



ISSUE 12 – AUGUST 2013



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CHANGE OF THE GUARD

This year when nominations opened for the 3 grower director positions on the board, I was advised by Paul Villis and long time board member and chairman, Paul Sgarbossa that they would not be seeking re-election. Paul Villis has served for two terms (6yrs) and helped deliver and shape the current strategic plan for BPS. His contribution in board meetings has been invaluable in making the tough decisions that have in some cases needed to be made.

Paul Sgarbossa has served on various industry bodies that are involved in the sugar industry. Here is a small snapshot of things he has been involved in:

- 9yrs as a director of BPS (all as chairman).
- Instrumental part of BPS formation following removal of statutory boards.
- 14yrs with Inkerman Cane Protection and Productivity Board and former Inkerman Cane Pest & Disease Control Board.
- Heavily involved in assisting research into Greyback cane grub control methods and subsequent release of Suscon Blue.
- Involved with Suscon Blue product improvements which led to the sulphur coating of the granular
- Role in assisting with identification of causal organisms of Striate Mosaic
- Held positions on other industry boards, Inkerman Mill Suppliers Committee, BSES.
- Fostered better collaboration with other Productivity Services and strongly advocated the Burdekin seedcane distribution system to other areas

"Both retiring directors are thanked for their contributions to BPS, and the new directors are welcomed into the fold to continue building on and delivering the services BPS offers."

Both directors are supportive of emerging technologies and the need to continue to look for new ways of doing things.

BPS thanks both retiring directors for their contributions and the new directors are welcomed into the fold to continue building on and delivering the services BPS offers.

The newly elected directors Bryce Davies and Peter McDonnell are no strangers to the productivity services industry and I am sure will continue delivering decisions that improve and build on the great range of services we currently provide to members. I will profile each of the new directors in the next edition, otherwise they will be in attendance at the BPS AGM on 27th August following their official appointment.

Plot News

BPS Staff commenced planting the Mother/Distribution Plots at Home Hill in late May. The Home Hill distribution plots have now been completed after the late plant blocks were planted in July. The early planting is looking good. Planting commenced at P&K farm Mother Plot on 22nd July and the distribution plots were planted immediately following this. In the Invicta area, Lyon's plot in Giru was completed on 17th July and Rapisarda's plot finished on 23rd July. We anticipate all Mother/Distribution plots will be planted by 20th August.

More area has been dedicated to the new varieties with less area of Q200, Q238 and Q247 being planted. With more new varieties becoming available next year, BPS may delete Q200, Q238 & Q247 from their plots. If any growers want to plant an approved variety on their farm BPS will Hot Water Treat a crate if the variety is not available on our plots. Please see your BPS Field Officer to request HWT of an approved variety.

Pest & Diseases News

RATS

There continues to be rat damage to cane in some areas, with the majority of areas reported being near, or adjacent to riparian zones. It is however, of great concern that there are some isolated areas of damage which are bordered by existing cane lands. The rat population can readily explode if protein is available, so maintaining weed free areas will greatly reduce the rat population.

The photos below show some of the damage that is occurring



Matured cane on P & K Plot



Burn't Cane damage

PIGS

BPS has again allocated \$10 000 in the budget to assist productivity groups with incentives to carry out aerial shooting of pigs. If the 2013 year remains dry, pigs will start migrating into cane fields for food once their food and water sources from other areas diminish. With the crushing season due to finish early and the weather remaining dry, good numbers of pigs should be destroyed with aerial shooting in the next few months. The Burdekin Shire Council (BSC) still provides 1080 baiting free of charge. Any growers wanting to conduct 1080 baiting please contact Jody Clouten (47839865) at BSC or any of the BPS Field Officers so it can be arranged.

