

Andrew Dougan 30 Years' Service



Congratulations to Andrew on achieving 30 consecutive years of service with MAPS. As a Senior Productivity Officer of the team, MAPS is very fortunate to have Andrew guiding the next generation of Productivity Officers starting their careers. Andrew's experience and knowledge of the sugar industry is invaluable, especially in varieties and cane pest/diseases management. Throughout the 30 years, hundreds of growers have saved and made many dollars with Andrew's advice and help.

Over the years, Andrew has trained and mentored most newly appointed Productivity Officers and still today he is training the next crop of MAPS staff. His patience, dedication and confident approach has helped shape them into valuable staff members ensuring the core values of MAPS remains strong.

Andrew has now handed over the MAPS Farm Manager role to Ian Marais and now trains and mentors the new staff. Andrew set a very high standard on the MAPS Clean Seed farm and took great pride in the high-quality plant material grown for grower distribution.

The work Andrew has done behind the scenes can not be underestimated and is a major reason why the Mackay region is in a good position with regards to RSD levels. Andrew has not looked for accolades over the years, but knows the importance of his role in helping growers improve their productivity by growing healthy productive crops. We are lucky to have Andrew working alongside us and value his commitment to MAPS and the industry.

New Staff - Lorelle Flynn

I would like to introduce myself as the new BMP Support Officer with MAPS in Mackay. My name is Lorelle Flynn and I have grown up in the sugarcane industry as the daughter of a local sugarcane grower. Whilst enjoying my BMP role on a casual basis, I also take pride in helping my father out on the cane farm; not only doing the bookwork, but the manual aspects as well. I enjoy the physical work and being a part of farming alongside my Dad.



In 2021, Dad and I went through the BMP Accreditation process for our farm, which gave me an understanding of BMP from a grower's perspective. At the time the process surprised me, in that whilst we had improvements to make, most of the required information was already being recorded or known. Based on my prior and current knowledge of the process, I would like to encourage those growers who may be "sitting on the fence" regarding engaging with BMP, to make contact so that we can arrange a mutually suitable time for an initial visit.

Whole families can be a part of the sugar cane industry and it's something which I see also in the BMP process. Whilst the process can be undertaken by individual growers, I have seen whole family units getting involved to get all the evidence together. This includes various records, maps, plans and receipts whether it be paper based, on a computer or using AgTriX. Whether it's done by the family or by an individual, the result is a source of pride.

I can also see that the information collected through the BMP Accreditation process provides a historical data set for future generations or new managers. I am working with Steven Garrad from MAPS who is experienced in helping and guiding growers along the way to their BMP accreditation. We not only help growers who are new to the process, but also those being reaccredited (which rolls around every five years). We are currently working to get 2-3 growers audited each month for both processes. If you have already made a start on your BMP journey and would like to advance to accreditation, I encourage you to make contact.

I am excited to be a part of this team and very keen to meet and help growers through their BMP Accreditations. At the same time I am growing my knowledge of sugarcane farming by viewing the different practices that growers undertake in the management of their farms.

Contact me by Phone: 0448 715 482
Contact me by Email: lflynn@maps.org.au

Clean Seed - Taking Care of Business



Take advantage of the MAPS Approved Plots and update your clean seed source for the foundation of a healthy productive crop. Collecting clean seed is still and always will be the smartest investment you can make on your farm that's cost effective and delivers the greatest returns. Going to the MAPS plots isn't just about getting new varieties, it's taking care of your business and building a strong foundation. Collecting clean seed takes time and it's usually at a time when everyone is busy and time-poor, however the one day spent at a MAPS clean seed plot is giving you the best opportunity to improve productivity. Farming is a business and to be successful, you need to collect clean seed every year.

Now with the MAPS billet plots open, as well as the Victoria Plains farm, growers have never had as much choice and options for collecting clean seed. Starting a program of collecting one or two varieties a year from the plots is an easy way of continually updating your clean seed needs. The practice of collecting clean seed on a yearly basis is the

smartest way to ensure your future plantings are starting with the best opportunity to be successful.

