



Sugar Research  
Australia

# eNewsletter

Irrigation timing, drones in plant breeding, Harvest Mate demo, FNQ weed control, OSNM training, ... it's all been happening this fortnight.



Call us to get a trial moisture probe installed on your farm

Improving irrigation for growers in Mackay Plane Creek Prosperine

SRA  
Sugar Research  
Australia

## Opportunity for Central Region growers to improve their irrigation timing

**Attention growers in Mackay, Plane Creek and Prosperine:** SRA Central District has Chameleon soil moisture probes available for local growers to try on their farm free of charge. The Chameleon soil moisture probes are low-cost and can be calibrated to your farm to achieve maximum return of investment from irrigating at the optimum time.

The moisture probe has three sensors located at three different depths and one temperature sensor as well as a display to read the data manually. Being Wi-Fi based,

they can be set up to download live (every two hours) using long range WiFi extenders or by connecting to your mobile hotspot. There are no subscription fees or ongoing costs.

Improve your irrigation timing today.

Central region growers can contact Dylan or Stephanie for more information and to have the trial soil moisture probe installed on your farm.

[Contact Dylan on 0490 029 387 or by email](#)

[Contact Stephanie on 0459 863 298 or by email](#)



## Why does SRA use drones in plant breeding?

An advantage of using drones in our plant breeding, is that it allows us to capture multiple traits over multiple stages, among other reasons.

[Watch the video](#)



## Demonstrating the opportunities with Harvest Mate

A harvesting trial to demonstrate the potential gains of SRA and DAF's new Harvest Mate tool was undertaken last week with Mackay Harvesting Operator Nathan Grech (*above, third from right*) and farmer Kevin Grech. Commenting on the trial, Nathan said: "It shows the pros and cons to cutting the paddock. You can see estimates for yields. It has settings for if the cane is erect or lying over. There are settings for conditions such as dry conditions, standard conditions and wet conditions. All of these factors contribute to the forecasted results."

*(Above): The collaborative trial team involved included Machinery Specialist Phil Patane (behind the camera), Stephanie Duncan, Eric Kok (Mackay Area Productivity Services), Nathan Grech and his two haulout operators, Sofiane El Harzli, Glen Park, Indiana Zarb (MAPS), and Luke Symonds (absent from photo).*

[Read more about the demo](#)



**SIX EASY STEPS®  
WET TROPICS  
WORKSHOPS**

Step 1: Knowing and understanding your soils

**Julatten:** 24 October, 8am  
**Mossman:** 24 October, 12.30pm  
**Babinda:** 26 October, 8am  
**Gordonvale:** 27 October, 8am

\*Soil pit locations to be confirmed

Express your interest to attend  
Email: [pcalcino@sugarresearch.com.au](mailto:pcalcino@sugarresearch.com.au)

Australian Government National Landcare Program

sha Sugar Research Australia University of Southern Queensland

## SIX EASY STEPS® Wet Tropics Workshops

Wet Tropics growers - don't miss these workshops coming to a location near you!

[More information on the workshops](#)

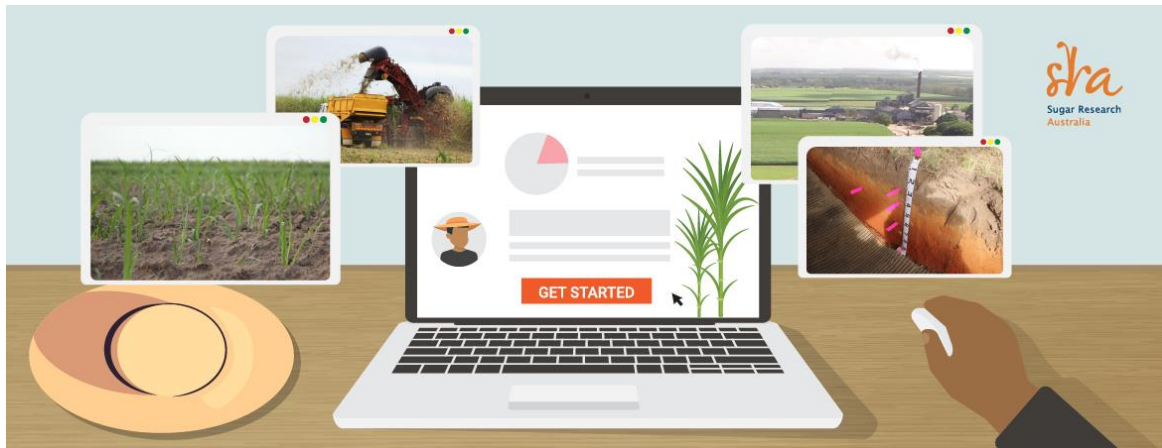


## Taking control of difficult weeds in FNQ

It was great to connect with local cane growers at SRA's recent weed management workshops in Mossman and Gordonvale presented by Weed Scientist Emilie Fillols (*above, right*).

