



NEWSLETTER

March 2026



SAVE THE DATE

17 & 18 APRIL 2026

📍 Mackay Showgrounds

This year MAPS will be taking a different approach. Instead of hosting our annual field day, we will be joining the Mackay Ag Trade Expo. Come along, see us there and enjoy a day at the expo. We look forward to catching up with you!

NEW MAPS STAFF MEMBER

My name is Michelle Tickle, and I am the new administration officer at the MAPS Office at Pleystowe. I am a third generation farmer, with our home farm at Dumbleton and one at Seaforth. My family (Froyland and Morrow) have a strong farming background in the Mackay and Valley area.

I am looking forward to working with the MAPS team and assisting local growers.

I am contactable on:

Ph: 0419763192

Email: m.tickle@maps.org.au



Refresh your Source

Billet Clean Seed - Victoria Plains

- Selected varieties will be available.
- First cut is likely to happen over 2 days in July, weather permitting.
- Final cut planned for early September.
- Own tipper bin is required.

Check with your Productivity Officer for details.

Billet orders for Victoria Plains will be handled by Indiana Zarb – 0439557839



On Farm Billet Plots

Plots will be open by appointment. Contact Ian Marais, Brendan Rae, Maryanne Volker and Indiana Zarb for details. The number of varieties available at the North Coast, Pioneer Valley, Marian and Racecourse billet plots has been kept to a single variety (see table below). The goal is to offer different varieties each year to allow growers easier access to clean seed. Dates for billet distribution will be set as the season progresses.

Regular Collection of Clean Seed

Seed cane should not be more than 3 years past the hot water treatment date. To achieve this, make the most of the additional clean seed plots to collect your clean seed each year.

RSD

Since RSD has made an appearance in some areas and harvesting groups in recent years, the best way to help avoid and manage disease on your own farm is to:

- ✓ Regular Clean Seed Uptake – available at Victoria Plains, Pinnacle, Marian Hampden, Pindi Pindi and Bakers Creek. When collecting billets from our plots make sure your haulouts are clean.
- ✓ Regular Plant Source Inspections – contact Productivity Officer ASAP to allow for results.
- ✓ Regular Sterilisation & Hygiene of Planting & Harvester Equipment – 70% Metho: 30% water or Sterimax.
- ✓ Never plant clean seed in replant blocks.

Victoria Plains			
Whole Stick		Billet	
Ian Marais – 0417 326 669		Indiana Zarb – 0439 557 839	
SRA40, SRA32, SRA26, SRA22, SRA21, SRA9, Q253, Q240, Q183, KQ228, Q208R		SRA40, SRA32, SRA26, SRA22, SRA21, SRA9, Q253, Q240, Q183, KQ228, Q208R	
Pioneer Valley	North Coast	Racecourse	Marian
Billets Pinnacle @ Justin Muscats	Billets Pindi Pindi @ John Simpsons	Billets Bakers Creek @ Ross Williams	Billets Marian Hampden @ Albert Deboni
Ian Marais - 0417326669	Brendan Rae - 0417326393	Indiana Zarb - 0439557839	Maryanne Volker - 0417326668
Q240	SRA32	Q240	SRA32

Potential Future Varieties

There are 6 current varieties in MAPS observation plots this year. This is what we could be planting in years to come.



WSRA17

Released in 2025 in Mackay, not yet available at MAPS farm. First released in the Burdekin region in 2017. Propagating up, waiting to see potential in Mackay region. Parentage: Q208 x Tellus. Intermediate-Susceptible for Smut. Intermediate for Pachymetra.



QC11-915

Not yet released anywhere. Still on hold waiting for Red Rot rating and possible variety potential. Parentage: Q208 x Q209. Resistant for smut. Resistant for Pachymetra.



Q240 (standard)

Released in 2012. Grown in a large area across Queensland. Parentage: QN81-289 x SP78-3137. Resistant for Smut. Intermediate for Pachymetra.



SRA23

Not yet released in the Mackay Region. Waiting on Regional Variety Committee to decide to release or not. On hold at the moment. First released in the Burdekin region in 2019. Parentage: QC83-627 x Q222. Resistant to smut. Intermediate for Pachymetra.



