



MEMBERS CIRCULAR

RE: RATOON STUNTING DISEASE (RSD)

POSITIVE SAMPLE IN ONE VARIETY IN THE P&K PLOT

Burdekin Productivity Services has advised QCAR and KCGO that after conducting two separate methods of intensive sampling (Xylem sap sampling & Leaf Sheath Biopsy), RSD has been detected in two rows of a single variety (1st ratoon Q183) in the P&K Plot. RSD samples taken from the same rows last year as plant cane, all returned a negative result. The affected rows of this variety have been quarantined and will be sprayed out and removed. A 3-row buffer either side will be also established to further minimize risk. After analysis of the RSD infection within the area, and consultation with BPS and SRA plant pathologists, it appears highly probable that the RSD has been introduced by an unknown, external source onto the plot.

Again, we emphasise the importance of our respective members contacting their planting and harvesting contractors to ensure that those contractors are undertaking the procedure recommended by Sugar Research Australia for clean down and sterilisation before moving between farms.

We note that the recommended procedure for disinfecting implements is as follows:

Thoroughly clean all implements removing all dirt and cane residues. A high-pressure cleaner is recommended. Implements include:

- 1. Harvesters-include topper, throat, base cutter, feed rollers, chopper box, boot elevator and primary and secondary extractors.*
- 2. Planters-include planter trailer, feed chute, blades, and rubbers, and exit chute. If recirculating fungicide spray or dip is used, ensure that tank and spray-lines are completely emptied and flushed with disinfectant.*
- 3. Plant cutters-include toppers, base-cutter and gathering chains.*
- 4. Stripping machines-include guards on inter-row tractor and fan, and fan blades.*
- 5. Cultivation equipment-include tines, coulters, discs, and tool bars. Special attention should be paid to disinfecting stool-splitting fertiliser boxes.*
- 6. Other equipment-include cane knives, slicing knives, brix dribblers, chain saws used to trim stalks, truck used to transport cane.*

Spray or dip equipment using Steri-max at a 1 in 100 dilution, allowing a 5-minute treatment time. Renew disinfectant solution daily or whenever it becomes dirty.

Alternatively, implements can be disinfected with 70% methylated spirits and if this method is utilised, the implements can be utilised after 1 minute treatment time. Methylated spirits is flammable, and care should be taken when using it near ignition sources.

In the meantime, we confirm that in addition to assisting with the management of RSD, the planting of approved seed cane is a key component of general disease management in cane.

Given that the area affected to date is minimal (2 rows), this will have no impact on approved seed cane availability this year. **BPS will continue with testing and analysing the P&K Plot.**

P&K Farms have been advised by BPS and SRA on further practices that may minimise risk of future spread of RSD on the approved seed cane plot and will review and consider further advice prior to endeavouring to implement these as soon as practical.

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