



Grower Update

ISSUE 47 – MAY 2023

Welcome to the MAY issue of our BPS newsletter. We hope you find the articles contained in this issue informative.



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DATE CLAIMER

SRA Burdekin Station Field Day

Wednesday May 31, 2023, 7 am – 1 pm

Join us for a morning of presentations and demonstrations. Interact with researchers, extension staff and the local community to learn about the latest research and technology in the Burdekin that can help your business.

Morning tea and lunch provided

RSVP to Terry Granshaw by Tuesday May 30 on

0457 650 181 or tgranshaw@sugarresearch.com.au

NEW FIELD OFFICERS

Over the past few months BPS welcomed two new employees, Jack Edwards and Nina Laubscher.

Hi, I'm Jack and currently I am the Pioneer field officer while Madeline is on maternity leave. Here's a little bit about me. I grew up in the Burdekin and graduated high school from Burdekin Catholic High School. Straight after graduating I started my traineeship at BPS where I have been learning about the agricultural industry. My goal is to keep learning and assisting growers with their farming productivity and profitability.



Hi, I'm Nina Laubscher and I am the Invicta field officer. I grew up in South Africa where I worked on a cattle farm and received my certificate four in agriculture. My main goal is to learn more about the sugar cane industry by helping farmers increase profitability and productivity. I enjoy helping growers on their farms and am very passionate about agriculture.

MODDUS

Moddus is a plant growth regulator that is used to increase CCS. With the recent rain, it may be a crop management option that growers want to explore, especially for early cut blocks or Q240 blocks that are already seeing heavy suckering. Previous trial work suggests that an increase in CCS of between 0.2 and 1 units can be achieved.

To be effective, Moddus needs to be applied between 8 and 5 weeks before harvest. In the Burdekin anecdotal evidence suggests that a longer period between application and harvest is more effective than applying closer to harvest. It should also be applied to healthy, actively growing crops. Crops that are under stress from either too much or too little water, diseases, or nutritional pressures will not respond as well as crops that are healthy.

Varieties can vary in their response to Moddus, in other words not all varieties will see an increase in CCS. Trials conducted many years ago showed that Q208 is generally responsive; Q183 had variable responses; and KQ228 was generally not responsive. Because we have no data on newer varieties, we suggest leaving an unsprayed strip when applying Moddus and harvesting this area separately. In this way you will be able to see how much effect the Moddus has had.

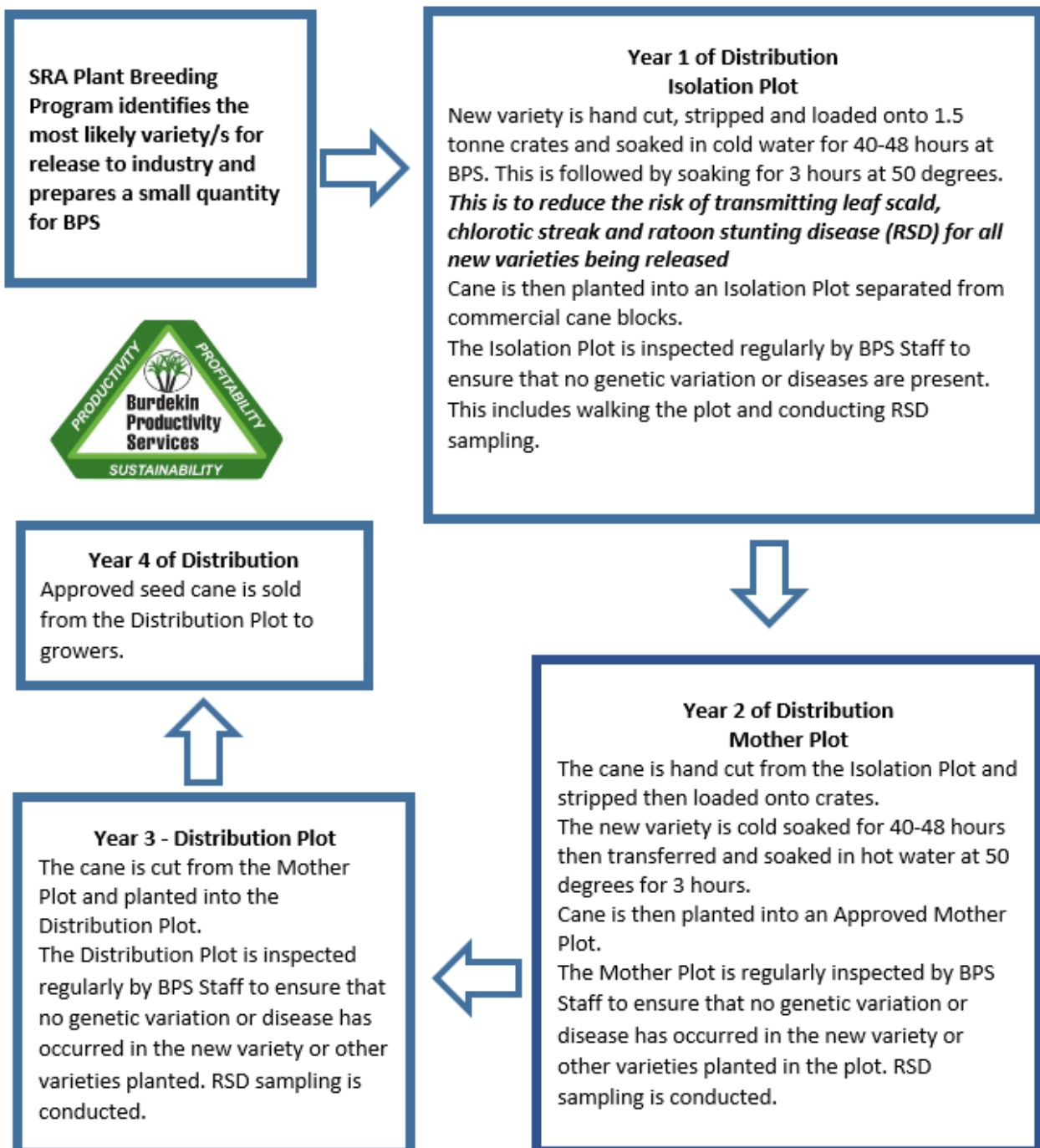
Key Points:

- Rate: 800 mL/ha
- Water volume for aerial application: 25 – 60 L/ha
- Timing: 5-8 weeks before harvest; to healthy, actively growing crops
- Withholding period: do not harvest for 5 weeks after application

REGIONAL VARIETY COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATE

In late March, the Burdekin Regional Variety Committee (RVC) met to discuss potential new varieties. The role of the RVC is to review variety information, performance, milling and disease data and vote on its release or otherwise for the Burdekin region. In addition, the RVC also reviews the Approved Variety List for the Burdekin region.

The RVC comprises representatives from the local industry including BPS, SRA, Grower Collectives, Farmacist and Wilmar and growers. However, it is only the groups with an economic interest in cane that have voting rights (4 x collectives and 1 x Wilmar). Before discussing the results of the 2023 meeting, it is worth reviewing how approved seed cane is typically propagated and distributed in the region.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

BPS does not set the price of seed cane that is sold from the plots. The Plot Owner sets the price and retains all proceeds from seed cane sales.

BPS covers the cost of:

- Plot planning, weighbridges, inspections and sampling.
- Organising sales and administration of seed cane accounts
- Funding additional Mother Plots
- Funding Isolation Plot
- Treatment of cane – Operating hot and cold water treatment tanks.

The diagram on the previous page may be modified slightly if tissue culture is used. Tissue culture is an alternative source of approved seed cane, but also quite expensive – around \$14 000 per hectare. Tissue Culture material is initially sourced from a disease tested mother plot and then grown in a lab where further testing occurs. This process reduces the risk of disease meaning there is very little chance of disease in the plant. This means the tissue culture material can be grown in the isolation plot, then planted straight into a distribution plot – typically fast tracking the process by one year since we do not need to hot water treat it and grow it in a mother plot.

At the 2023 RVC, it was decided to accelerate two experimental varieties QA13-1331 and QA13-1225. So both of these varieties will be planted into a BPS isolation plot this year. It was also decided by the voting members to hold another variety, QK14-2492. This variety is in a BPS strip trial due to be harvested this year, and pending those results, the variety may be released.

Another topic that was discussed was which varieties are on the current Approved List in the region. It was noted that often growers ask questions regarding a variety that is performing well in another region (e.g. Mackay or Ingham), and if this was available in the Burdekin. SRA has an "regional exchange program" where all the top varieties are swapped and tested in each of the SRA Plant Breeding programs. So if you hear of a variety that is doing well in another region, but is not available in the Burdekin, it more than likely means it did not perform well in trials here, or there are disease or milling traits that limit its suitability in the Burdekin.

However, if a grower would like the RVC to further consider a variety for release in the region, then please raise this with an RVC representative (any of the collective managers, Catherine Kettle – SRA or Rob Milla - BPS) to table at the next RVC meeting. A full list of the approved variety list for the Burdekin region can be found in the regional 2023 Variety Guide ([Burdekin Variety Guide 2023](#)), which can be found on the SRA website

MANAGING SRA32 AS A SEED SOURCE

SRA32 was discussed at recent shed meetings and since then, some more observations have been taken. It is important for growers to be aware of the importance of managing SRA32 as a seed source.