SRA29

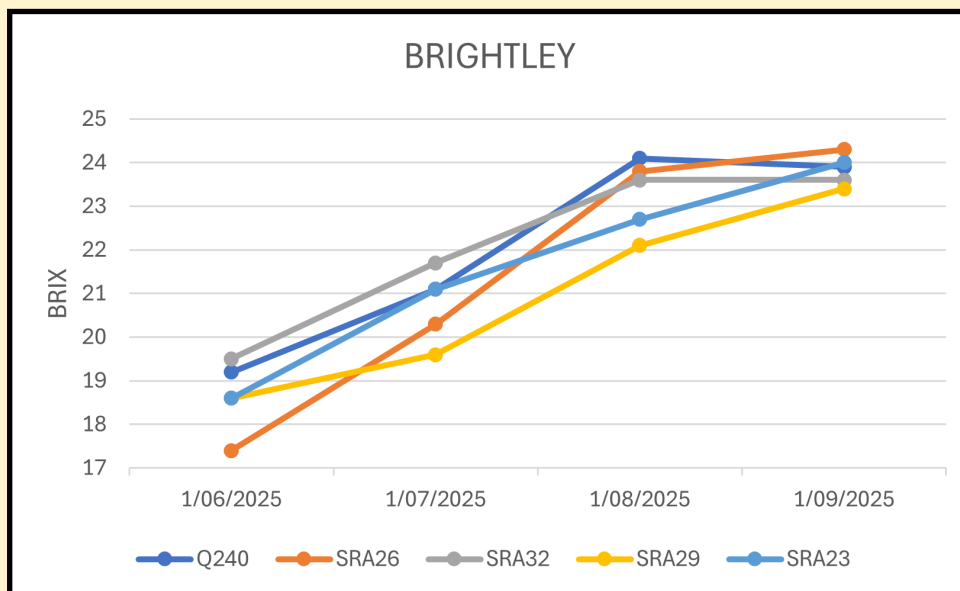
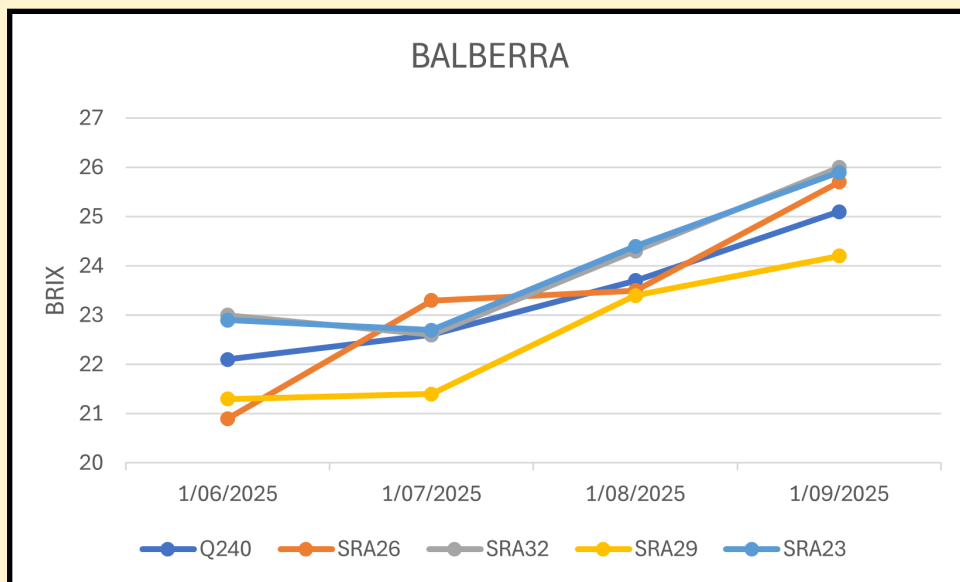
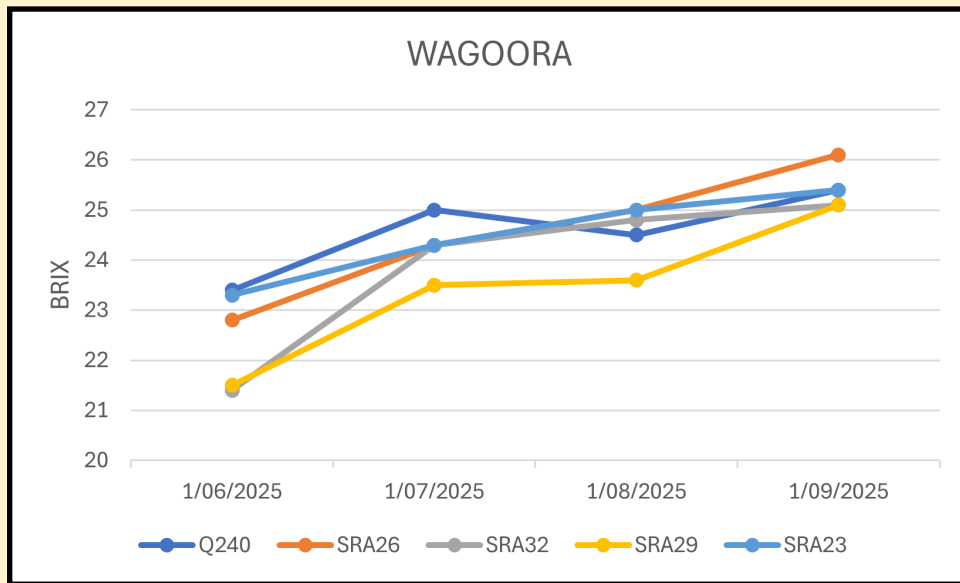
Not yet released in the Mackay Region. First released in Bundaberg in 2020. Waiting on Regional Variety Committee to decide to release or not. On hold at the moment. Parentage: Q170 x QC90-289. Intermediate for Smut. Resistant for Pachymetra.