The Clean Seed plots are now open for distribution and there are two new varieties for release, SRA26 & SRA40. Normally when new varieties are available, the collection of older varieties gets forgotten. However it is still an opportunity to collect a fresh source of an older variety that you are continuing with from one of the MAPS Approved Clean Seed plots. MAPS recommends updating your plant source on an annual basis.

Whole Stick Clean Seed

- All varieties available for hand cutting.
- Limited varieties can be pre-ordered and cut onto MAPS trailers.
- ALSO limited varieties can be pre-ordered and cut onto Growers' trailers.
- Orders to your Productivity Officer and trailers delivered by Monday morning.

Billet Clean Seed

- Weather permitting, billets will be offered later in August for a limited time. A text message seeking expressions of interest will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.
- Select varieties will be available.
- Cost set at \$66/tonne, own tipper bin required.
- Check with your Productivity Officer for details. Billet orders will be handled by MAPS Farm Manager, Ian Marais – 0417 326 669.

Victoria Plains			
Whole stick		Billets	
Ian Marais – 0417 326 669			
SRA40, SRA26, SRA22, SRA21, SRA9, Q253, Q240, Q183, KQ228, Q208, Q208R		Q183, Q208R, Q240, Q253, KQ228, SRA9, SRA21, SRA22	
Pioneer Valley	North Coast	Racecourse	Marian
Whole stick Tannalo	Billets Pindi Pindi	Billets Bakers Creek	Billets Marian Hampden
Ian Marais – 0417 326 669	Brendan Rae - 0417 326 393	Indiana Zarb - 0439 557 839	Shane Hare - 0417 326 668
SRA26	Q253 Q183	Q253 SRA9	Q208R SRA9

Chemical Product Reminder

This is a timely reminder of the spray window restrictions around the use of certain chemicals in the next few months in the Mackay Region. Growers/Operators should always read the chemical label thoroughly for all other restrictions, such as buffer zones and slope limits.

2,4-D products

Amicide Advance 700 if spraying 1.1 L/ha to 1.6 L/ha where no trash blanket is present, no use allowed during Oct & Nov. Where trash blanket is present, no use allowed during October. If spraying over 1.6 L/ha, the no use period is extended, (i.e. use up to 2.3 L/ha, but no use between Sept to Dec.) If spraying under 1.1 L/ha, no time restrictions.

Amine 625 If spraying 1.2 L/ha to 1.8 L/ha where no trash blanket, no use during Oct & Nov. Where trash is present no use during October. Spraying over 1.8 L/ha, the no use period is extended. If spraying under 1.2 L/ha, no time restrictions.

Nufarm Dropzone (2,4-D 500g/lit) If spraying 1.56 L/ha to 2.1 L/ha where no trash blanket, no use during Oct & Nov. Where trash is present, no use during October. If spraying over 2.1 L/ha, the no use period is extended. Spraying under 1.56 L/ha, no time restrictions.

Nufarm Estercide (2,4-D 680g/lit) If spraying 1.15 L/ha to 1.7 L/ha where no trash blanket, no use during Oct & Nov. Where trash is present, no use during October. Spraying over 1.7 L/ha, the no use period is extended. Spraying under 1.15 L/ha, no time restrictions.

Some 2,4-D products, such as Zephyr 625, 4Farmers 625, Genfarm 625, AC Joker 625 and 2,4-D 475 Dual have a

spray restriction for all rates during October and November.

All 2,4-D products require a minimum nozzle spray droplet size of very coarse (VC).

Other Products

Trooper 75-D (2,4-D & Picloram) If spraying over 0.7 L/ha to 1.5 L/ha where no trash blanket, no use during Oct & Nov. Where trash is present no use in October. If spraying 0.7 L/ha and under, no time restrictions.

Pulverize/Tordon 75-D(2,4-D & Picloram) – No spraying use up to 3.2 lit/ha during Oct – November.