SRA32 appears to be a prolific side shooter, and eyes move very early, particularly when planted early and exposed to sunlight i.e. with lodged cane or outside rows.

BPS staff have inspected SRA32 at a number of sites across the region in the last month, and all sites show eyes moving on stools at the ends of rows, and the outside row showing signs of eyes bulging – and in many cases shooting up to 15-20 mm long. These eyes will obviously be knocked around by a harvester/planter. Sites were across a range of soil types and were planted between late May and August. One site in particular had patches of lodged cane, and where the lodging occurred, side shooting was very prolific. We

would not recommend using these lodged patches as a seed source for planting due to the side shooting. However, at most sites, where cane is standing and away from the edges of the paddock, eyes look perfectly fine to use as a plant source.

Given this is such a new variety, and we have no SRA32 grown at a commercial scale at the moment, we recommend anyone purchasing SRA32 as a seed source to discuss management options with a BPS staff member or advisor. In general, it is far better to plant this variety late if planning to use it as a seed source as well as really hold it back with limited irrigation and nitrogen. The variety is very vigorous, and even when grown on approved seed plots with low nitrogen rates and limited irrigation, internode length is still significant.

Performance of SRA32 in SRA trials showed a 16 t/ha increase in cane yield compared to the average other standard varieties (Q240, Q208, Q183, KQ228), and a 0.8 decrease in CCS. We have discussed this variety with advisors in the Atherton Tablelands (similar soils, fully irrigated) where it has been in strip trials for a few years, and their advice is to use this variety on poorer soils, due to its very vigorous nature and low CCS.



SMARTCANE BMP

Smartcane BMP is an industry led program that aims to help growers develop and improve their farming practices and record keeping. Growers can become accredited in the three core modules that cover off on topics such as soil health and nutrition, irrigation practices and weed/pest management. BMP aims to give growers the opportunity to show that their farming practices in these three modules are at, or above a recognised industry standard. This is a way of demonstrating that cane growers are able to regulate themselves through an industry led program. Currently 40% of the Burdekin area is now BMP accredited along with 40% of Queensland's cane farming area which shows that Smartcane BMP is really kicking goals.

In January 2023, the Smartcane BMP facilitators from Mossman to Rocky Point met in Brisbane to discuss the next phase of BMP after funding was renewed until 2026. There was much talk about how Smartcane BMP is meeting international standards of sustainability and what this may mean for Australian sugar that is certified in the BMP program. A shipment containing 25 000 tonnes of sugar was sent to South Korea in late 2022 to prove the concept of block chain traceability of BMP sugar. This was a successful venture and provides another avenue for BMP sugar to make it to market and consumers.

The BMP program is voluntary, and growers are assisted along the way by their local BMP facilitator who can guide them on best management practices and a variety of record keeping tools. Smartcane BMP can help guide you to have compliant records as required by Government regulation. Fortunately BMP accredited growers are not the focus of Government compliance audits and can provide their certificate as evidence to negate an audit. If you are



Ross and Lisa Parker have recently had their farm accredited

interested in becoming Smartcane BMP accredited or would like to know more, call Jasmine Girgenti on 0438 934 601 or John Nancarrow on 0447 069 887.



BMP auditor Dale Mengel with Home Hill grower Greg Rossato.

SHARING OF WILMAR DATA WITH BPS

You will have recently received correspondence from Wilmar regarding an 'opt in' process to sharing your data with Burdekin Productivity Services. I would like to share with you the importance of sharing this data, and how and why BPS uses it. Please also note that this is nothing new, historically this data was always shared with BPS under the cane supply agreement. A few years ago it changed to an 'opt out' process, and now that has changed to this 'opt in' process.

Firstly – the data we are requesting you share with us is:

- Mill maps
- Productivity data (tonnes of cane and CCS)

We are NOT requesting any information around pricing.

Why is this data important for BPS and growers?

Mill Maps

BPS staff use grower mill maps for many reasons such as identifying blocks when you phone up requesting a soil test or plant source inspection, but also more importantly for recording 'crop data' – our end of year survey with each grower. This way we can record to each block levels of pest or disease pressure across the whole district. This information in turn can be used to direct the BPS strategy, as well as assist with registration and emergency use permits for various pesticides e.g. the recent aerial rat baiting permit was assisted by the provision of areas (de-identified) of rat damage in the region.

Productivity Data

This information (tonnes of cane and CCS) is used to develop our productivity reports that are presented at shed meetings at the start of each year. With this data, we can provide analysis of trends in productivity and variety performance by soil type, track productivity group trends as well as answer specific requests from growers about variety performance. We also use this information to make it much easier for growers with trials on their place to analyse the data, and use it to identify the winners of the annual productivity awards.

What happens if growers do not opt-in?