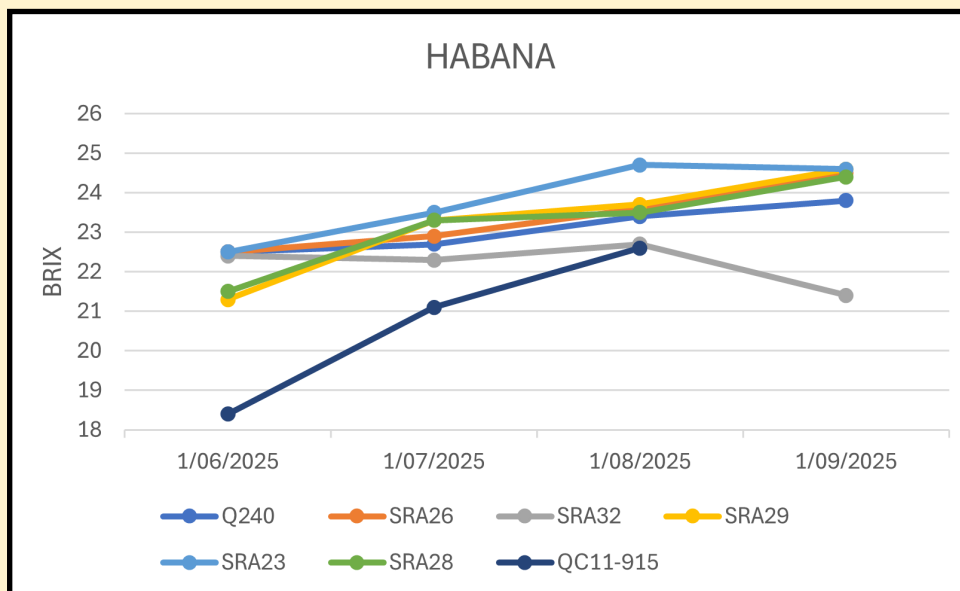
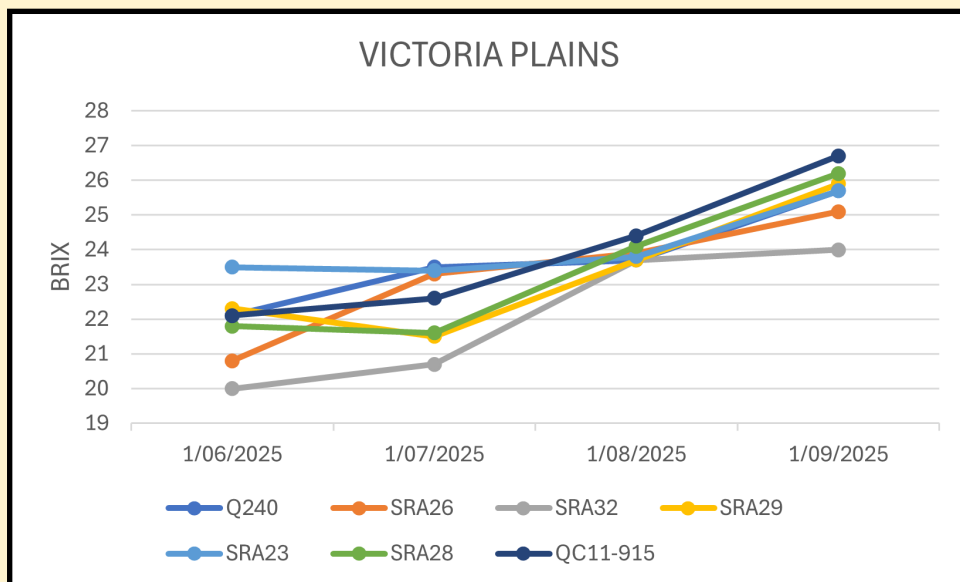
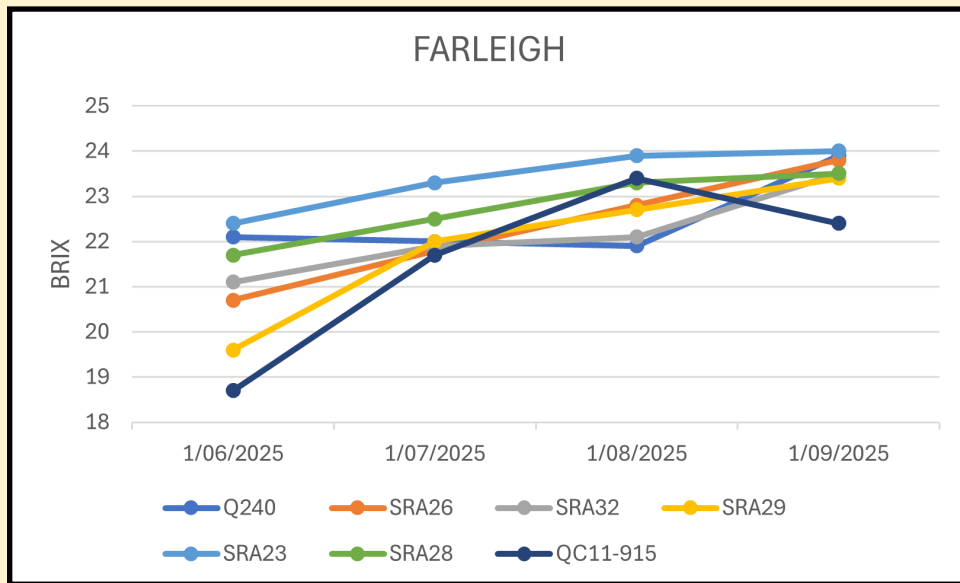
SRA28

Not yet released in the Mackay Region. First released in the Northern region in 2020. Waiting on Regional Variety Committee to decide whether to release or not. On hold at the moment. Parentage: Q233A x Q135. Intermediate resistant for Smut. Resistant for Pachymetra.

