



Grower Update

ISSUE 52 – JUNE 2025

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

This issue contains:

Director Elections
Plots Update
Giru Weighbridge Upgrade
Machinery Inspections
Shed Meeting Summary
Staff Updates
Staff Contacts



DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

The nominations are now completed. Four growers have nominated for the three board positions. Thanks to all the growers who nominated, it is much appreciated by all staff.

The next step in the process is to go to a vote. Ballot papers were emailed to members on May 23, 2025. BPS has engaged a third party organisation (Australian Election Company) to perform the voting process. If BPS has your email address you will receive an email from the Australian Election Company asking to you vote, please keep an eye out for this email in particular if it is in your junk or spam folder. For anyone who doesn't have an email address on file they will receive the voting papers via post.

As shown below the ballot will conclude on the 20th of June 2025, with the term of the directors commencing following the AGM on the 15th of August, 2025.

IMPORTANT DATES

Nominations open on	Monday, 14 April 2025
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Official Rolls close at 4pm on	Friday, 9 May 2025
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Nominations close at 4pm on	Friday, 9 May 2025
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Ballot papers to be emailed by	Monday, 23 May 2025
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Ballot papers returnable by 4pm	Friday, 20 June 2025
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Election counting of votes on	Thursday, 26 June 2025 & Friday, 27 June 2025
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Declaration of election results on	Friday, 4 July 2025
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Elected members term commences	Friday, 15 August 2025
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Indicates completed tasks

PLOTS UPDATE

At long last, planting season is underway. Just a reminder to please make sure to contact your field officer if you would like seed cane and have not placed an order, as well as any other questions or concerns.

Rina Patane (*Invicta Field Officer*) – **0472 702 693**

Maddy Muguira (*Invicta Field Officer*) – **0407 167 159**

Wayne Johnstone (*Inkerman Field Officer*) – **0407 960 057**

Jack Edwards (*Pioneer Field Officer*) – **0439 375 411**

Kristie Casalegno (*Kalamia Field Officer*) – **0427 167 159**

Mother Plots

We have a new variety being planted into mother plots this year, as well as an old variety.

QK14-2492 has been in our Isolation plot system for a few years now and has been released at the RVC this year. It will get its official name soon. We will have a limited supply of this variety in plant cane in 2027.

The same goes for **SRA27**. We have had SRA27 in our Isolation plot in the past, however with the varieties at the time it never made it into the mother plot/distribution plots. We will have a very limited amount available for distribution in 2027.

P&K Plot

It's full steam ahead at the P&K plot and there is plenty of cane for all. The P&K Whitson's plot opened on 28th of April, slightly later than usual due to the wet weather of course. There is still an excess of seed cane that hasn't been ordered for all varieties, excluding Q183 and Q240. There is no set date for closing. We will decide later in the year. If you require any last-minute plants, please give Jack or Kristie a call and they will help anyway they can.



Brock Road, Giru and Millaroo Plots

All plots have been open since the last week of April. The Invicta plots are running low on Q240 and Q183. We still have plenty of supply of the other varieties. Giru Plot is running with a first in best dressed system. Brock Rd and Giru plots will be closed for the next couple weeks as the plots need to be irrigated before the Sunwater shut down. If you have any questions or would like to get some clean cane, please get in contact with Rina or Maddy.

Inkerman Plot

The Inkerman plot has been open since 22nd April. There is minimal to no tonnes left available to order for KQ228 and Q240, with a surplus of available tonnes with the other varieties. The Inkerman plot will close on 12th September. If you have any questions, please contact Wayne.

GIRU WEIGHBRIDGE UPGRADE

Recently the Giru weighbridge had a significant upgrade. The main objective for the upgrade was to widen the existing scales to ensure large transporters can be weighed with more accuracy.

The new scales also had the electrical components upgraded to prevent issues caused by water infiltration. Anyone in the Giru region who is looking for seed cane please contact BPS and come and see the new scales in action.