“There’s a lot to take in at these workshops. During the practical session that Emilie facilitates at the end, with relatable scenarios, it all comes together. You can see that everyone gets it,” said SRA Far North District Manager Gavin Rodman.

[Read more about the weed management workshops](#)



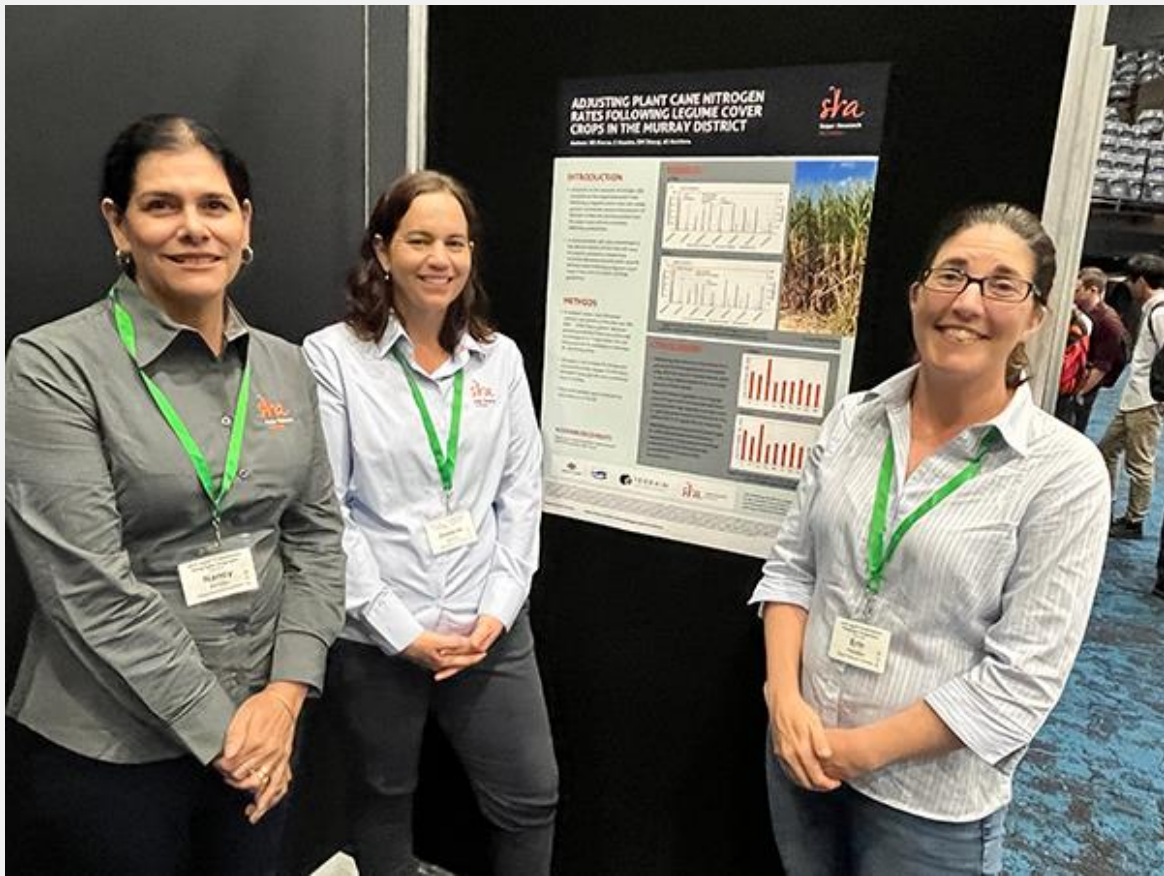
## Quick, easy signup and FREE access to OSNM training

SRA encourages growers to consider enrolling in SRA's free Online Sugarcane Nutrient Management training program based on the SIX EASY STEPS® approach to on-farm nutrient management. This program refines your knowledge of:

- knowing and understanding your soils
- understanding and managing nutrient processes and losses
- soil testing regularly
- adopting soil specific nutrient management guidelines
- checking on the adequacy of nutrient inputs, and
- keeping good records and modifying nutrient inputs when and where necessary.

