



Here's news of our Research Showcase, other face-to-face meetings, upcoming webinars and events, the latest Cane Matters and new fact sheets - this issue has got it covered.



## SRA showcases our research to the industry

Interim CEO Shaun Coffey expressed his appreciation of the positive feedback provided by industry leaders at last week's research update in Brisbane.

Growers, millers, industry bodies, researchers, federal and Queensland agricultural departments, universities and innovators were invited to attend the event which was held on 5 March. People from throughout the state's sugarcane growing regions were in the room. The showcase was an opportunity to share SRA's draft Research & Development Plan (2024-2034) with the industry and through discussion and engagement throughout the day to seek feedback from stakeholders.

SRA will now incorporate feedback received during the forum into the plan to ensure it will deliver maximum benefits to the industry. The final plan will be available by the end of June.

"I appreciated the positive feedback in the meeting, to me personally, and via the media," Shaun said. "I am grateful that industry believes our draft strategic research plan is on the right road and that our staff are considered to be doing a good job in helping to improve the industry's profitability and sustainability, and ultimately its competitiveness in the world market."

[Contact the team for more about the R&D planning process](#)



Meet with SRA staff, including SRA Principal Agronomist, Danielle Skocaj, and with other impacted sugarcane growers to discuss options for managing crops impacted by flooding. This session provides you with an opportunity to ask questions specific to your circumstances.

*Catering will be provided.*

**Babinda Meeting:** 9am - 11 am, Thursday 21 March, Babinda CWA Hall, via School St at Bill Wakeham Park

**Meringa Meeting:** 1 pm - 3 pm Thursday 21 March, SRA Meringa Station, 34 Hall Road, Gordonvale

[RSVP to District Manager Far North, Gavin Rodman](#)

Autumn edition  
NOW AVAILABLE



Our new Autumn edition of Cane Matters is now available to read online. Full of useful information for growers including news on varieties and milling technology, recent workshops and other activities happening in the sugar industry. Enjoy your reading!

[Read the latest issue of Cane Matters](#)

**WEBINAR**

Let's discuss future foods and precision fermentation for the Australian sugar industry

Professor Ian O'Hara and Madeline Smith

**Future foods & precision fermentation: Webinar 27 March**

The second webinar in the Bioeconomy in Focus series will discuss future foods and precision fermentation for the Australian sugar industry.

You're invited to hear from the leaders shaping the future foods and precision fermentation ecosystem in Australia:

- Dr Michele Stansfield, Co-founder and CEO [Cauldron Ferm](#)
- Dr Chris Downs, Director, [Australia's Food and Beverage Accelerator](#) (FaBA) and
- Jim Fader, Co-founder and CEO, [Eden Brew](#)
- Kylie Porter, CEO, [Greater Whitsunday Alliance \(GW3\)](#)

The webinars are being held as part of the [Sugar Industry Innovation Industry Network](#) project. Please RSVP by COB Tuesday 26 March.

[Click here to register for the webinar](#)