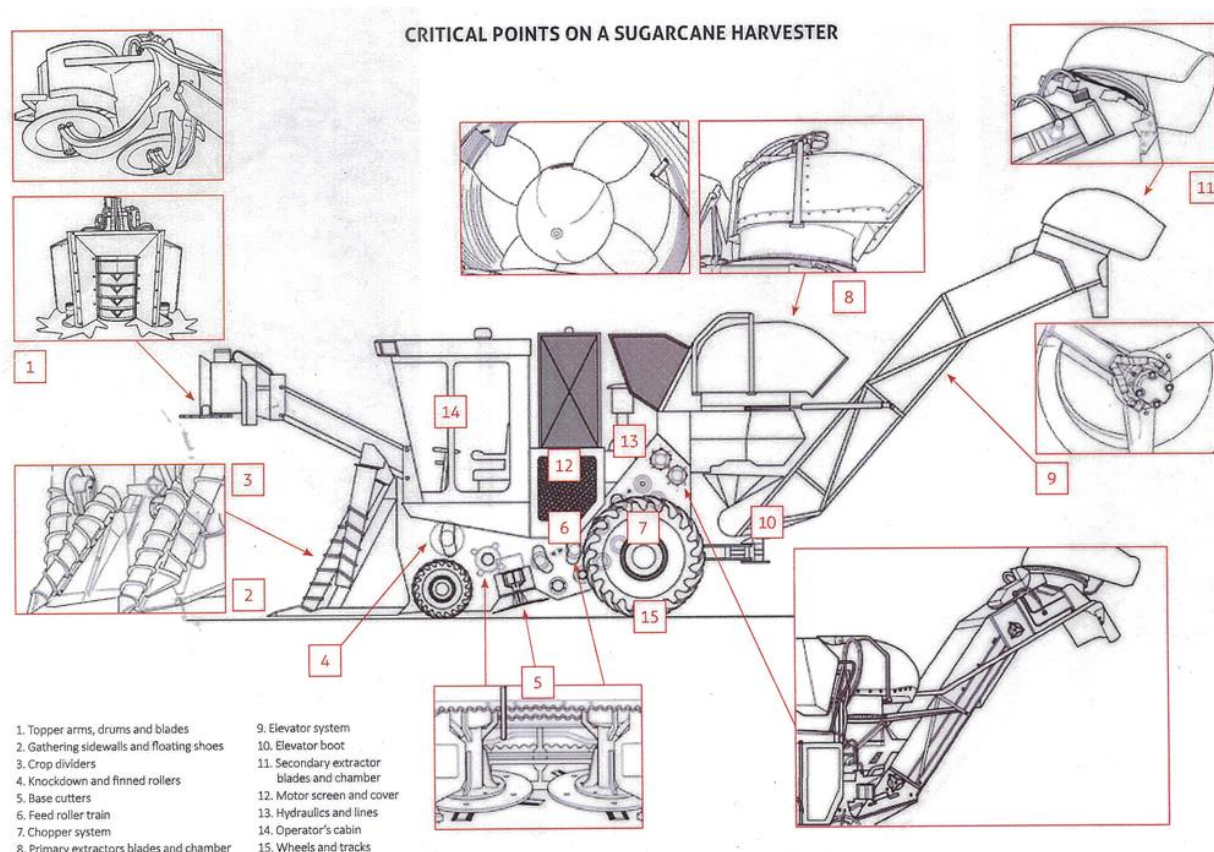


MACHINERY INSPECTIONS

In order to move machinery across sugarcane biosecurity boundaries, the appliance will require a Plant Health Assurance Certificate (PHAC). BPS is the local authority who is responsible for performing this service in the Burdekin region. Sugarcane machinery moving within the same zone does not require a PHAC. The local biosecurity zone runs from approximately the Port of Townsville to just north of Bowen (see map).

In order to meet the requirements and be issued with a PHAC, machinery must be free of visible plant material and soil when inspected. The images below show the different biosecurity zones and the critical areas to be cleaned for harvesters, which are the most difficult appliance to clean.

Please call your Field Officer, the office or anyone else at BPS if you need an item of machinery inspected.



CLEANING A HARVESTER BEFORE TRANSPORT

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Sugar Research
Australia

REGULATION AND MOVING MACHINERY

The regulation around the movement of sugarcane machinery has changed with the implementation of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and *Biosecurity Regulation 2016*. In order to move machinery across sugarcane biosecurity zone boundaries, the appliance will require a Plant Health Assurance Certificate (PHAC) available through the local productivity service or Biosecurity Queensland.

