speed is 70kmh (44mph)
- » Did you know when water freezes it expands by 9%



CHOCOLATE NUTELLA STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE TORTE

INGREDIENTS

- » 200g dark cooking chocolate, finely chopped
- » 200g unsalted butter, chopped
- » 155g (3/4 cup, firmly packed) brown sugar
- » 35g (1/3 cup) Dutch cocoa powder, plus extra, to serve
- » 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
- » 125ml (1/2 cup) hot water
- » 75g (1/2 cup) plain flour
- » 50g (1/3 cup) self-raising flour
- » 2 eggs
- » 27-30 (about 490g) evenly sized strawberries, washed, hulled, dried
- » 200g dark choc melts

NUTELLA CHEESECAKE FILLING

- » 2 x 250g packets cream cheese, at room temperature
- » 480g (1 1/2 cups) Nutella
- » 60g (1/3 cup) icing sugar mixture
- » 125ml (1/2 cup) thickened cream

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

- » 150g dark cooking chocolate, finely chopped
- » 190g (3/4 cup) sour cream

METHOD

Step 1: Preheat oven to 160C/140C fan forced. Release base of a 22cm (base measurement) springform pan. Invert. Line base with baking paper. Secure in pan, allowing paper to overhang. Grease side of pan with butter.

Step 2: Combine the chocolate, butter, brown sugar, cocoa, coffee and water in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on High, stirring every minute, for 2-3 minutes or until smooth. Use a balloon whisk to whisk in the flours and eggs. Pour into pan. Bake for 1 hour or until a skewer inserted in centre comes out clean. Set aside in pan to cool completely. Remove cake from pan. Clean the pan.

Step 3: Grease clean pan with melted butter and line base and side with baking paper. Use a large serrated knife to cut the cake in half horizontally. Place cake base in pan, cut side up. Cut 10 strawberries in half. Arrange side-by-side against side of pan, cut sides out and pointy ends up. Trim if necessary so they are not higher than the rim of the pan.

Step 4: To make the cheesecake filling, use electric beaters to beat cream cheese and Nutella in a bowl until smooth. Add the icing sugar and cream. Beat until well combined.

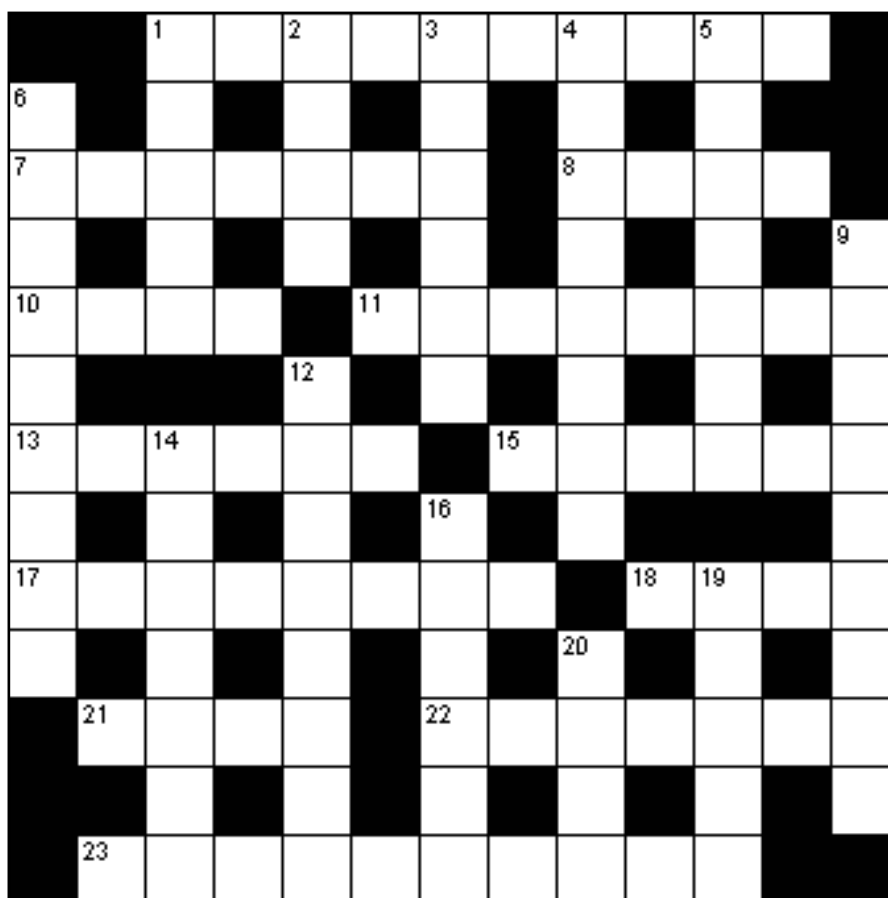
Step 5: Spoon 1 cup of cheesecake filling into the centre of the pan and smooth the surface. Arrange remaining strawberries, pointy ends up, in the centre to form a cross and then make a diagonal line of strawberries in each quarter. Spoon remaining cheesecake filling over strawberries to cover. Smooth surface. Tap pan on bench to release air bubbles. Place remaining cake on top, cut side down. Place in the fridge for 6 hours to set.

Step 6: Place a large sheet of baking paper on a work surface. Microwave choc melts in a microwave-safe bowl, on High, stirring every minute, for 1-2 minutes or until melted. Spread in a thin layer over paper. Place cylindrical objects (such as a rolling pin and/or spoon handles) under paper to make ripples in the chocolate. Leave to set. Break into shards.

Step 7: To make the ganache, combine chocolate and sour cream in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on High, stirring every minute, for 1-2 minutes or until melted and smooth.

Step 8: Transfer cake to a serving plate. Drizzle with ganache. Top with chocolate shards and dust with extra cocoa. Serve immediately.

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 The capital of Uruguay (10)
- 7 Little pasta cases with savoury filling (7)
- 8 Profound (4)
- 10 Walk through shallow water (4)
- 11 Leave the country (8)
- 13 Sea between Greece and Turkey (6)
- 15 Owing money (2,4)
- 17 Australian marsupial (8)
- 18 Unpleasant child (4)
- 21 The two of them (4)
- 22 Examined and corrected (7)
- 23 Early bird song (4,6)

DOWN

- 1 Shifted (5)
- 2 Midday (4)
- 3 Puzzle (6)
- 4 Needy (8)
- 5 Raise (7)
- 6 Disadvantages (9)
- 9 Lack of doubt (9)
- 12 Long-distance foot-race (8)
- 14 Venetian canal boat (7)
- 16 Quarter (6)
- 19 Takes a break (5)
- 20 Above (4)

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Down: 1 – Moved, 2 – No, 3 – Enigma, 4 – Deep, 5 – Indigent, 6 – Elevate, 7 – Ravio, 8 – Aegean, 9 – Drawbacks, 10 – Emigrate, 11 – Wade, 12 – Marath, 13 – Kangaroo, 14 – Gondola, 15 – Brat, 16 – Both, 17 – Indeb, 18 – Revised, 19 – Rests, 20 – Over.



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