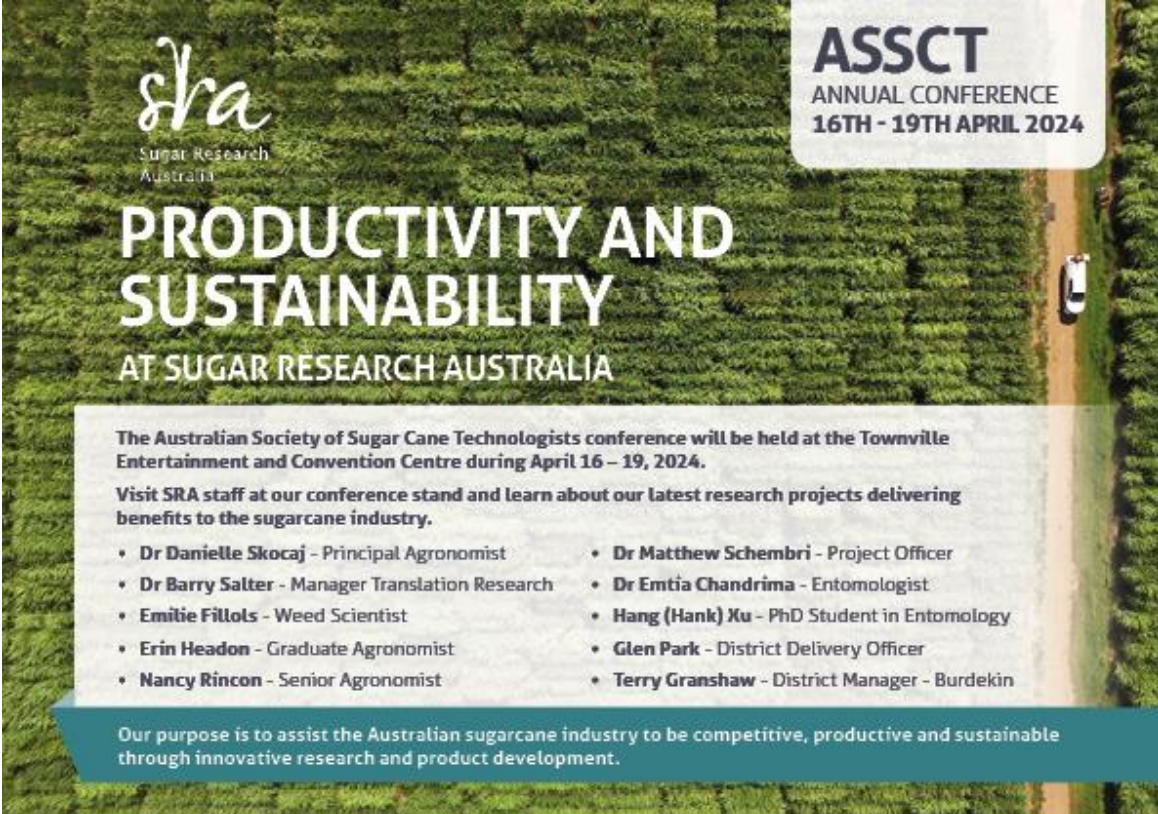
## Decision time for new clones

SRA's Variety Development team met in Bundaberg this week for the Annual Selection Meeting. The data collected on the latest sugarcane clones over the past harvest season is reviewed at the meeting. This work is done in preparation for the industry's six Regional Variety Committee (RVC) meetings which begin in April.

"Getting together over two days, the team discusses the performance information for advanced new clones to take to the RVCs for progression, discard, or commercial release decisions," said Dr Jason Eglinton, General Manager, Variety Development. "It is an important time for us to critically examine the performance data and what it means for the fate of potential new varieties before consulting with industry." Planting a new variety

is one of the biggest investments a grower will make and this work is to ensure it's a win for the industry as a whole.

*(Above): Variety Officer Herbert, Juan Briceno presents data to the meeting.*



**sra**  
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**ASSCT**  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
16TH - 19TH APRIL 2024

# PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

## AT SUGAR RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

The Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists conference will be held at the Townville Entertainment and Convention Centre during April 16 – 19, 2024.

Visit SRA staff at our conference stand and learn about our latest research projects delivering benefits to the sugarcane industry.

- **Dr Danielle Skocaj** - Principal Agronomist
- **Dr Barry Salter** - Manager Translation Research
- **Emilie Fillols** - Weed Scientist
- **Erin Headon** - Graduate Agronomist
- **Nancy Rincon** - Senior Agronomist
- **Dr Matthew Schembri** - Project Officer
- **Dr Emtia Chandrima** - Entomologist
- **Hang (Hank) Xu** - PhD Student in Entomology
- **Glen Park** - District Delivery Officer
- **Terry Granshaw** - District Manager - Burdekin

Our purpose is to assist the Australian sugarcane industry to be competitive, productive and sustainable through innovative research and product development.

[ASSCT full conference program](#)



## **SRA Research team presents R&D update to Policy Council**

This week SRA's research team, Dr Tinashe Chiurugwi (*above*), General Manager, Research and Business Development, Jane Trindall, Head of Research Strategy and Investment, and Bronwyn Venus, Head of Partnerships and Project Management briefed CANEGROWERS' Policy Council and Board on SRA's R&D Plan Information and Feedback Session following the showcase event last week. This included an update on the SRA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Research Fund Call.

The 20-person Policy Council meets regularly to decide the overall strategic direction of CANEGROWERS, while the Board is responsible for corporate governance.



## Great turnout for sugarcane disease ID course at Woodford

Participants at the 2024 Sugarcane Disease Identification Course at Woodford came from as far north as Mossman. The hands-on course at SRA's Woodford pathology research station, gave participants the opportunity to see sugarcane diseases in the field and learn identification skills from SRA's pathology team.

Some of the comments from attendees included: "Pleased to hear SRA is taking forward new concepts in diagnostics and testing" and "I found the course useful in learning the soil sampling process for diseases such as Pachymetra and RSD. In my job I will be sampling for RSD for the first time this season".