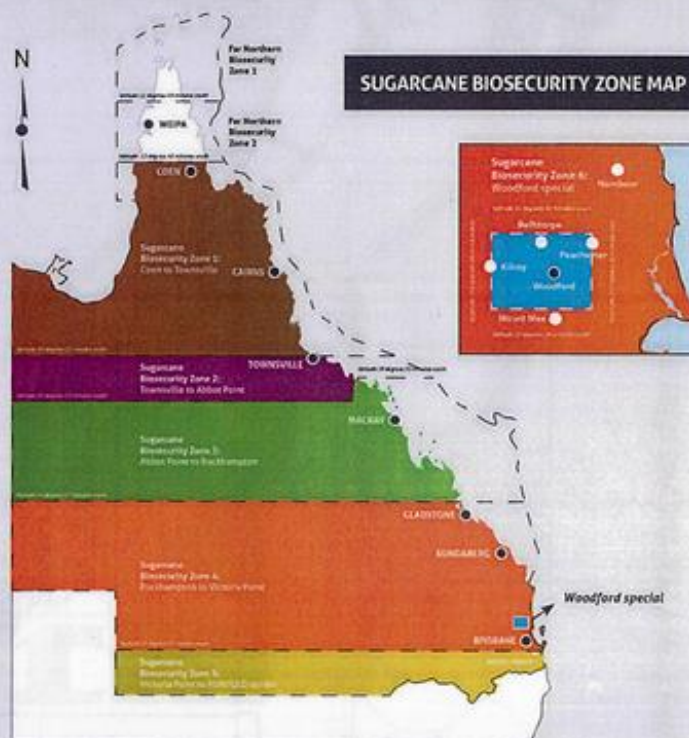
The PHAC states that the machinery was free of visible plant material and soil when inspected, and the PHAC will accompany the appliance during transport.

Movement within sugarcane biosecurity zones does not require a PHAC, but will require the General Biosecurity Obligation (GBO) to be managed. The GBO requires all Queenslanders to take all reasonable steps to prevent or minimise biosecurity risks.

WHERE TO CLEAN

When preparing a harvester for inspection the following areas should be cleaned, as they will be assessed during the PHAC inspection (refer over page for diagram):

1. Topper arms, drums and blades
2. Gathering sidewalls and floating shoes
3. Crop dividers
4. Knockdown and finned rollers
5. Base cutters
6. Feed roller train
7. Chopper system
8. Primary extractors blades and chamber
9. Elevator system
10. Elevator boot
11. Secondary extractor blades and chamber
12. Motor screen and cover
13. Hydraulics and lines
14. Operator's cabin
15. Wheels and tracks



• All appliances (harvesters and other sugarcane machinery) moving between sugarcane biosecurity zones must:
 > be free of cane trash and soil.
 > be inspected by an authorised inspection person who will issue a Plant Health Assurance Certificate (PHAC).
 > be accompanied during transportation by the PHAC.

• Machinery inspections can be arranged by contacting the local productivity service organisation.
 • To move sugarcane plants (stalks, leaves, ported plants, etc) between biosecurity zones contact Biosecurity Queensland (13 25 23).

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Sugar Research
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SHED MEETING SUMMARY

At the most recent round of shed meetings, we had excellent attendance and it was great for BPS and SRA staff to catch up with everyone. Some great discussions were held and the main topics covered included productivity reports from 2024 season, managing standover, variety trial data, imidacloprid and paraquat updates and irrigation management. Some of the key take away messages are summarised below.

Standover Management – key recommendations

- Do not apply additional fertiliser – typically you will not get a return on investment
- Be aware that rats and pigs may be more of a problem than usual, as may canegrubs
- Irrigate as normal (though it is likely that there will be limited requirement given rainfall and dry down)
- Add a week or 2 to normal dry down times
- Harvest early – maybe consider shandying standover cane with “good” cane to minimise CCS impacts if this is possible/practical
- Is MODDUS helpful? – we don’t have enough information to make a recommendation. There is some anecdotal evidence from previous years that responses were achieved (these were mainly delta farms).
- Late plant following harvest – needs to be a block-by-block decision based on previous experience with late plant, soil types, weather conditions and availability of seed cane. Instead of replanting there may be the opportunity for a legume fallow/cash crop
- Ratooning following harvest – don’t fertilise directly behind the harvester (normal recommendation). Assess whether the ratoon will be viable before fertilising. There may be higher than normal levels of harvester damage because of the crop size.