Maturity Sampling Data



Maturity Sampling Data





mackay area productivity services



Sugar Research
Australia

Variety Information

Disease, Harvest & Management Ratings

Variety	First Year Supplied from MAPS	Parentage	Pachymetra	Red Rot	Smut	Germination	Sugar		
							Early	Mid	Late
SRA32	2025	QN80-3425 x QN86-2168	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Good	Average	Good	Good
SRA40	2024	QN97-2122 x Q146	Resistant	Resistant	Resistant	Good	Poor	Average	Average
SRA26	2023	CP70-1547 x QA96-1492	Resistant	Resistant	Resistant	Good	Average	Good	Good
SRA22	2020	QS91-7179 x CP72-2086	Resistant	Intermediate	Resistant	Good	Average	Good	Average
SRA21	2019	QC82-668 x Q205	Intermediate	Intermediate	Inter-Res	Good	Average	Good	Average
SRA13	2018	QC88-284 x QC90-289	Resistant	Inter-Res	Resistant	Good	Average	Average	Poor
SRA12	2018	Q233 x QC90-289	Resistant	Intermediate	Resistant	Slow	Poor	Average	Average
SRA9	2017	QN81-289 x Q166	Resistant	Inter-Res	Inter-Sus	Good	Poor	Average	Good
Q253	2017	QN80-3425 x Q209	Resistant	Intermediate	Resistant	Very Good	Good	Good	Average
Q252	2013	Q208 x Q96	Intermediate	Resistant	Intermediate	Good	Good	Good	Average
Q250	2017	QN79-183 x QN89-1043	Intermediate	Intermediate	Resistant	Good	Good	Good	Average
Q249	2012	QC83-625 x QC90-289	Intermediate	Inter-Res	Resistant	Average	Average	Average	Average
Q247	2013	Q138 x Q155	Resistant	Resistant	Intermediate	Average	Average	Average	Average
Q242	2012	Q170 x Q150	Resistant	Inter-Res	Intermediate	Good	Average	Average	Average
Q240	2012	QN81-289 x SP78-3137	Intermediate	Resistant	Resistant	Good	Good	Good	Average
Q238	2009	Q138 x Q155	Resistant	Inter-Res	Resistant	Good	Average	Good	Good
Q232	2009	QN80-3425 x QS72-732	Intermediate	Inter-Res	Inter-Res	Average	Average	Average	Average
KQ228	2007	QN80-3425 x CP74-2005	Intermediate	Resistant	Intermediate	Good	Good	Good	Poor
Q208R	2016		Intermediate	Resistant	Inter-Res	Average	Good	Good	Good
Q208	2005	Q135 x QN61-1232	Intermediate	Resistant	Inter-Res	Average	Good	Good	Good
Q190	2000	Q170 x H56-752	Resistant	Resistant	Resistant	Good	Poor	Average	Average
Q183	2007	Q124 x H56-752	Resistant	Intermediate	Resistant	Good	Average	Good	Good
Q138		QN58-829 x QN66-2008	Resistant	Inter-Sus	Susceptible	Average	Poor	Average	Average
Q135		NCo310 x QN56-7096	Susceptible	Susceptible	Intermediate	Average	Poor	Average	Good
SP80	2015	SP71-1088 x H57-5028	Resistant	Resistant	Inter-Sus	Average	Average	Average	Average

The information in this table is reproduced from the SRA Variety Guide with permission from SRA.

Ratoon Stunting Disease

Please note RSD ratings have not been included. No sugar cane varieties are resistant to RSD. All varieties can become infected and suffer yield loss. Some varieties such as KQ228, Q242 and Q253 are more susceptible to RSD. The following measures will help reduce the risk of introducing RSD to your farm and help contain the spread of RSD:

- Source clean seed from a MAPS approved clean seed plot
- Refresh your source for all varieties every 2-3 years
- Have MAPS staff inspect all cane plant sources you intend to use
- Plant into volunteer-free fallow
- Sterilize planting and harvesting equipment that comes into contact with cane juice

