

Grower Update

ISSUE 49 – DECEMBER 2023

Welcome to the December issue of our BPS newsletter. We hope you find the articles contained in this issue informative.

This issue contains:

Christmas Message
Variety Trial Results
Next Gen Grower Bus Trip
Staff contacts



The BPS board, management and staff would like to wish all growers and industry members a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

The BPS office will close at 2pm Friday December 22, 2023 and will reopen on Monday January 8,

MERRY CHRISTMAS



As 2023 draws to an end I would like to wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas. With good sugar prices and the crop off, hopefully all can have a well deserved break. At the time of writing, it looks like there is a chance of rain around Christmas time, so a break from irrigation would be a fantastic bonus. This years crop ended up at an average of 118 t/ha and 14.74 CCS. This is a decrease in tonnes cane per hectare from 126 t/ha last season, however the increase in CCS meant that overall tonnes of sugar/ha was better at 17.4 t sugar/ha when compared to the previous 2 years (17.2 and 17.3 respectively).

Over the last few months BPS staff have been busy monitoring approved seed cane plots, collecting crop data, taking soil samples and providing recommendations, and plenty of general agronomy support around nutrition, irrigation, pest and disease management, and variety selection. We have also been undertaking some pest surveys investigating nematode and Pachymetra numbers across the district. Once all the results are in we will discuss them at shed meetings in February next year.

All approved seed cane plots are looking good, and when staff are collecting crop data, seed cane orders are being requested as well. All growers are required to have their seed cane orders submitted by end of February to ensure availability – please contact your BPS Field Officer to submit your order. If any varieties are over ordered, allocations will be based on orders received by end of February – orders submitted after this date cannot be guaranteed.

We are still looking for any growers interested in conducting trials in partnership with BPS. We are looking for a site in the BRIA to compare new varieties (including SRA34), as well as sites in the BRIA and Delta investigating phosphorus response. There may also be opportunity for a Delta site to compare soil amendments including biochar.

A huge thanks to all the BPS staff and directors for their hard work and support through this year, as well as a special mention to the approved seed cane plot holders, harvesters and managers. I am very thankful for the support of all members throughout this year and look forward to a productive and profitable 2024.

All the best for the festive season and New Year

Rob

VARIETY TRIAL UPDATE

This season we harvested two variety strip trials. These were a plant crop at Mona Park and a second ratoon at Inkerman. BPS would like to thank the participating growers and their harvesting crews for their assistance with the variety trial program.

The trial results for each site include the harvest results from this year as well as the cumulative results over the life of the trial for the Inkerman trial. The black lines on the graphs for the 2023 results show the range of results, that is the lowest and highest yield for each plot.

\$/ha return has been calculated using the cane price formula less harvesting and levies. For this year's returns a sugar price of \$650/t and harvesting and levies of \$8.50/t have been used. For the cumulative results from the Inkerman site we have used a sugar price of \$475/t and harvesting and levies of \$7.50/t for the plant and first ratoon crops, and \$650/t and \$8.50/t for the second ratoon crop.

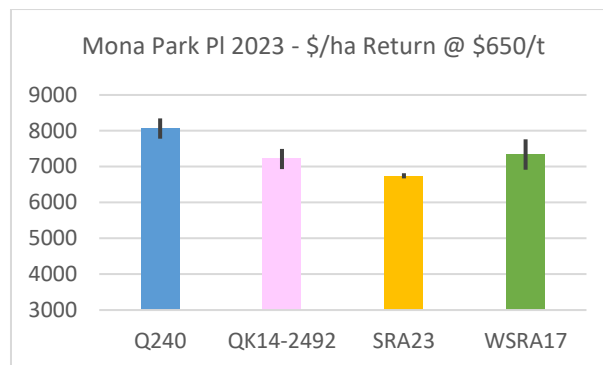
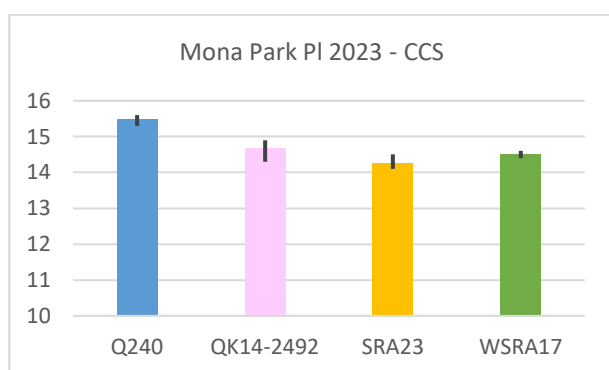
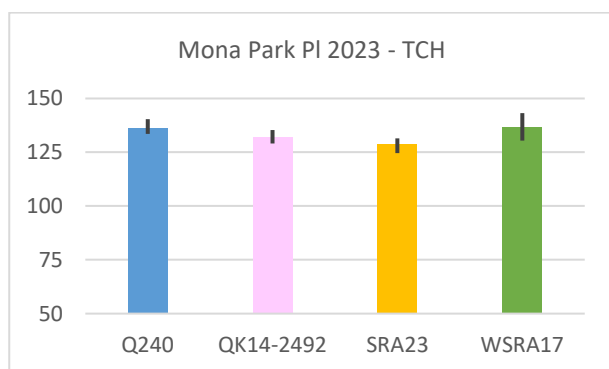
Mona Park – Plant Cane

