



Sugar Research
Australia

eNewsletter

Can you believe we're already into February? In this edition of eNewsletter, we catch up with some North Queensland growers about soil health and why it matters to them. And with bookings filling fast for our identifying sugarcane diseases workshops, remember to book soon to secure your tickets.



Watch growers Chris Bosworth and Allan Lynn who feature in - [Improving soil health - YouTube](#)

Growers share why soil health matters to them

SRA caught up with some North Queensland sugarcane farmers who've focused on improving soil health, about the changes introduced on their farms and the resulting benefits.

They've shared their experiences in a video on our YouTube channel. Agronomist Dr Danielle Skocaj also discusses some of the improvements observed at one of the farms.

The growers are also featured in our extended soil health coverage in the [Summer edition of CaneConnection](#).

Nominations open for soil health awards

Nominations for the 2022 General Jeffery Soil Health Award are now open. The Award recognises the work of people who care about soil health and who are educating or inspiring others.

Individual farmers, land managers, extension specialists or educators may be nominated for activities including undertaking and promoting good management practice, raising awareness about the importance of maintaining and improving soil health, or educating others about soils.

Nominations close Sunday 17 April, with finalists announced in August. The award was established in 2020 by the Office of the National Soils Advocate and is administered by Landcare Australia.

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Expert to examine yellowing cane in the Herbert

SRA experts will examine several sites around Ingham next week following multiple reports of yellowing cane.

District Manager Phil Patane (pictured) said several growers had contacted him to report yellowing of their crop, while Herbert Cane Productivity Services had received similar reports.

“We’ve had more than 100 millimetres of rain over the past week, combined with high temperatures, so it may be a stress reaction in the crop,” Phil said. “But it’s also important to examine whether there’s something else involved.”

SRA Entomology Leader Dr Kevin Powell will visit the Herbert district to inspect the yellowed crops. Dr Powell has been undertaking research into yellow canopy syndrome and whether insects or mites play a role in the syndrome.

Herbert growers who’ve observed recent yellowing of their crop are encouraged to contact District Manager [Phil Patane](#).



Disease workshops filling fast

SRA’s Identifying sugarcane diseases workshops scheduled for early March are filling fast.

Manager Biosecurity and Disease Screening Dr Nicole Thompson encouraged individuals interested in attending to book their spot early to avoid disappointment.

Sessions include a mix of field activities, group learning and seminars to teach the fundamentals of sugarcane diseases and pathology.

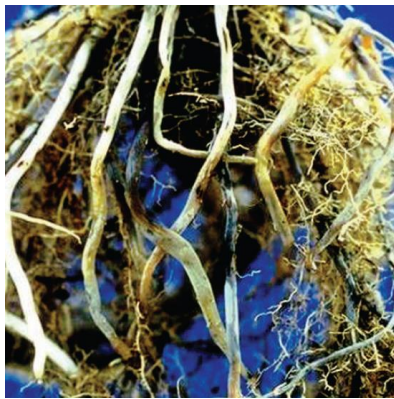
The 2-day workshops are \$300 per participant and will be held at SRA Woodford:

1-2 March: Identifying sugarcane diseases - experienced advisors and industry members

3-4 March: Identifying sugarcane diseases - industry newcomers

Enrolment details and COVID requirements for attendees are outlined on the SRA Events page.

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Understanding the impacts of soil-borne diseases

Soil-borne diseases, caused by bacteria, fungi, viruses and nematodes, can have a major impact on yield and can be difficult to manage.

To develop a better picture of the impact soil-borne diseases have on plant systems, representatives from agricultural sectors across Australasia are invited to [complete a questionnaire](#).

The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes to complete and is designed to capture information on the importance of the different soil-borne pathogens in agricultural and natural plant systems.

Researchers hope to use the insights gained to better convey the cost of soil-borne diseases to funding agencies, management and policy makers. Outcomes will be presented at the 11th Australasian Soilborne Disease Symposium in Cairns in August.

For more information contact Tony.Pattison@daf.qld.gov.au.

Mentors helping shape future agricultural leaders

More than 160 participants have been selected in the second of three rounds to find mentees and mentors under the Future Drought Fund's Drought Resilience Leaders mentoring program.

The mentoring program pairs farmers wanting to increase their skills in managing drought and climate resilience and adaptation with experienced farmers and agricultural professionals.

The third opens for applications in early 2022. Visit the [Australian Rural Leadership Foundation website](#) for more information, including eligibility criteria.

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