



Sugar Research  
Australia

# eNewsletter

We've had great interest from a full range of stakeholders in SRA's 10th Anniversary Research Fund call. Don't miss the opportunity to get your idea in before the deadline of Wednesday 20 December.



Steve is happy to have made the change

“I should have done it years ago.” That’s the first thing Steve Pilla will tell you since adopting automated furrow irrigation onto his sugarcane farm.

After joining the Burdekin Irrigation Project, Steve began using an online platform where he can make decisions based on live datasets. He says understanding how to analyse the data on this platform, combined with the scheduling tool, helps to inform him when to irrigate, rather than going off a hunch.

*(Above) Burdekin grower Steve Pilla (R) is pictured with SRA District Manager Burdekin Terry Granshaw and Agronomist, Agritech Solutions, Cherrie Stockham (Photo Credit: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries).*

[Learn more about Steve’s journey in the Qld Govt’s AgTech Roadmap 2023-2028](#)

[Read more about the Burdekin Irrigation Project](#)



## Representing sugarcane research

Lead Field Pathologist Dr Seona Casonato and Manager Biosecurity and Disease Screening Dr Shamsul Bhuiyan attended and presented at the Australasian Plant Pathology Society conference in Adelaide.

Dr Bhuiyan presented on *A Novel and Rapid Method of Screening Sugarcane Variety for Red Rot Resistance*.

PhD student at Griffith University, Moutoshi Chakraborty spoke about a collaborative project with SRA developing a hand-held device for the detection of sugarcane diseases such as Ratoon Stunting and Leaf Scald pathogens of sugarcane (SugarPATH).

"The three-day conference was full of new ideas and bright minds working to mitigate the impact of biotic and abiotic factors affecting our rural primary industries, including the sugarcane industry," Shamsul said.

## Have you sent in your ideas yet?



**sra** **10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
RESEARCH FUND CALL**

**Your ideas can shape the future**

Stage 1 submissions due 20 December

Share your ideas to help solve the Australian sugarcane industry's challenges. SRA wants to hear from growers, millers, researchers and people who live and breathe our industry. Submit your concept before 20 December.

[Everything you need to know to get started is here](#)

[Submission guidelines and Concept note form](#)

[Got a question? Please email us](#)





**Sugar Research  
Australia**

## You can be a part of our review

Sugar Research Australia has contracted consultants GHD to conduct an Independent Performance Review as required by SRA's Statutory Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

You are invited to contribute a submission which will be received up until Friday 2 February 2024.

The final Independent Performance Review Report will be released in 2024 on the SRA website along with the company's response to recommendations following the conclusion of the review.

[More about the Independence Performance Review](#)

[Provide input to the review](#)



**First cyclone of the season moving slowly towards the coast**

Tropical Cyclone Jasper formed near the Solomon Islands and on Friday morning was at category 4 intensity and moving slowly towards the Queensland coastline with the main area of concern from Mackay to Cooktown, including Cairns and Townsville.

This is the first cyclone to be named by the Bureau in the 2023-24 season, which officially runs from November to April.

[Track the cyclone](#)

**Be Prepared** - Check or make an emergency kit, review your household emergency plan and clean-up around your property.

**Stay informed** - Queensland's local governments have disaster dashboards and/or websites that provide important information to support local communities during and after disaster events - with weather warnings, river heights, road conditions and closures, phone and power outages, and more.

*(Above): a storm rolls across Mackay district. (Photo credit: SRA Mackay's Plant Variety Officer, Chris Tom).*

[Find your local council's disaster dashboard here](#)



**Permit for control of canegrubs in ratoon cane**

An emergency permit (PER94238) has been granted for growers to treat cane grubs in cane harvested in December or early January.

[Read the permit for control of canegrubs in ratoon cane](#)

## **Reminder about closed spray/no spray windows**

Several agricultural chemical products containing 2,4-D have a closed spray or no spray window period which is currently in force.