If growers do not opt in, then BPS will not be able to service its members anywhere near as efficiently as we have been able to historically. It may hinder registration of some chemical pest control products, and also

mean that BPS may not be able to produce any productivity reports that are useful to the whole local industry if there is not the majority of data included.

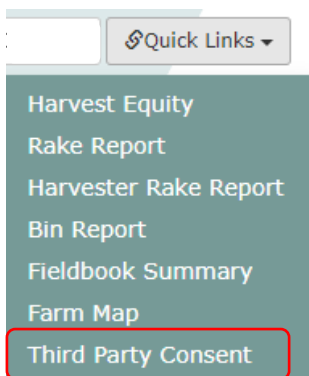
Can BPS share the data with any other party, including government?

No, BPS is bound by the privacy act – we can only use the data for its intended purpose (to benefit growers productivity and profitability). Secondly, we have a data licence with Wilmar, which will be revoked if BPS shares data with any other party.

Please note that historically, this data was always shared with BPS under the cane supply agreement, so us having access to this data is nothing new. I strongly encourage all growers to opt in to sharing your data with BPS, so that we as an organisation can service our members with accurate data in relation to mill maps and productivity trends and reports. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rob Milla.

How do I opt-in?

Wilmar have added a consent page to GrowerWeb. This can be accessed from your grower profile, via the Quick Links, or on the Agreements page.



Select Third Party Consent

Once you are on the consent page you will see a list of the third party organisations. Click on the check box to record your consent to release information and then press Update.

The image shows the consent page with several callout boxes:

- 'Click on the Info box to see the data that will be provided and the intended use of that data' points to the 'Info' link in the table.
- 'By ticking this box, you give Wilmar permission to release information to the related Third Party as per the information covered in the Info box' points to the 'Consent Given' checkbox.
- 'Click the Consent Given box and the Update button to record your consent to release information for that Third Party' points to the 'Update' button.

Wilmar from time to time.

Wilmar takes the protection of our Growers' confidential and personal information seriously, and will only provide information where we have your consent to the release of the information to the nominated third party in accordance with the terms of the CSA.

A summary of the type of information requested by each nominated third party can be found by clicking on the text "Info" beside each third party below.

If you DO consent to Wilmar disclosing the specified information to the nominated third party, please check the appropriate box below. This consent, if given by you, is valid for the relevant Grower entity until withdrawn at any time by unchecking the appropriate boxes below.


Third Party	Info	Consent Given
Sugar Services Proserpine Ltd	Info	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sugar Research Australia Limited	Info	<input type="checkbox"/>

Back Update

Persons checking the boxes on behalf of the Grower trading entity warrant to Wilmar Sugar Pty Ltd that they are an authorised representative of the Grower trading entity with authority to sign legal agreements and authorities on behalf of the Grower trading entity, and have the authority to consent to the disclosure of the information to the nominated third parties.

IRRIGWEB WORKSHOPS

IrrigWeb is a sugarcane specific irrigation scheduling and recording tool that BPS provides free to our members. It uses a combination of a crop model, daily climate data and local soils information to calculate daily crop water use. The daily crop water use and soils information then determines the irrigation schedule. IrrigWeb is web-based and can be accessed from anywhere.



Welcome to IrrigWeb
Welcome to IrrigWeb, a sugarcane irrigation scheduling tool for the sugar industry.
The primary aim of IrrigWeb is to provide irrigators with current and local advice on sugarcane crop water use and development. The tool combines crop water use estimates with user-defined irrigation system constraints and crop cycle inputs to schedule future irrigation events.
Developed by SQIR Software, IrrigWeb uses a sugarcane crop model, CANSCO, to calculate sugarcane crop water use and

Data Inputs
Meteorological inputs are obtained daily either from a 3rd Party source such as the Queensland Government's SSO application, or directly from local Automatic Weather Stations. Users select the closest meteorological site as the source of weather data inputs for the model.
Users can define multiple fields to either represent actual blocks on the farm, or generic fields to represent a range of cropping cycles throughout the season.
Fields are assigned irrigation system rules which define both the

Output/Reporting
Output is provided by a range of Graphical and tabular reports. Charts depicting the soil water balance, canopy development, water stress, crop water use and yield components are combined with tabular irrigation schedules and historical reporting.
In addition to obtaining one-on-one access to the tool, regional users or consultants can use IrrigWeb's notification functionality to provide automated SMS and/or email advice to multiple end-users.
Please email irrigweb@sqirsoftware.com for further information.

Due to increasing interest from growers, BPS will be running IrrigWeb workshops on an as needed basis. Each workshop will run for approximately 2-3 hours and during this time growers will set up their farm and input some data. Growers with existing IrrigWeb accounts are also welcome to attend either as a general refresher or to learn about some of the newer functionality.

For more information contact Marian Davis (0428 927 079) or John Nancarrow (0447 069 887).

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