A grower who successfully completes this training program can be considered an Appropriate Person to develop and verify their farm's own nitrogen and phosphorus budget (N&P budget).

[Enrol in OSNM training today](#)



## Mobilising the Murray project page updated

Last year, Sugar Research Australia became a major partner in the project, Mobilising the Murray Reef Trust VII (MRT7), which supports cane growers in the catchment by addressing productivity constraints and accessing opportunities and incentives for the long-term sustainability of the sugar industry.

This hands-on initiative was first launched in 2021 by Terrain Natural Resource Management (NRM) and funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust.

The project has its own SRA webpage. This page was recently updated with the addition of two ASSCT 2023 papers with findings from the project:

- [\*Adjusting plant-cane nitrogen rates following legume cover crops in the Murray district\*](#) and
- [\*Tully Growers trial the SIX EASY STEPS® Toolbox guidance for their late-season ratoons and a final ratoon crop.\*](#)

*(Above): SRA Agronomists Nancy Rincon, Dr Danielle Skocaj and SRA Graduate Agronomist Erin Headon at ASSCT conference Cairns 2023 with the poster Adjusting plant-cane nitrogen rates following legume cover crops in the Murray district.*

[We invite you to visit the Mobilising the Murray project webpage](#)



### **Deadline looms for tissue culture orders**

Growers wanting tissue culture for planting in Spring 2024 must get their orders in to SRA by **15 November 2023**.

Seedlings produced from tissue culture are certified free from disease, are DNA tested and maximise industry productivity by allowing rapid adoption of new varieties.

[Use this Calculator to estimate how many seedlings to order](#)

[Place orders with Tissue Culture Leader Clair Bolton on \(07\) 3331 3374 or email](#)

## Work in sugar for your PhD

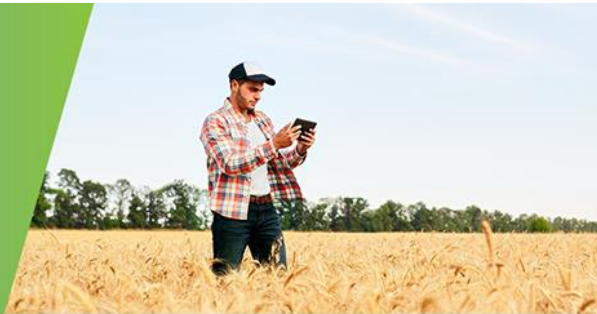
Applications for UQ PhD Scholarships for the project exploring entomopathogenic viruses for the biological control of insect pests in sugarcane are now open. The application is open to both international and domestic students.

*(Right) Moutoshi Chakraborty, PhD candidate with Griffith University, has worked with Molecular Plant Pathologist, Dr Chuong Ngo this year.*



[Do your PhD in the sugar industry](#)

## Aquaculture and Agriculture Tech Skills Hub



## Tech Skills Hub launched

The Aquaculture and Agriculture Tech Skills Hub was launched this week.

The Hub aims to provide new ways to help industry overcome challenges to skills and workforce development.

Products in the hub were developed in partnership with industry and include micro-credentials and accredited skillsets to nationally recognised qualifications.

[Visit the Aquaculture and Agriculture Tech Skills Hub](#)



## SRA Events

[NQ Dry Tropics Innovations Day](#) – Lower Burdekin, TOMORROW, 7-11 am, Friday 13 October – Aaron Linton's farm, Home Hill: SRA Burdekin District Manager Terry Granshaw will be on hand to talk about the Burdekin Irrigation Project and Autoweed Robotic Sprayer.

[SIX EASY STEPS Wet Tropics Workshops](#) - Julatten, Mossman, Babinda and Gordonvale - Tues-Frid 24-27 October

[Guided Tour to MLG's Mt Garnet mine and processing plant](#) - Tuesday 14 November, full day

[SRA's Annual General Meeting \(AGM\)](#) - Thursday 16 November from 10am at The Atrium (UQ), 308 Queen Street, Brisbane and hybrid.

## Follow Us



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