Amitron 700WG – No spraying use allowed between 1st Oct – 31st Dec.

Bobcat Combi/Velpar/Dethrone – No spraying use allowed between 1st Nov – 31st May.

Diuron 900/Diurex – Over 450g/ha diuron active, no spraying use allowed between 1st Dec – 30th April. Under 450g/ha active, use at any time. Mix with paraquat (Gramoxone).

Nufarm Nuprid 350 (Imidacloprid) – Plant cane - apply between June – November; ratoon cane - apply between Sept – November.

Please remember to record all your chemical applications. All growers have access to Agtrix Farming through MAPS which allows you to record and store all your chemical applications on a digital platform and has the ability to generate reports for government audit purposes. If you're interested in giving the program a trial, ask your Productivity Adviser to set you up to register to Agtrix Farming.



Chlorotic Streak in SRA26

SRA26 is a Northern variety that was first released in 2019 and released to growers in the Central region in 2022.

Recently in Mackay, MAPS observed chlorotic streak symptoms in SRA26 in an observation plot. The plot was planted in a block with a low-lying section where water runoff occurs during rainfall events. No streak symptoms were seen in SRA26 at the elevated end of the block. The source material used to plant the block was inspected and found to be free of chlorotic streak symptoms. The affected block of SRA26 was subsequently inspected by MAPS Senior Advisor Andrew Dougan and SRA Variety Officer Chris Tom.

Chlorotic streak is spread by diseased planting material and via floodwater spread of inoculum. Growers are advised not to source their SRA26 planting material from, or to plant SRA26 in, low lying or poorly drained blocks.

SRA has recently approved a new research project to develop an effective and reliable chlorotic streak resistance screening test to identify highly susceptible varieties prior to their release.

For further information on chlorotic streak or SRA26 please contact your MAPS advisor or SRA Variety Officer Chris Tom (0411 589 806).



Chlorotic streak symptoms (arrow) in SRA26

Application of liquid imidacloprid in ratoons - reminders

Placement

- 100 – 150 mm slot depth (slot created by double disc opener or tyne, in stool splitter or side dresser arrangements).
- Apply liquid band to the base of the slot (ensure correct nozzle alignment).
- Cover treated band immediately with at least 100 mm of soil. (i.e. close the slot).
- Regularly check depth of application.
- Remove trash and/or mill mud and loose soil to inspect the slot depth.



Rate

Rates of application are determined in mL of active per 100 m of row, which means rate per hectare varies with your row spacing. For the maximum rate of 22 mL per 100 m of row, the table below indicates the equivalent rate per hectare.

Row spacing	m	1.52	1.65	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.4
Length of row per hectare	m	6,579	6,061	5,882	5,556	5,000	4,167
Application rate of product	L/ha*	1.45	1.33	1.29	1.22	1.10	0.92

*Based on 22 mL/100 m of row for liquid formulations e.g., Nuprid®350SC and a range of generic liquid brands

Placement in wide beds or dual rows

Dual row and wide row systems are not explicitly covered by the current liquid imidacloprid label. SRA recommendations:

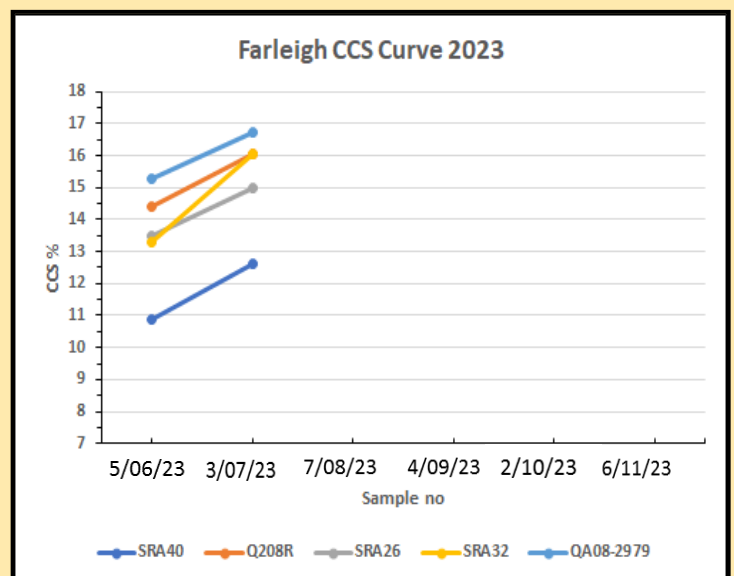
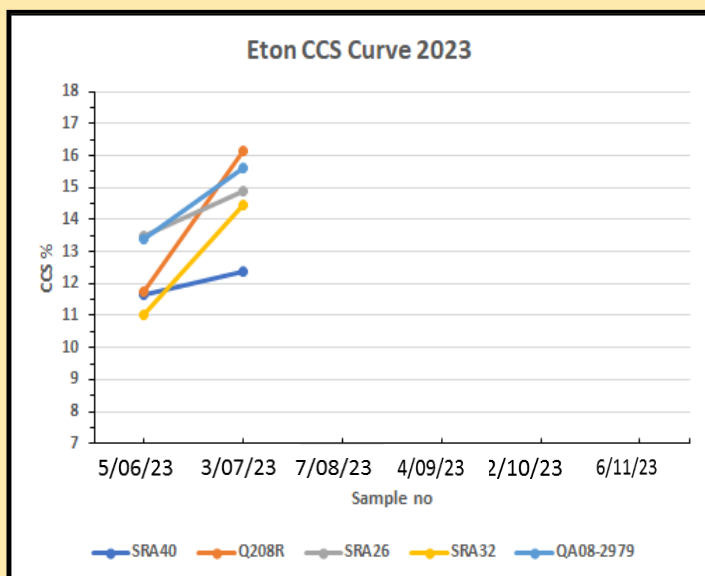
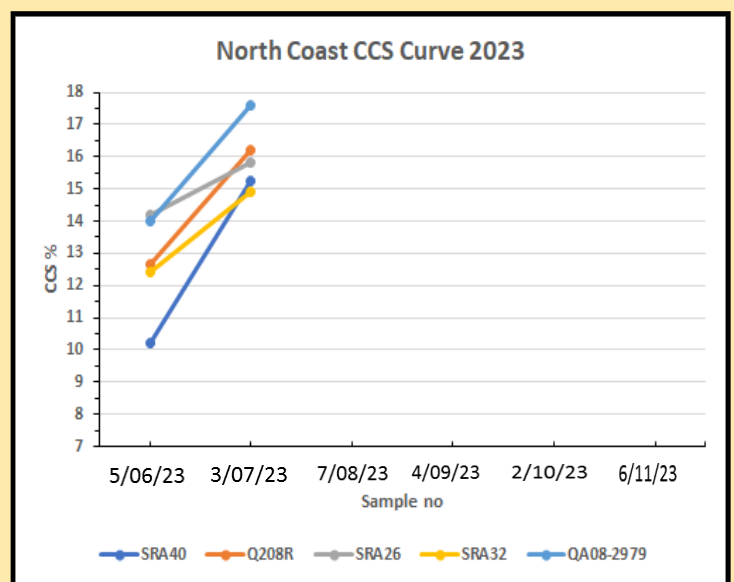
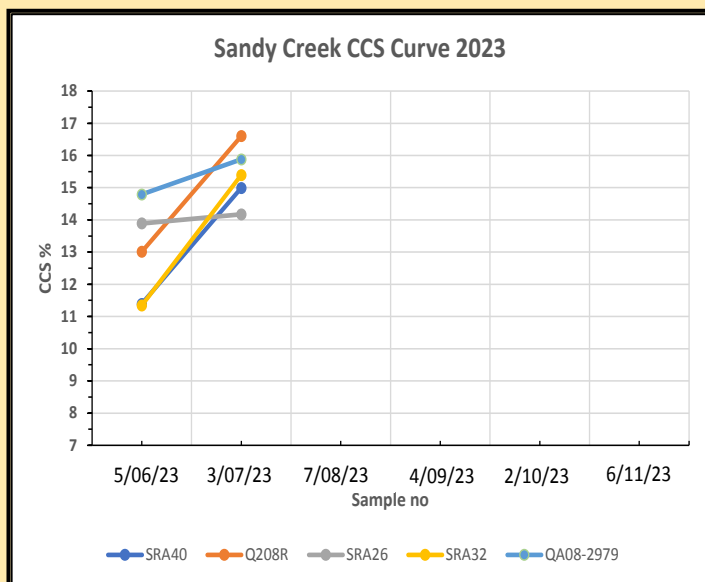
- Dual row – use the bed row spacing to determine the rate per hectare as per the above table. Treat each individual row (in the bed) with half the rate rather than the full rate applied to the centre of the bed (between the two individual rows).
- Wide row – use the bed row spacing to determine the rate per hectare as per the above table. As for the dual row system, better to split the rate using 2 coulters per bed rather than one coulters with full rate into the centre of the bed.