Variety Trials

All data from 2024 variety strip trials was published in the Dec 2024 newsletter. Contact BPS if you would like another copy.

Imidacloprid update

The use of neonicotinoid insecticides, which includes imidacloprid, is under review by the APVMA. SRA is currently investigating and screening a number of different products that are potential replacements for imidacloprid. While this work is commercial in confidence, there have been some promising results with a plan to move to field trials in 2025 (subject to SRA funding and continuing commercial collaboration).

Growers who have blocks that experience grub damage, but have **never** had imidacloprid (either liquid or granular) products applied, and who are willing to participate in a trial should contact Terry Granshaw (SRA) on 0457 650 181.

Paraquat Update

Most growers would be aware that in late 2024 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) handed down their review into paraquat and diquat. The proposed decision was that paraquat and diquat use be severely restricted due to the high acute toxicity of the actives to birds and mammals (including humans). This decision has affected almost all agricultural industries, not just sugarcane.

This decision is now in a consultation phase. SRA, along with the other affected industries, has provided submissions to the APVMA. The key arguments put forward are:

- That removing paraquat and diquat would have a serious economic impact on growers,
- That the alternatives (chemistry and reversion to more cultivation) would have environmental risks,
- That there are issues with the risk assessment model that has been used. An outside agency, the Australasian Epidemiological Association (AEA) has provided data to support this.

Because of the large number of submissions from all industries the APVMA has extended its deadline for the final decision. This is now due in late 2025.

Irrigation Management

Local examples of Burdekin growers who have either improved productivity with the same amount of water applied, or maintained productivity with a significant reduction in water (and power costs!) were presented. These examples are better described in person rather than a newsletter as they take some time and diagrams to explain the context. Contact Terry Granshaw or Rob Milla if you would like more information on local demonstrations and data.

The basic concept of irrigation management was covered, which is all about matching:

- Volume of water applied per irrigation
- Volume of water soil can hold
- Volume of water used by the crop in the last period

Think of your soil like a bucket. Every soil type—whether it's sandy, loamy, or clay—can hold a certain amount of water before it starts to overflow or run off. This is called the soil's *water holding capacity*. Sandy soils hold less water (like a small bucket), while clay soils hold more (like a big bucket).

If we do not refill the bucket soon enough (or not irrigate with enough volume), then your crop may go into stress – which will lead to a drop in yield that can't be recovered back again. In peak times, sugarcane uses around 8mm of moisture per day. This means after 7 days, almost 60mm of soil moisture will be depleted.

To get a very good understanding of how much water your crop in each of your blocks is using at any time, contact any BPS staff member to be set up on IrrigWeb – our online scheduling and record keeping tool free to BPS members.