MAPS Field Observations

Based on MAPS Field Observations

Variety	Release date	General Comments		Soil Preference
SRA32	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Above average tonnes - Below average sugar - Prone to lodging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pronounced eyes/ Tough rine - Limited commercial data available - Fast germinater /Slow to stool out 	Good
SRA40	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Susceptible to brown rust - Stool prone to sprawling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Below Average Sugar - limited commercial data available 	Average
SRA26	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliable germination - Slow after germination - Leaf Scald 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly susceptible to chlorotic streak - Reliable sugar throughout the year - Hairy leaf sheaths 	Good
SRA22	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compact stool size - Good canopy, closes in well - Slow grower - Early to mid-season maturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid late harvest - Responds well to irrigation - Heavy trash blanket 	Good
SRA21	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upright cane - Reliable germination (can be slow) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can tolerate waterlogged - Prone to suckering - Ratoons reliably 	Average to Good
SRA13	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prone to lodging - Average sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor yields in ratoons - Prone to smut 	Good
SRA12	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slow to germinate & ratoon - Compact stool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prone to smut 	Good
SRA9	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slow but reliable ratooner, fills in well - Good tonnes sugar / hectare - Wet feet and thick trash cover reduce yields (consider removing trash in low, heavy country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good/heavy soils may produce lower CCS (consider adjusting nitrogen rates) - Heavy crops can challenge harvesting - Increased observations of smut - Crops yields holding up well in later ratoons 	All soils
Q253	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast, reliable germination - More prone to RSD than most varieties - Susceptible to brown rust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good option for poorer soils - Heavy/good soils may produce lower CCS (consider adjusting nitrogen rates) 	Poor
Q252	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good early sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratooning concerns, fades in ratoons 	Good
Q250	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very little commercial data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heavy to good soil preferred 	Good
Q242	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prone to smut, chlorotic streak and RSD - Prone to suckering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superior pachymetra resistant varieties now available 	Average to Good
Q240	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good germination - Early sugar, deteriorates late with suckering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handles some waterlogging - May tolerate soldier better than other varieties 	All soils
KQ228	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early sugar, deteriorates late with suckering - Fast germination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More prone to RSD than other varieties - Can tolerate heavy soil 	Good
Q208R	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliable allrounder, good ratoonability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slow in dry conditions & if plant material is mature 	All soils
Q208	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handles wet feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing smut levels 	All soils
Q183	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast germination and ratooning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Susceptible to Chlorotic Streak 	All soils
SP80	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brittle in windy conditions - Variable sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resilient in poor harvest conditions 	All soils

The information in this table is from observations made by MAPS staff. It should be used as a guide only as varying conditions can impact variety performance.

Why Do Smartcane BMP?



Smartcane BMP not only meets Queensland Government Reef Regulations and is recognised as an alternative compliance pathway, the program has so many other positives. It demonstrates to the world that the Queensland Sugar Industry is continually building its reputation as a sustainable sugar source. Coca Cola (CCA) & Unilever now recognise Queensland sugar as sustainably sourced, through the Smartcane BMP Program. The program is aligned with other sustainable sugar platforms such as Bonsucro, Czarnikow VIVE and ProTerra.

Possessing a “Social Licence to Operate” is becoming a part of doing business in global markets. The Smartcane BMP program demonstrates a commitment in the Social Licence to Operate field in supporting businesses, community, environment and the Great Barrier Reef.

The Smartcane BMP program is also recognised by banking, insurance and other service providers to manage their risks and goes beyond simply compliance. The program does not take away from other industry organisations and in fact adds to the betterment of our sugar industry.

Lorelle Flynn is the Smartcane BMP Facilitator for the Mackay area and is in the office or area on Tuesday-Friday. If you would like to book an appointment for Lorelle to come out and go through the Smartcane BMP process, you can contact her on **0448 715 482** or let your Productivity Officer know of your interest. Your facilitator is here to help you in any way to guide you through to your accreditation.

We have a new independent auditor on board, Chris Dench, who comes from the Proserpine area. Dale Mengel has been undertaking independent audits for Smartcane BMP for over five years now and has recently been coming across familiar faces with growers undertaking their re-accreditations. Both of our independent auditors make you feel at ease during your face to face audit. Mutually suitable audit dates are now more easily available with these two auditors on board.

There are a couple of items that tend to hold up growers with their Smartcane BMP audit. The first being their N&P Budget. An N&P Budget can be obtained through various service providers and/or suppliers, or if you have some knowledge of Excel, a spreadsheet can be made available to you. The Six Easy Steps is required to be undertaken via an online course through the SRA website if you choose to tackle the budget yourself. The

N&P Budget is a legislated requirement for growers and will also be audited under Smartcane BMP. This budget starts out as a recommended budget for the beginning of the season and can be updated throughout the season to match your actual fertilising application. Dates are really important for anything to become a complete record. When did you plant, side/top dress or spray block 1-1?

The other legislated requirement is grower spray records, which is also covered in the Smartcane BMP audit. Growers are required to have their spray certificate completed (in the competencies of Prepare and Apply Chemicals to Control Pest, Weed and Diseases; Transport, Handle and Store Chemicals; and Control Weeds – 3 modules). There is currently no requirement for certificates to be updated despite some service providers advising otherwise. Recording your spray is another record growers find hard to undertake as most want to be spending their time in the paddock, not doing bookwork (who could blame them), but unfortunately it's the way of the world now. Advice on this recording is, find what works for you. You might want to scribble in a note book and then transcribe it into a recording book or electronically when you get home, you may want to record it directly in the book or on printed forms right there and then so it's done. Recording books are available from the MAPS office if you require one. There are some special requirements around weather recording, so please familiarise yourself with these compliance requirements.

If you have the above few items complete prior to booking an appointment, you are not only ticking off the items that are legislated requirements, but what some growers find as “hold ups” to become Smartcane BMP Accredited. Many growers already have most of their documentation in order. If you do, why don't you become Smartcane BMP Accredited?



John Barfield receiving his Smartcane BMP certificate.