MAPS Observation Plots Maturity Testing Results

MAPS has continued with the early maturity testing on the observation plots planted throughout the Mackay Sugar region. The purpose of the maturity testing of the plots is to help identify a pre-released variety and gain more data and insight on the recently released commercial varieties. With SRA26 & SRA40 being released this year without any commercial data, testing in the observation plots will help to determine when to harvest the two new varieties.

The sampling commenced at the start of June with the plots to be sampled every month till the end of crush. Samples were analysed at Mackay Sugar's Marian Mill providing the data that compares all the varieties in the plots. QA08-2979 is a seedling being trialled in the plots. The early indication is that it has a higher CCS content compared to the other varieties in the plots. The seedling is pachymetra resistant and potentially could be released in the next few years based on the SRA trial data. The newly released SRA26 has tested well early in the majority of the plots and is also pachymetra resistant. The start of the 2023 crush has seen Q240 perform exceptionally well for early sugar and now growers are reverting back to the variety to cover the early sugar option. MAPS advise that if growers plan to plant Q240 out again, they start with a clean source from an approved plot and not use older ratoons which would have a older hot water treatment age.

The MAPS Observation plots are not replicated trials, however the data collected in the plots provide valuable information for growers with variety selection. With variety management, it is vital that all factors are addressed to achieve the best productivity results possible. Selecting a variety for your block is a financial decision you make on your farm that can either make you money or lose you money. That's why you need to make sure all considerations are taken into account to select the correct variety. Contacting your Productivity Officer and discussing your variety options is the best way of guaranteeing you're selecting the right varieties for your blocks.



Making Ash go Further

The benefits of mill byproducts, mud and ash, to our industry can not be underestimated when we talk about improving soil health and productivity. Over the years we have promoted the soil health and financial benefits of using mill mud and it's now encouraging to see growers are using mill mud as an alternative to inorganic fertilisers. Utilising the high levels of nutrients like phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulphur as part of their fertiliser program is an easy way of reducing your fertiliser cost. In addition to the nutrient values, the mill mud improves soil texture and structure, improves soil water storage and works towards increasing soil pH.

Mill ash is a great product if you're looking at improving the productivity of sodic soils. Traditionally mill ash has been dumped on the sodic soil sites within blocks and spread by growers. Banded mill ash is a more cost-effective way to apply the product across the whole block. At the recent MAPS/SRA Field Day, Gerard Ruane displayed his banded mud/ash applicator that applies mill byproducts for Mackay Sugar. The applicator generated much interest amongst growers and was viewed as a viable option to spread the product further to address some of the districts productivity constraints. As with mud, ash also contains nutrients (Table below) that should be incorporated into a fertiliser program.



