Bone dry

Weather records for Broadwater mill show that January 2019 was about the 3rd driest since the late 1880's. At Condong and Harwood it was the driest ever recorded.

It's plain to see how the crop is suffering. Ratoons are doing it the toughest. Plant cane seems to be holding on. The recent rain from cyclone Oma was welcome, here's hoping we get some follow up?

An update on SRA activities

This is a short summary from Sebastien on SRA’s adoption activities since mid-last year. The purpose of the SRA Industry Adoption Strategy is to support the growth of the sugar industry through application of technology and practices that lead to an increasing cane supply. Each region formed working groups to discuss and develop their own plans. In our case the NSW Ag Advisory Committee and Rocky Point Canegrowers/mill reps got together to form an advisory committee.

The group identified what the research and practice improvement needs were, and the most effective means of doing it.

Each regional group also nominated two people to represent...
the region on the industry wide adoption committee. This industry committee will co-ordinate the plans and try to obtain funding to commission new projects. Wayne Rodgers and Rick Beattie will represent NSW on this committee. Sebastien Garcia-Cuenca will look after the admin and engage with the existing groups. Since July 2018 Sebastien prepared a discussion paper and the committee has agreed on 3 top priorities, improved farming systems, nutrient management and better cane varieties. The next step has been to develop the plans to go to the industry advisory committee. This group meets in March so by July some projects on farming systems, nutrients and varieties should commence.

In parallel to the above, SRA has been co-funding and delivering with Ag Services regional projects that include:

- A nematode survey on 45 farms where 15 blocks per mill area have been sampled and analysed to assess the distribution and potential impact of nematode species in different soil types. The results of these will be discussed at the shed meetings.

- A winter fallow demonstration trial at the Sunshine Sugar corporate farm to trial different winter and multispecies crops. These results will also be discussed at the shed meetings.

- Eight harvesting trials between NSW and Rocky Point were conducted to provide practical insight and economic data on harvesting practices; Results have been presented to the participating groups and an overall summary will be presented at the Info Day on 26 March.

Please contact Sebastien Garcia-Cuenca on 0421 349 995 or s.garcia-cuenca@sugarresearch.com.au with any queries, comments or if you require more details on any of the above topics.

---

**Bonsucro audit**

The annual audit will take place during late May. We’ll notify the lucky winners as soon as we can.

It’s a requirement of certification that 6 farms are audited each year.

It really isn’t that hard. We will work through the process with you and prepare most of the information.

**EHS choppers**

The SRA results of testing the EHS choppers with the Lower Richmond and Woodburn groups last season were impressive. Less loss, more sugar per hectare. All positives for farmers, the harvesting co-op and the mill.

Chris’s letter explains the subsidy arrangements that are being offered for the EHS choppers. This makes good sense given the crop size this year. There’s no point in growing it then losing it at the last minute.

If you’d like any more information on the trials please call.

**Sugar conference**

Ag Services has funds to help support farmers to go to the sugar conference in Toowoomba which is on 30 April to 3 May 2019.

If you are interested please contact Sebastien, 0421 349995

---

Rick Beattie 0418 162964  
Tom Lock 0439 283404