### Soil survey

The relationships between farmers, farming practices and their soils are complex. Teresa Fox, a Researcher for the national think tank, the [Australian Farm Institute](#), together with the University of Sydney are investigating soil security, specifically farmers' connectedness to their soil. Teresa is looking for farmers to complete a short evaluation survey to help inform their research.

At the end of the evaluation you will receive a personalised soil connectivity report and links to additional information.

Questions or concerns? Contact [Teresa Fox](#)

[Take the survey](#)

## Sugarcane seed germination in focus at Mackay



Variety Development Manager Central, Dr George Piperidis (*above*) and his team at SRA Mackay Station discussed the germination of sugarcane seed at a Grower Information Meeting this month hosted by Nutrien.

*(Below): The Central Variety development team plant sugarcane seed known as fuzz on trays. Plant Breeding Technician, Nicole Foxley-Conolly, evenly spreads the fuzz over the tray. Variety Officer Central, Chris Tom, then pats it down while spraying with water to ensure its good adhesion to the potting mix to maximise germination. (Photo credit: Annette Corcoran, Nutrien.)*





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 FOR AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY PRODUCERS

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FRITZ BOLTEN (2021 SCHOLAR) ON HUMANS OF AGRICULTURE PODCAST, JANUARY 2024

- **\$40,000** bursary
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- Applications close **31 May 2024**

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## Your time to shine

Applications for 2025 Nuffield Scholarships are open now and close on 31 May.

Each scholarship is valued at \$40,000. Nuffield Australia will award up to 20 scholarships this year. Scholarships on offer include five drought resilience scholarships, and others for sugar, horticulture, grains, dairy, wool, fisheries, cotton and more. Nuffield Scholarships are open to all those involved in food and fibre production typically aged between 28 and 45.

The bursary allows scholars to travel for 15 weeks over the next two years to study a topic important to their industry. With international travel back in full swing, Nuffield

Australia has groups of scholars travelling to every corner of the globe this year. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed during June and July. Successful recipients will be announced at the Nuffield Australia National Conference in Launceston from 2-4 September.

[Find out more and apply](#)



**WEBINAR VIDEO**

**Let's discuss SAF for the Australian sugar industry**

Professor Ian O'Hara and Madeline Smith

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Sugar Research  
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### Watch the SAF webinar video

Did you miss the webinar on Sustainable Aviation Fuel and the sugar industry earlier this month? It's now available to watch via [this link](#).

**Get your paddocks assessed before you plant**



*(Above): the telltale loss of the sheath on the end of these sugarcane roots is indicative of Pachymetra root rot.*

Before you start planting this season, make sure you get your Pachymetra and nematode counts read.

Forms are available on the SRA website which give you easy instructions to get this done on your farm for a very reasonable price.

[Tully - plant parasites including Pachymetra](#)

[Woodford - plant parasites & free living nematodes](#)



[Read the factsheets](#)

## Advice for irrigators

Cane growers - do you use furrow irrigation in your cane production system?

Please read the new factsheets produced by SRA for the Burdekin Irrigation Project (BIP) about the design and management of systems to furrow irrigate cane:

- **Pumping system efficiency factsheet:** to help you optimise design pipeline and pump setups
- **Good irrigation practices factsheet:** assessing system performance using tools to help determine crop water demand and how to deliver this water most effectively
- **Automation factsheet:** overview of the varied tools BIP growers are using to automate their irrigation systems describing the benefits and comparing tools such as pump timers, timed actuators and full automation.

## Events

[Managing flood impacted cane: Babinda and Meringa](#) - Thursday, 21 March

[Advanced post emergent herbicides workshop: Burdekin & Ingham](#) - 26 & 27 March

Bioeconomy in focus webinars: [Let's discuss precision foods & fermentation for the Australian sugarcane industry](#) - 11 am - 12 pm, Wednesday 27 March 2024

[Regional Sugar Milling Seminars:](#) Mackay, Monday 18 March, Training Room, Racecourse Mill; Townsville, Tuesday 19 March, Rydges; Gordonvale, Wednesday 20

March, Rambler Room, Mulgrave Mill, Rocky Point, Monday 25 March, Rocky Point Mill; Bundaberg, Wednesday 27 March, Millaquin Mill.

**Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT) Conference** 15-19 April 2024, Townsville Entertainment Centre. Registrations for next year's ASSCT 2024 conference in Townsville are open.

**DATE CLAIMER: Bureau of Meteorology weather meetings** - Ballina, Tuesday 16 April, Isis, Thursday 18 April, Meringa Field Day, Tuesday 30 April, Tully, Wednesday 1 May.

**DATE CLAIMER: Meringa Station Field Day** - 8 am - 1 pm, Tuesday 30 April

## Follow Us



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