BPS funding is available to productivity groups that shoot only, not to individual growers. The funding covers some of the cost of aerial shooting up to a maximum of \$500 per productivity group per year

YELLOW CANOPY SYNDROME (YCS)

To Date

- \$1 million secured to conduct research into YCS;
- project team formed and research started;
- a greenhouse trial established to determine whether YCS transmission occurs via planting material is showing no YCS symptoms after 10 weeks;
- linear bugs are unlikely to be a cause of YCS;
- Sugar Cane Yellow Leaf Virus ruled out as a cause of YCS;
- Phytoplasma ruled out as a cause of YCS.

"A range of molecular diagnostic tests have been carried out on leaf material taken from fields showing YCS symptoms."

BPS is participating in the SRDC/SRA/DAFF funded project, which is being run as a collaborative venture involving several key industry players and organisations contributing ongoing expertise and input. The project is being led by Davey Olsen, Research Agronomist – SRA, who is based here in the Burdekin at the SRA facility on the other side of Brandon. The project commenced, with the first phase being the identification of 180 monitoring sites within the Herbert and Burdekin districts. To date approximately three quarters of the sites have been identified, with the remaining to be identified from late harvest blocks. The 90 sites within each district will be GPS mapped and monitored regularly to track the development of the symptoms of YCS in two successive crops (plant crop and first ratoon, or a first and second ratoon) and the valuable information collected will be used by the SRA researchers during this critical assessment stage. BPS field staff are working closely with Davey Olsen in establishing these 90 sites across our district. Sites will be monitored closely for information on, number of leaves; severity of YCS in leaves; leaf analysis; soil analysis; variety; no. of ratoons & vigour of ratoons; distribution of YCS symptoms within the block.

A range of molecular diagnostic tests have been carried out on leaf material taken from fields showing YCS symptoms. These tests have conclusively dismissed Sugar Cane Yellow Leaf Virus and other phytoplasma as causes of YCS according to Dr Kathy Braithwaite (SRA, Indooroopilly).

As BPS staff traverse the district they will be looking out for any new blocks with YCS. Later in the year when BPS conducts another round of shed meetings Davey Olsen will be invited to attend some meetings and give growers an update. This will allow growers to ask questions and raise any concerns they may have. BPS will continue to update growers on the progress of the project. In the meantime if growers have any concerns please contact any BPS staff member.

NEW VARIETIES AT MOTHER PLOTS

Sample Crushed 10/07/2013

Variety	Plot	CCS
Q240	P&K	15.2
Q238	P&K	13.9
Q247	P&K	13.6
Q208	P&K	15.2
KQ228	P&K	15.1
Q253	P&K	14.9
Q252	P&K	15.1
Q200	P&K	14.9
Q183	P&K	13.3
Q252	Duncans	14.8
Q253	Duncans	14.3
Q232	Duncans	14.7

CCS formulae has 2 points taken off for small mill factor.

As a matter of interest BPS sampled 6 sticks of cane of each variety and had it analysed at the small mill at Kalamia. The purpose was to see if the new varieties indicated early sugar. Not much can be taken from these results, only to say Q238 and Q247 are ordinary.

Red witchweed - situation update

Biosecurity Queensland has placed movement restrictions on four out of the five properties in the Mackay area that originally reported red witchweed. This includes the initial affected property.

Biosecurity Queensland is now extending the surveillance area to check properties further out to see if the weed has spread.

Surveillance further afield has been based on potential high risk pathways for the weed to spread, such as the movement of machinery.

To date, Biosecurity Queensland has not found any weed outside of these properties but this work is continuing.

Biosecurity Queensland will continue to work with the owners and industry to ensure there is some business continuity.

Properties placed under movement restrictions cannot move equipment, soil or plant material on or off an affected property without approval from Biosecurity Queensland.

Identifying red witchweed

- Grows 20-40 cm tall. Attached to roots of its host.
- Leaves are arranged in opposite pairs along the stem. Leaves are 6-40 mm long and 1-4 mm wide and have a tapered pointed tip.
- Flowers are 5-20 mm long.
- Seeds are very small and remain viable in the soil for up to 15 years.