The APVMA sets closed spray windows where climatic factors such as minimum rainfall reduces dilution of runoff water or reduces product efficacy.

Always check the product label for spray windows and keep records of what you spray and when.

[Check the label for spray windows on the APVMA chemical database](#)

[Find out more about requirements for using agricultural chemicals](#)



## **National Biosecurity Strategy released**

For the first time a National Biosecurity Strategy has been developed and approved by all federal state and territory agricultural ministers. It is in place until 2032.

The aim is to strengthen Australia's biosecurity system to protect our nation and the Australian way of life.

The implementation phase is now underway.

## **Get more involved in biosecurity**

Are you concerned about biosecurity? You could become a Queensland Biosecurity Ambassador.

The Biosecurity Mates Ambassador Program is an initiative of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. Six biosecurity ambassadors across Queensland will be appointed under the program to help strengthen Queensland's collective biosecurity system. The representatives will help advocate and engage the community in biosecurity awareness and preparedness.

*(Above): moth borer damage with larvae.*

[Read the National Biosecurity Strategy](#)

[Become a Queensland Biosecurity Ambassador](#)





## India named 2024 Chair of International Sugar Organisation

The Government of India has expressed India's commitment as Chair of International Sugar Organisation to spearhead sustainable practices in sugarcane cultivation, sugar and ethanol production and maximise the utilisation of by-products.

India is the largest consumer and second-largest producer of sugar globally, with a 15 per cent share in global sugar consumption, contributing 20 per cent to global sugar production with a strong influence on global sugar markets.

The country is now the third-largest producer of ethanol globally with ethanol blending reaching 12 per cent in 2022/23, up from 5 per cent in 2019/20.

The ISO has a membership of about 90 countries.

*(Above): Stock image of Indian cane farm.*



## Top-cited smut article

An article about sugarcane smut written by SRA and CSIRO researchers and published in *Phytopathology* journal has been judged one of the top-cited articles for 2021-2023.

In the article, Manager Biosecurity and Disease Screening, Dr Shamsul Bhuiyan with co-authors pathologist Dr Rob Magarey (retired), and Dr Karen Aitken and Dr Meredith McNeil from CSIRO review the biology, ecology, epidemiology, genetics and genomics of *Sporisorium scitamineum* and the disease it causes.



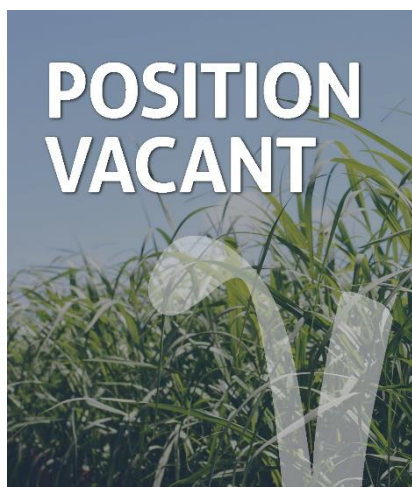
(Above) Smut whip on a cane flower.

[Read the sugarcane smut article](#)

## Join the SRA team

- District Delivery Officer - Central
- Learning and Development Co-ordinator

[Current vacancies here](#)



## Events

**[DATE CLAIMER: EOIs please for Sugarcane Disease Identification Workshops – 2024](#)**

- 27th February – 28th February 2024 or

- 29th February – 1st March 2024

\* Bookings now open on [TryBooking](#) \*

**DATE CLAIMER: Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT)  
Conference 15-19 April 2024**

*Profitability, Sustainability and Adaptability* is the theme of next year's ASSCT 2024 conference in Townsville.

"The theme aptly reflects the ever-changing landscape of our industry and the crucial role that adaptability plays in navigating the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. By embracing sustainability and adaptability we can secure a prosperous and resilient future for the sugar industry," President and Wilmar General Manager Production and Technology, Jay Venning said.

The President has called for conference papers which align with the theme.

## Follow Us



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