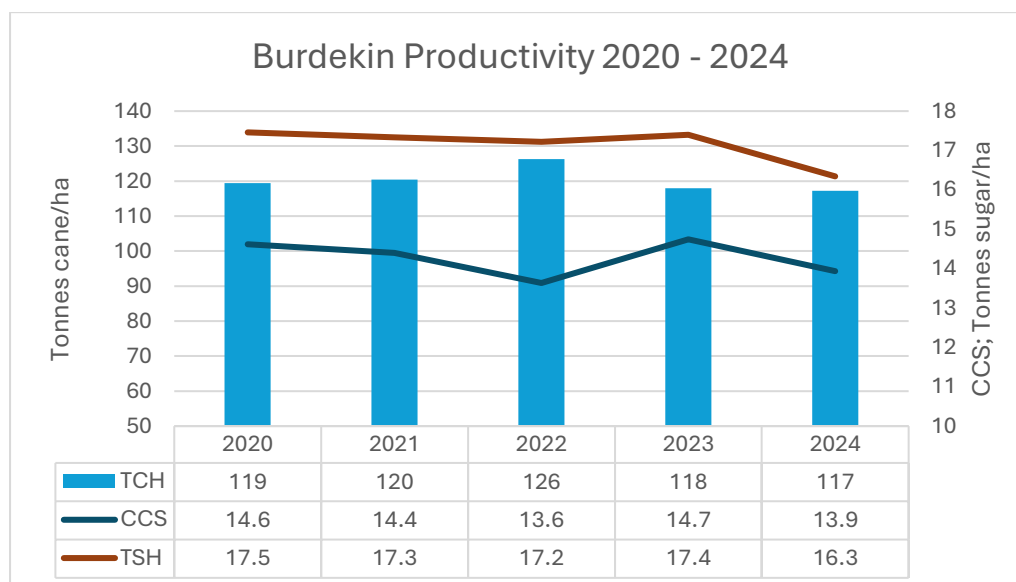
2024 Productivity Results

Productivity data from the 2024 season was presented at the shed meetings held in March. If you would like a copy of any of the productivity reports please contact any of the BPS staff.

Yield Data