YELLOW LEAF SYNDROME (YLS) - *Different to Yellow Canopy Syndrome*

Be alert but not alarmed is the message:

- Caused by a virus.
- Main symptoms – a strong yellowing of the mid-rib.
- Symptoms are expressed when the crop is stressed.
- "Handbook of Diseases of Australian Sugarcane" by Dr Rob Magarey has YLS classified as a minor disease.

Early in July BPS staff noticed some varieties of cane had a yellowing of the mid-rib. KQ228 appears to be the most affected so far and BPS staff have surveyed the plots finding YLS is present in a few varieties. Leaf samples were collected and sent to the laboratory for verification. Rob Magarey was contacted for verification and to share any information on YLS. His message was "be alert but not alarmed". Rob also indicated that the majority of KQ228 in Tully is showing YLS. Yellow Leaf Syndrome is a minor leaf disease and should have only a small effect on CCS. Ray Hildebrandt (Senior Field Officer) states that YLS was in the Burdekin 20 years ago in Q117. Transmission is by vegetative propagation and by two aphid species. Sugar cane is the only known host of YLS. The virus has not been transmitted to sweet corn, sorghum or Johnson grass.

NOTE:

YLS is a known & identified disease with minor yield & CCs effects. YCS is still being investigated. It is important to know the difference between these two similarly named conditions. Refer to the photos below. YLS tends to be seen in mature cane. The photo of YLS is leaves of cane sourced from the P & K plot. The photo of YCS is from the Brock road plot in Clare.

If producers suspect they have Red Witchweed they must report the weed immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23



Y
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S



YCS

Other Items

GYPSUM TRIAL

The gypsum trial being conducted by BPS that commenced last year will finish in the Delta this year, and in the BRIA next year. The results are quite interesting and when released will be of great advantage to growers. It is anticipated that the information will be released at shed meetings later in the year. BPS would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Rob Dwyer (Agronomist) from Incitec Pivot for his invaluable input over the course of the trial. Rob will be attend the shed meetings and will also present the latest data on the Entec trials. For growers who are not aware, Entec is a Incitec Pivot product that is a slow release Nitrogen fertiliser. BPS is also conducting a trial with this product.

Variety Trial Update

To date, three variety demonstration trials have been planted across the district on the 3 major soil groupings – sand, clay/loam and clay. The varieties being compared at most of the sites are Q183, Q208, Q240, Q247, Q252 and Q253 (Q253 available next year). These are replicated strips in commercial paddocks 4 rows wide down the full length of the paddock. Emergence was good on all sites, and it was very noticeable the Q247 was the slowest variety to emerge. Q252 was the next slowest to emerge, and is the shortest of the varieties at all sites. Shoot counts are being conducted at the sites to keep track of plant populations over time and initial counts at 16 weeks of age are showing little difference between varieties. The table below is an example of number of shoots per metre from the sandy site in Jarvisfield and clay loam in Selkirk. Keep in mind variations in this early stage has no bearing on what the final yield and CCS may be for any of the varieties.

Average shoots/m	Q183	Q240	Q252	Q253
Jarvisfield	24	24	26	25
Selkirk	31	28	26	26

If growers are interested in viewing any of the demonstrations, please contact Rob Milla. Towards the end of the year, field walks will be organised at these sites.





Annual General Meeting

The board and management of BPS cordially invite all financial members to join them at the AGM on Tuesday the 27th August 2013 at the Delta Cinemas commencing at 7.30pm.

This year the guest speaker John Hughes—Senior Agronomist (DAFF) who will give a presentation on “Managing Soil Variability within a paddock”. Other industry representatives also attending include QSL, NQ Dry Tropics, Ravensdown Fertilisers, Impact Fertilisers, Incitec Pivot, Wilmar BioEthanol, along with all local Canegrower Collectives.

Light Refreshments and Drinks will follow



Staff Contacts

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Upcoming Events

BPS AGM

27th August 2013

Burdekin Delta Cinemas

CBL Members Information Meeting

29th August 2013

CBL Hall – Home Hill

If you would like any further information or like to list an important grower event then please contact Lance or Margaret to have it added