This trial consists of Q240 as the standard (i.e an established variety); 2 of our newer variety releases with WSRA17 and SRA23; and an experimental variety, QK14-2492. We had three 6 row strips of each variety, except the WSRA17 which only had 2 replicates.

Q240 and WSRA17 had the highest average cane yields (136 and 137 t/ha), followed by the QK14 (132 t/ha) and finally the SRA23 (129 t/ha). What is important to note here is that the range of results for the WSRA17 was quite large (130 – 143 t/ha, 13 t/ha) compared to the other 3 varieties which only had a range of 6-7 t/ha between the highest yielding plot and the lowest.

Q240 was clearly the best variety for CCS and was the only one that had CCS readings in the 15’s. Q240 also had the highest tonnes of sugar per hectare with 21.1. WSRA17 was next (19.8), followed by QK14-2492 (19.4) and SRA23 with 18.4 t sugar/ha. For the overall \$/ha return, the higher CCS for Q240 saw it return just over \$8000/ha, well ahead of WSRA17 at \$7300/ha.

Variety	TCH	CCS	TSH	Return
Q240	136	15.5	21.1	8065
QK14-2492	132	14.7	19.4	7216
SRA23	129	14.3	18.4	6722
WSRA17	137	14.5	19.8	7333

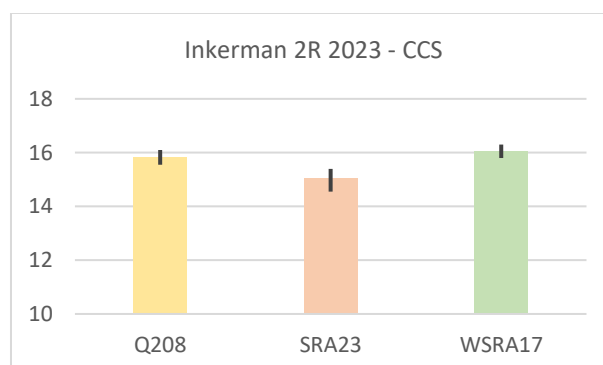
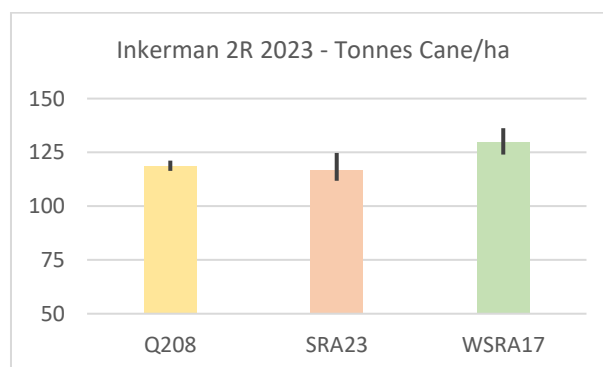


Inkerman – 2nd Ratoon

This trial consisted of Q208 as the standard with SRA23 and WSRA17 as the new releases. There were three 6 row plots of each variety. Due to some milling issues, it took 3 days to harvest the trial but there were no major effects on CCS.