Gerard explained to MAPS, "Being able to hold 25 tonne of product and apply it banded has resulted in a higher demand for the applicator across the district. This truck can save growers a lot of time in the paddock and spreads the product across the block evenly with applied rates ranging between 70 – 140 t/ha, depending on what the grower wants. I'm seeing more growers request the ash to be banded, because of the time saving factor and that more area can be covered than being bulk dumped."

Using mill byproducts to improve sodic soils and soil structure and reduce fertiliser costs is a win-win for everyone when looking at improving productivity. Being smarter how we use mud and ash is one way to grow more cane and get a better return from your crop. To discuss what options are available, give your MAPS Productivity Adviser a call to get the best out of the mill byproducts.

ASH NUTRIENTS	100 t/ha	Estimated available nutrients (kg/ha)	
	1 st crop	2 nd crop	3rd & 4 th crop
Nitrogen (N)	0	0	0
Phosphorus (P)	sufficient	Check with leaf test	Check with leaf test
Potassium (K)	80	80	0
Sulfur (S)	0	0	0
Calcium (Ca)	Reduce Ag Lime by 1.3 t/ha		
Magnesium (Mg)	Sufficient Mg for 1crop cycle		
Silicon (Si)	Sufficient to address deficiency		



Gerard Ruane

MAPS Levy Review

MAPS is proud of the services made available to Mackay growers in working towards productivity improvements. With a strong commitment to our core responsibilities on providing quality clean seed material from plots and maintaining the regions low RSD levels, MAPS is continually exploring ways to improve our services with a view towards the future in a cost-effective manner. MAPS recently reviewed its 5-year strategic plan that was established in 2020, to ensure our targeted goals are relevant to the industry. To deal with current inflation levels and cost of operation increases, a levy increase was considered necessary to maintain and improve service levels and to continue moving the organisation forward. MAPS has functioned without a levy increase for over ten years and the last change to the levy was a significant **decrease** in 2016.

MAPS presented a levy increase proposal to the Bargaining Representatives and Mackay Sugar which was accepted. The grower levy will increase approximately 1c/t from 10c/t to 11c/t, based on a 5.3Mt crop. The role of MAPS is often taken for granted, but one that needs to be done to ensure healthy productive crops are established. MAPS has built a strong reputation on what has been achieved in the past and now with our revised strategic plan in place, we have a real focus on grower extension. This, combined with a strong emphasis on our core responsibilities, clean seed and RSD management, means MAPS has a clear direction to addressing and improving the productivity in the Mackay region.

Anthony Schembri

Managing standover cane this season



Mackay Sugar
Member of Nordzucker Group

A major consideration when deciding what to do with standover cane is determining the value of harvested standover cane. Sugar prices have been elevated for some time now, so the return on standover cane is good compared to previous seasons.

QCS is currently working on an in-season pool price of \$717/t IPS for the 2023 Season. At this price, and using the current Mackay Sugar cane pay CCS of 12, standover cane achieving the average CCS of 9.41* is worth at least \$35/t cane to the grower.

This is a solid cane price for growers to consider when developing a plan to manage standover cane.

For a more accurate estimate of the value of standover cane, the table (right) includes the average CCS for different varieties of harvested standover cane as at 24 July 2023.

To date there has been very little cane under 7 CCS, where Mackay Sugar has agreed to pay an ex-gratia payment of \$12/t of cane for sugar that tests between 6 and 7 CCS.

Variety	Cane Tonnes	Average CCS
KQ228	2,515	8.49
Q138	6,749	8.48
Q183	38,835	9.91
Q208	36,581	9.28
Q208R	8,234	9.03
Q232	1,067	8.97
Q240	34,392	9.66
Q242	7,459	9.14
Q253	12,613	8.84
SP80	17,946	9.42
SRA21	2,603	9.02
SRA9	21,781	9.25
Q238	2,349	10.84
Other	2,066	9.41
Average	195,190	9.41