In 2024, the average cane yield was 117 t/ha, average CCS was 13.94, and the average sugar yield was 16.3 t/ha.

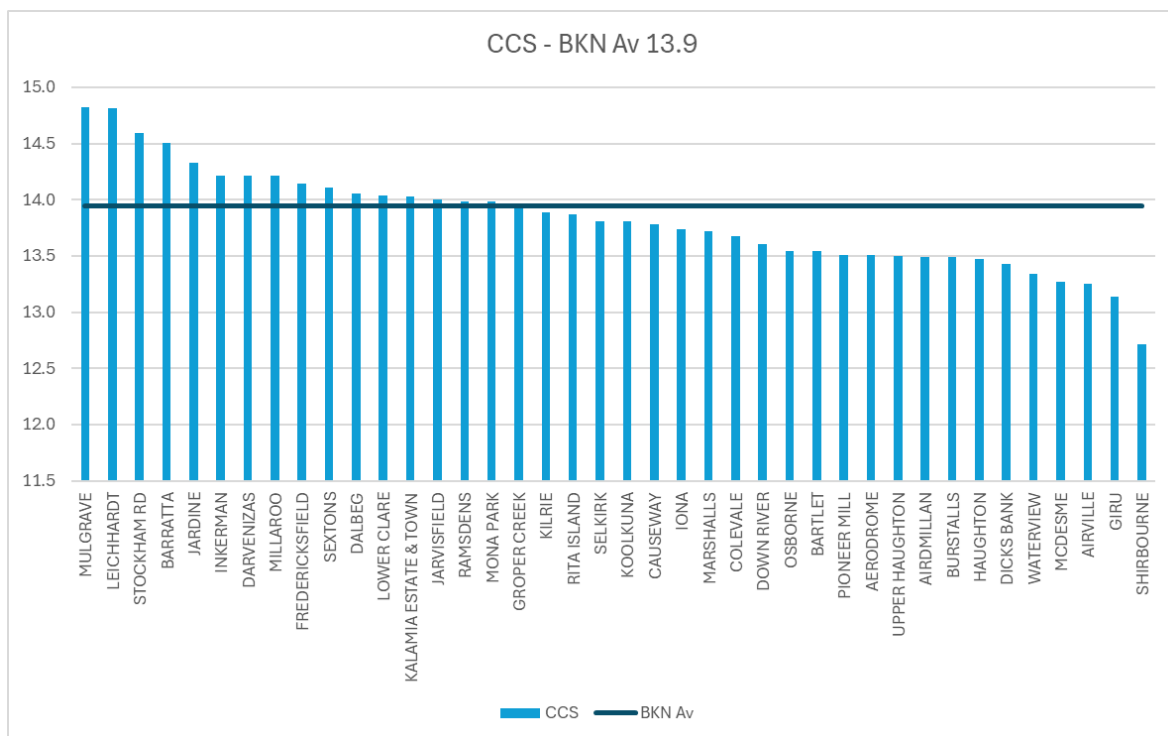
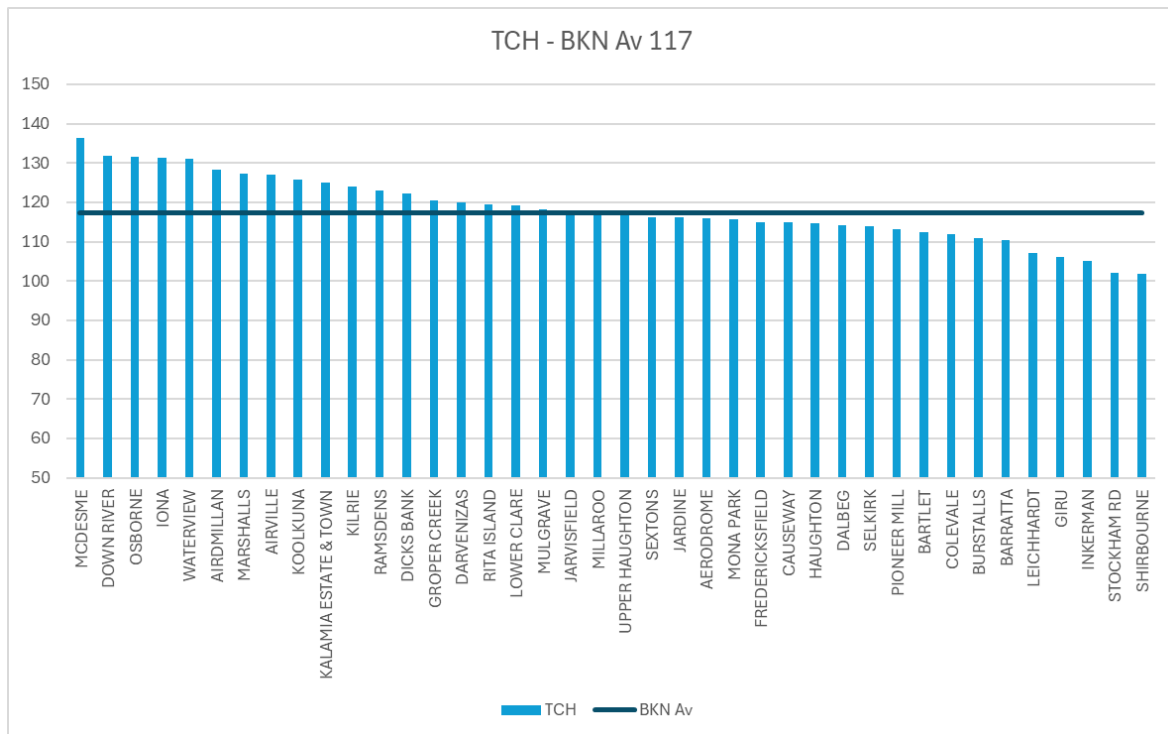
Cane yield was very similar to 2023, but CCS was almost a unit lower. This resulted in a tonne less sugar per hectare when compared to 2023.