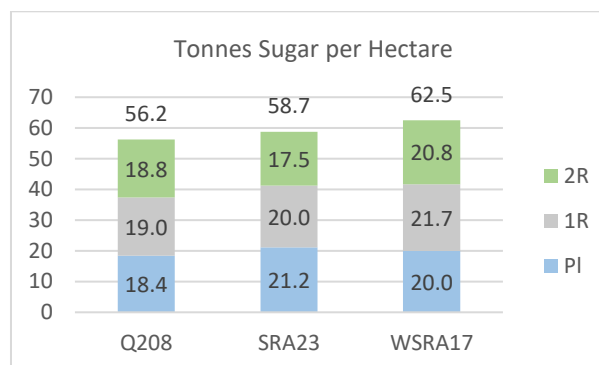
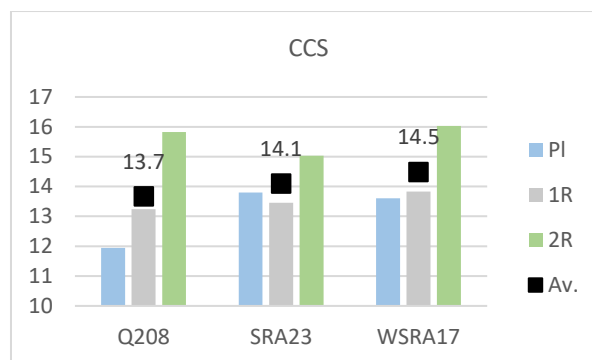
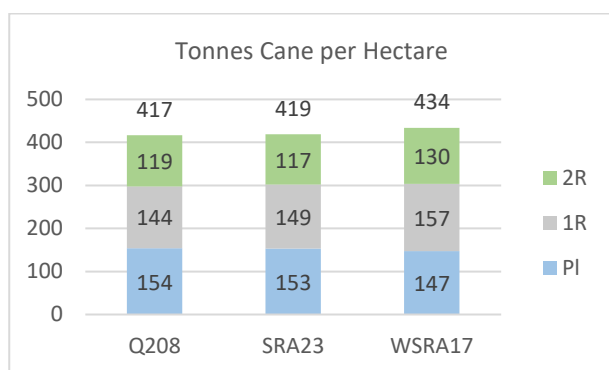
This year WSRA17 was the best performing variety with the highest tonnes of cane, CCS, tonnes of sugar and \$/ha return. Q208 was next for all parameters with SRA23 being the lowest for all.

Variety	TCH	CCS	TSH	Return
Q208	119	15.8	18.8	7279
SRA23	117	15.0	17.5	6612
WSRA17	130	16.0	20.8	8119



Inkerman Cumulative (Plant – 2 Ratoon)

The following graphs show the cumulative results over the 3 crops so far. The pale blue is the plant cane results, 1st ratoon is grey, and 2nd ratoon is green. The numbers above the bar graphs are the totals so far, and the black squares on the CCS graph show the average. WSRA17 has the highest overall tonnes per hectare, average CCS, tonnes of sugar and \$/ha return. The overall tonnes per hectare for Q208 and SRA23 are very similar but in the plant crop Q208 had much lower CCS than the other varieties. This was due to a combination of early season harvest, and delayed harvesting – 2 of the 3 Q208 plots were harvested after being burnt for 4 days.



NEXT GEN GROWER BUS TRIP

PROJECT CATALYST FORUM - 18-20 FEBRUARY 2024

BPS has been successful in accessing funding through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to support Next Gen growers to attend the upcoming Project Catalyst Forum in Mackay next year.

For more information see the attached flyer or contact Jasmine Girgenti on 0438 934 601 or email jgirgenti@bps.net.au

STAFF CONTACTS

Contact	Title	Contact Number	Email
Office		(07) 4783 1101	reception@bps.net.au
Fax		(07) 4783 5327	
210 Old Clare Road, Ayr QLD, 4807 PO Box 237, Ayr QLD, 4807			
Rob Milla	Manager	0490 036 329	rmilla@bps.net.au
Mark Rickards	Commercial Manager	0427 834 800	mrickards@bps.net.au
Marian Davis	Extension Agronomist	0428 927 079	mdavis@bps.net.au
Jasmine Girgenti	Extension Agronomist	0438 934 601	jgirgenti@bps.net.au
Wayne Johnstone	Field Officer – Inkerman	0407 960 057	wjohnstone@bps.net.au
Maddy Molino	Field Officer - Invicta	0407 167 159	mmolino@bps.net.au
Jack Edwards	Field Officer - Pioneer	0439 375 411	jedwards@bps.net.au
Nina Laubscher	Field Officer – Invicta	0427 372 124	nlaubscher@bps.net.au
Kristie Casalegno	Field Officer – Kalamia	0427 167 159	kcasalegno@bps.net.au
Kristine Patti	Extension Agronomist/BMP	0447 069 887	kpatti@bps.net.au