

May 17, 2018

New research to deliver outcomes for Australian sugarcane growers and millers

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has announced 12 new research projects that will begin from July 1, 2018, to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers.

These new projects complement the existing portfolio of research investment by SRA and will address critical research gaps and requirements that have been identified in SRA's five-year Strategic Plan.

SRA CEO Mr Neil Fisher said the new research investment would see research providers from several leading research institutions undertake work to address critical issues for the Australian sugar industry.

"These projects have an emphasis on new and innovative research," Mr Fisher said. "For example, CSIRO will be looking closer into the genetics of sugarcane and molecular markers, which will help us to continue to modernise the SRA breeding program, leading to better varieties for growers and millers.

"We are also investing in a major project with QUT to improve pan design and how pans operate. The pan stage of milling is where syrup is converted to sugar, and there is an opportunity with this research to improve the efficiency of this critical component of the milling process, and to do so in a way that minimises the capital investment for our Milling Members.

"Our investments are also looking at other key topics including improved irrigation system selection, nitrogen use efficiency, and improved farming systems.

"We are also investing in a project led by SRA to ensure our industry is prepared for the possible biosecurity risk posed by moth borers, which exist in neighbouring sugarcane growing countries and would cause serious problems for our industry if we faced an incursion. This type of preparation is a vital insurance policy for the future of our industry."

Mr Fisher said these projects had been chosen based on a rigorous selection process over the last six months, overseen by the SRA Research Funding Panel (RFP).

"These projects have all been assessed based on the outcomes they will provide to the industry, leading to positive outcomes for our investors."

The full portfolio of SRA's research investment is available via the SRA website:

<https://sugarresearch.com.au/research-portfolio/>

SRA's investment is funded by the statutory levy of 70 cents per tonne of cane, to which growers and millers each contribute 35c per tonne of cane each. This investment in research is supported by a co-contribution of about \$7.2M from the Federal Government and \$2.85 million from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

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Project title	Research agency
Genetic analysis and marker delivery for sugarcane breeding	CSIRO
Developing the sugarcane gene catalogue for trait improvement	CSIRO
Selecting high value chromosomes from Saccharum species - extension to 2015/026	CSIRO
Development of commercial molecular biological assays for improved sugarcane soil health and productivity	SRA
Impact of stool architecture on ratooning: extending current trial to 4R to strengthen correlations.	CSIRO
Implementation of root system diagnostics to deliver a field-based measure for root health.	CSIRO
Greenhouse gas emissions from sugarcane soils: strategies for increasing NUE and reducing environmental pollution	Queensland University of Technology
Improved irrigation system selection and operation for increased sugarcane productivity and profitability.	University of Southern Queensland
Pan design and operational changes to suit Australian pan stages operating on low pressure vapour	Queensland University of Technology
Validating root system traits for enhanced nutrient capture in challenging environments.	CSIRO
Establishing sugarcane farming systems to improve soil health	SRA
Moth Borers – how are we going to manage them when they arrive?	SRA

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