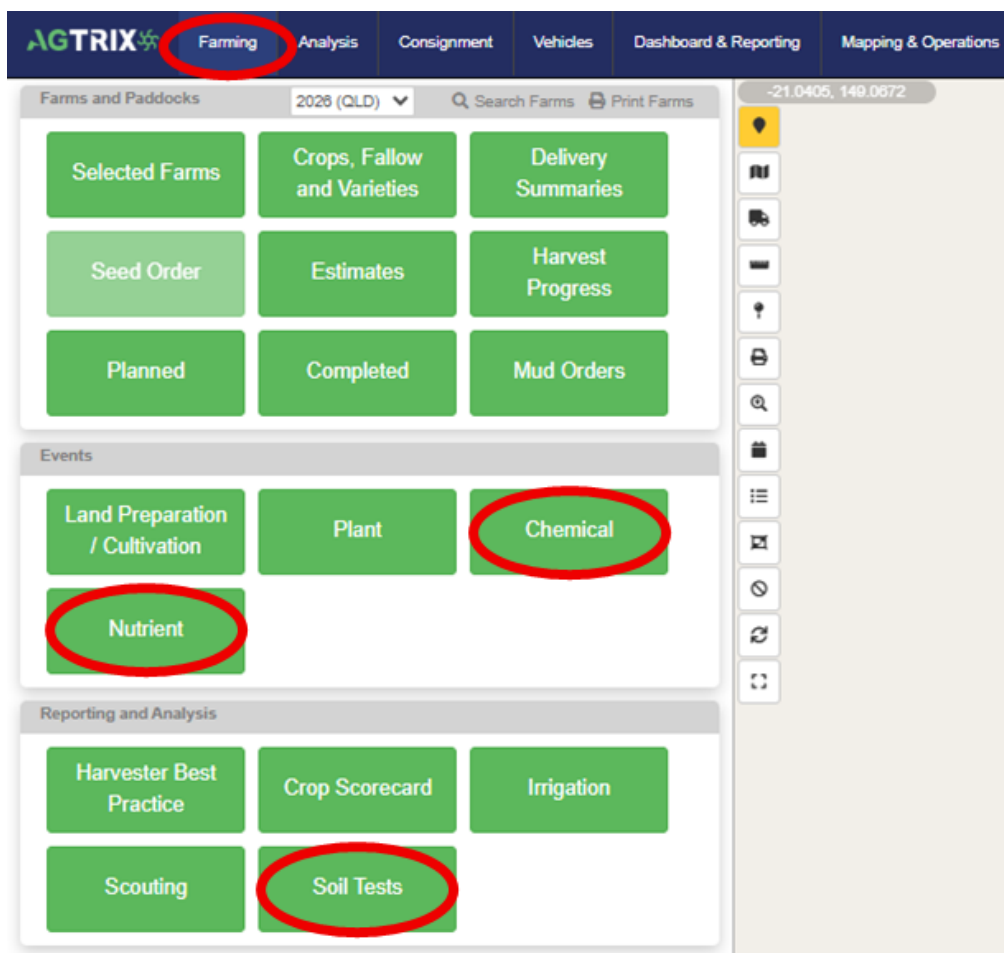
AGTRIX UPDATE

While Agtrix are busy making updates the program has temporarily been frozen for any new entries or edits of nutrient and chemical records. Growers will still be able to view past records. Agtrix plan to have it up and running by the end of March. A notice will be sent out once this happens.

2026 brings some big changes for growers accessing Agtrix. Moving forward, the Mackay Sugar layer will be the access point for growers wanting to utilise Agtrix as the MAPS layer is no longer being updated and will eventually be integrated into the Mackay Sugar layer. The login portal is still accessible from the MAPS website or at <https://farming.agtrix.net/farming>.

Agtrix is also currently working on the development of a mobile app to record nutrient and chemical applications, with an estimated arrival for later on this year.

Once logged in all recording functionalities will remain the same. Through the farming tab at the top of the screen growers will still have access to input spraying and fertilising records through the nutrient and chemical tabs as well as generate N&P Budgets through the soil test tab. If interest is shown training will be offered on these functions.



Over the past few months MAPS and Mackay Sugar have been working hard to ensure Agtrix is ready for grower use and that all maps being sent out this year are as accurate as possible. If you have any questions or queries regarding using Agtrix please contact your Productivity Officer for assistance. For any map changes please contact Mackay Sugar.



Mackay Area Productivity Services - MAPS

175 followers • 5 following

MAPS is the main provider of sugarcane advice and extension in Mackay.

Our mission is to enhance the profitability and sustainability of the sugar industry through innovative productivity programs and plant protection services.

■ Agricultural service

Follow

Search

MAPS has Facebook!

MAPS are now on Facebook. Scan the QR code and follow our page to stay up to date with relevant topics!



 **SCAN ME**

By now all Mackay Sugar growers will have been sent their mill map(s) and estimate sheet(s) (with estimate link) via email (please make contact ASAP if you haven't).