The group with the highest average cane yield in 2024 was McDesme with 136 t/ha. It was followed by Down River at 132 t/ha and 3 groups – Osborne, Iona and Waterview all averaged 131 t/ha. The lowest yielding groups were Stockham Road and Shirbourne with 102 t/ha.

The groups with the best CCS were Mulgrave and Leichhardt with 14.8, closely followed by Stockham Road at 14.6. The lowest CCS was recorded at Shirbourne at 12.7 and Giru at 13.1. The late season finish and very heavy rainfall in these areas will have played a part in the CCS depression.

McDesme had the highest sugar yield with 18.1 t/ha; the lowest was Shirbourne with 12.9 t/ha.



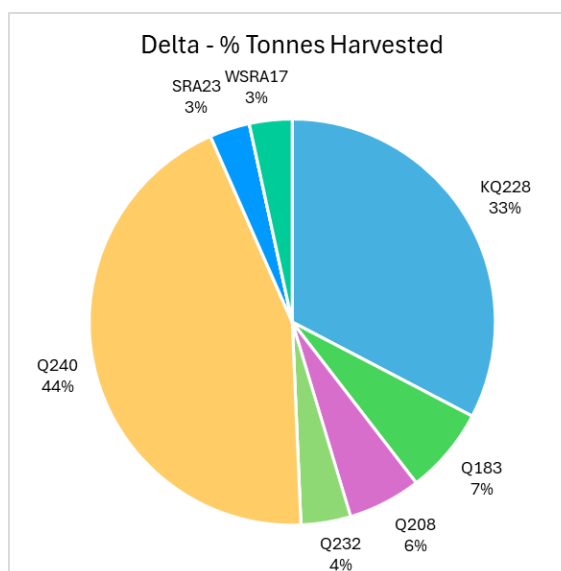
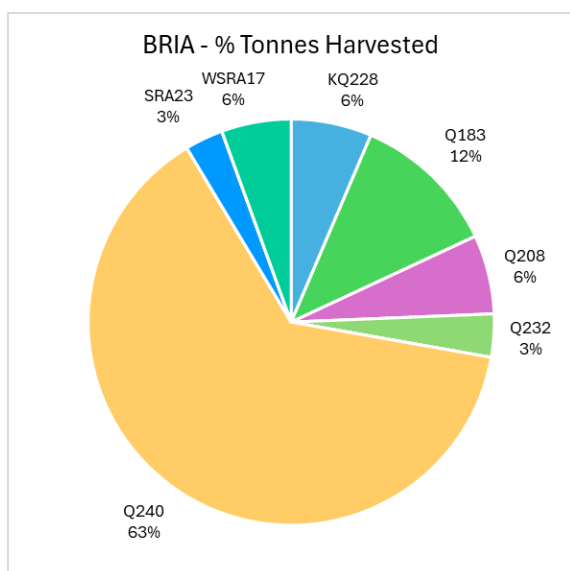
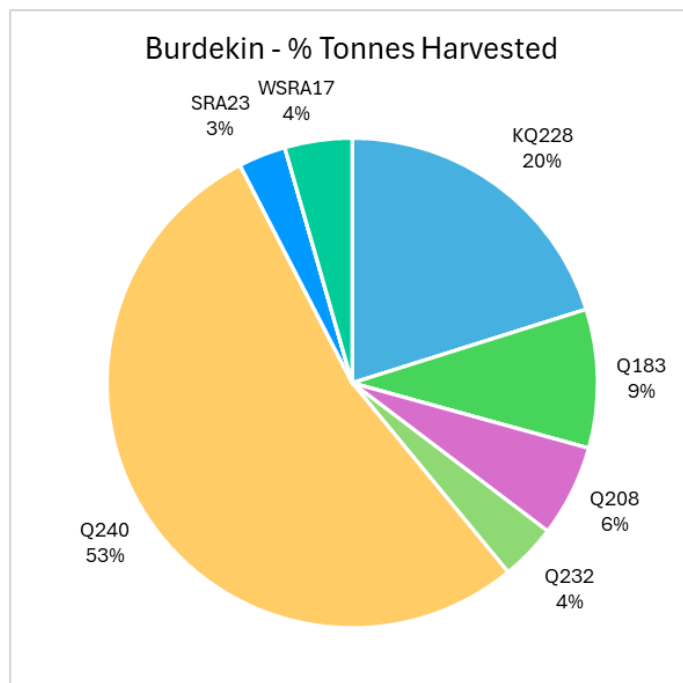
Variety Distribution

There was plenty of discussion around variety performance by productivity group and soil type. If you would like your group report, please contact any BPS staff member and we can supply this information for you.

Across the Burdekin, Q240 is the most dominant variety. In 2024, 53% of all the tonnes delivered were Q240. KQ228 was the next most common at 20%.

Looking at the BRIA alone, Q240 comprised 63% of all tonnes delivered. The second most common variety was Q183 at 12%. While the popularity of Q240 is understandable, from a risk management perspective having this much of the area to a single variety is concerning.

The variety spread in the Delta, while still dominated by Q240, is balanced somewhat by 33% KQ228.



STAFF UPDATES

Anna Greenland – Trainee Extension Agronomist

Anna has been taken on as a trainee extension agronomist after completing her bachelor degree in agriculture at the University of New England. Having grown up in Cairns Anna is excited to be back up north and getting involved in the cane industry. Having had previous experience working on broad acre and cotton farms she is eager to assist growers in all aspects of farming. Anna's position is funded under the QFF graduate program



Congratulations to Maddy! Maddy and Matthew Muguira celebrated their wedding on 31st June. BPS wish them all the best for many happy years ahead!

STAFF CONTACTS

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