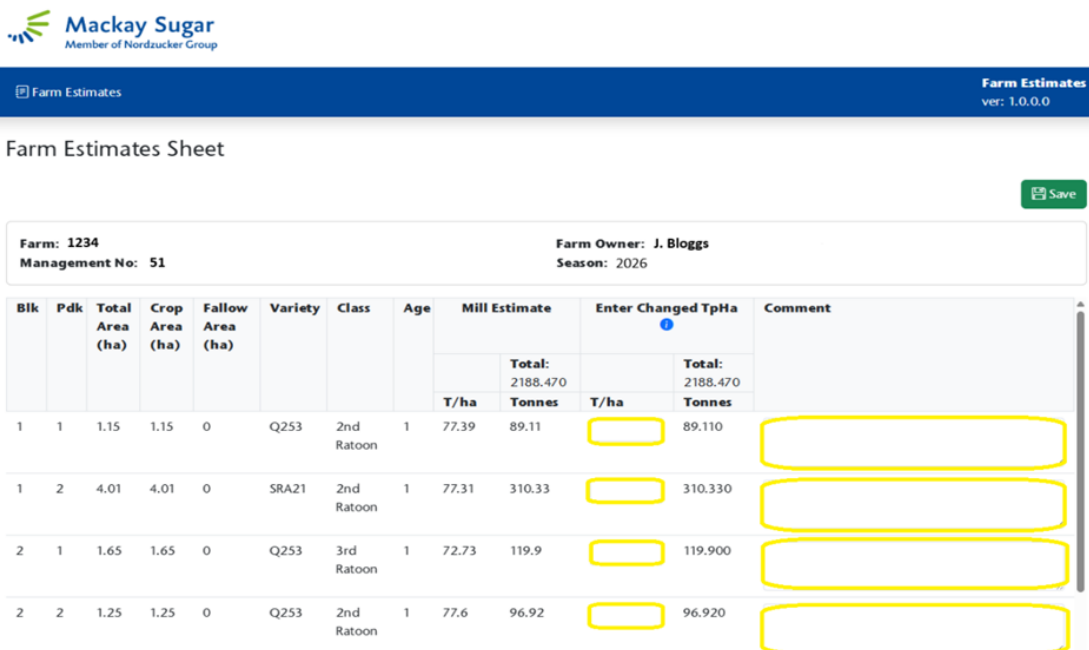
The estimate is based on the 5-year average production of the farm. The estimate is NOT a Mackay Sugar estimate. If you agree with the estimate you do not need to do anything. If you would like to make adjustments to the estimate it can be done via the link in the email. This link will take you to an online form where you can simply make the changes and then save these changes. These changes will automatically feed through to Mackay Sugar. Alternatively, you can print out the estimate sheet and make the changes and return via email or in person.

Changes to the farm map can be made either by noting the changes in the "Comments" section of the Estimate Sheet online form (e.g. Block 2-4 is Q208R not SRA9) or via printing out the map and marking the changes on the map and scanning and returning via email to the Field Office email. Alternatively, the maps can also be mailed through to:

Field Office, 598 Mackay Eungella Road, Pleystowe Qld 4741 **or** can be dropped in to the Cane Supply office at Pleystowe.

If you would like to go over the changes with one of the Mackay Sugar staff you are more than welcome to make contact and organise a suitable time to meet and make the changes.

At the end of the last season it became very clear that the accuracy of the farm maps and estimates flows through to the Harvest Equity side of the business. What this means is that the greater accuracy that we can get in the maps means more accurate and reliable harvester tracks that lead to more accurate Equity Reports for you and your contractor.



Mackay Sugar
Member of Nordzucker Group

Farm Estimates ver: 1.0.0.0

Farm Estimates Sheet Save

Farm: 1234 Management No: 51 Farm Owner: J. Bloggs Season: 2026

Blk	Pdk	Total Area (ha)	Crop Area (ha)	Fallow Area (ha)	Variety	Class	Age	Mill Estimate		Enter Changed TpHa		Comment
								T/ha	Tonnes	T/ha	Tonnes	
								Total: 2188.470		Total: 2188.470		
1	1	1.15	1.15	0	Q253	2nd Ratoon	1	77.39	89.11	<input type="text"/>	89.110	
1	2	4.01	4.01	0	SRA21	2nd Ratoon	1	77.31	310.33	<input type="text"/>	310.330	
2	1	1.65	1.65	0	Q253	3rd Ratoon	1	72.73	119.9	<input type="text"/>	119.900	
2	2	1.25	1.25	0	Q253	2nd Ratoon	1	77.6	96.92	<input type="text"/>	96.920	

Please return maps & estimates to: Fieldoffice@mssl.com.au, or contact Damian Baxter **0419294768**.

MACKAY WHITSUNDAYS REEFWISE FARMING PROJECT

“Sugarcane growers’ chance to obtain the support, tools, and funding to improve farm practices — protecting productivity today and the Reef for the future.”









Reef Catchments, in partnership with leading agronomy and industry groups including Farmacist, Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS), Sugar Research Australia (SRA), and Nutrien Ag Solutions, is delivering a practical practice-change initiative until 2028 to address nutrient and pesticide-related water quality risks in the Mackay–Whitsunday–Isaac region, reducing pollutant impacts on the Great Barrier Reef.

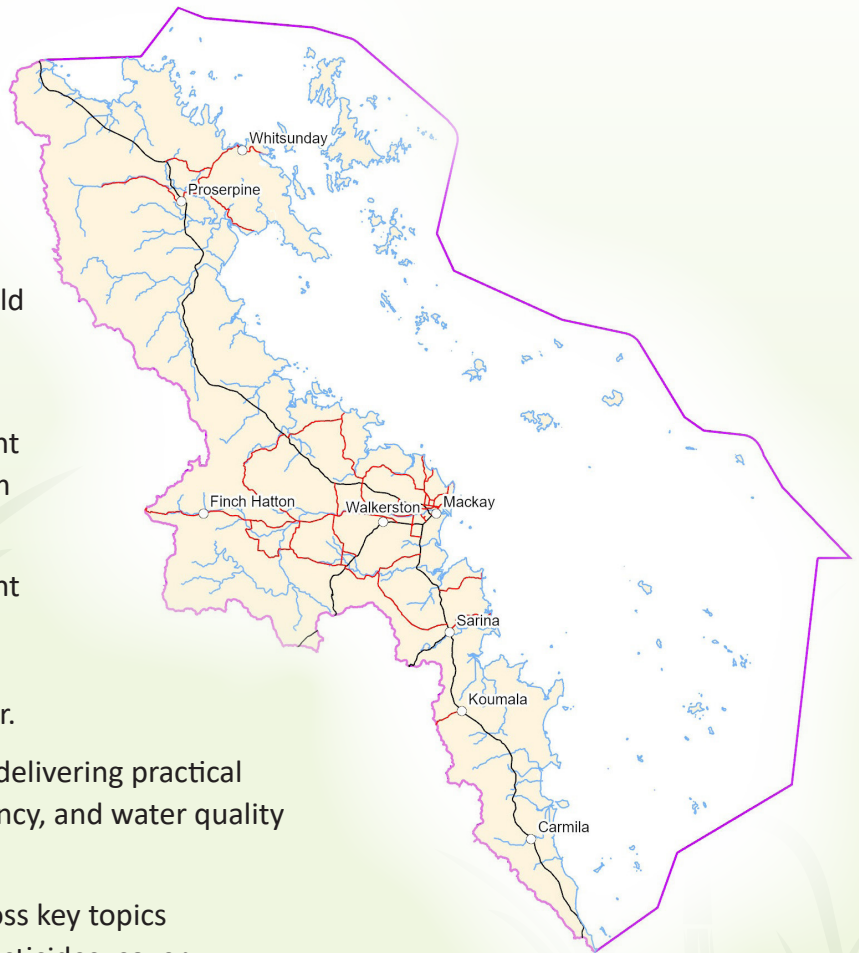
HOW SUGARCANE GROWERS CAN BENEFIT

-  **Right advice, right time**
Practical, independent support to fine-tune fertiliser and chemical decisions in-season.
-  **Help with the costs**
50:50 co-funding to invest in equipment that makes best practice easier and more efficient.
-  **Try it on your farm**
Test new approaches in your own paddocks and see the results before scaling up.
-  **Learn from other cane growers**
Share real experiences, challenges, and solutions with growers farming in similar conditions.
-  **Results you can see**
On-farm improvements backed by measured practice change and water quality outcomes.



LIST OF ACTIVITIES:

-  Nutrient & Chemical Management Plan that goes beyond regulations and includes recommendations
-  Access to Additional Management Services such as EM (Electromagnetic) Mapping, Yield Mapping, spray rig assessment, and more.
-  Access to irrigation and drainage support to identify system constraints and improvement opportunities that lift efficiency and on-farm performance.
-  Access to major grants to support equipment upgrades that sustain or improve practices reducing nutrient and pesticide losses, accelerating adoption where cost is a barrier.
-  Extension support aligned to grower goals, delivering practical improvements in management, farm efficiency, and water quality outcomes.
-  Workshops and field days to build skills across key topics such as nutrient management, irrigation, pesticides, cover crops relevant to Mackay Whitsunday Region growers.



GET INVOLVED

We are inviting 60 eligible growers to take part in this Reefwise Farming project.

Applicants must meet an eligibility criterion, and will be assessed against past funding received, including the type of activity, timing, and level of investment. Projects that build on earlier work and demonstrate additional environmental benefits may still be eligible. Strong interest is expected and we encourage you to register your interest as early as possible to avoid missing out.



For further details visit the Reef Catchments Reefwise Farming website QR or contact Reef Catchments on (07) 4964 6102 / email kevin.moore@reefcatchments.



Elevating cane farming through sustainable practices



CANERISE
Mackay Whitsunday

CaneRise Mackay Whitsunday (canerise.com.au) is a local website featuring stories, tools and information to help cane farmers in the Mackay Whitsunday region grow their productivity and profits through sustainable practices.

CaneRise is a central portal **for cane farmers** to easily access:

- useful and up-to-date **tools and resources** for cane farming
- **funding** opportunities for growers
- upcoming **events** in the region
- stories and videos featuring **local growers** who are seeing benefits from practice changes
- opportunities to get involved with local water quality improvement **projects**.



There is also a **community section**, including CaneRise Learning, a new education hub featuring an interactive cane farm for little kids and big kids to learn about cane farming, at home or in the classroom.



CaneRise is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program to help cane growers implement practices that improve their cane, soil and water quality in Reef catchment areas. CaneRise was originally created as part of a project funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

Supporting organisations



Great Barrier Reef Foundation



Head over to canerise.com.au to check it out. Don't forget to **sign up to the newsletter** to receive updates on the latest tools, information and stories from the Mackay Whitsunday area. And pass the word on!