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Tonia Sanderson AFP®

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Fax: 07 4783 7107

Email: admin@grassofinancialservices.com.au

146 Queen Street, AYR QLD 4807

PO Box 1425, AYR QLD 4807

Kalamia Sweet Notes

Designed and printed by:
Lotsa - Print & Signage
Phone: 4775 1981

KCGOL acknowledges and
thanks all contributors.

Firstly I would like to say to you that Kalamia and BDCG Boards are disturbed by the impact on growers businesses of QSL's funding of Cane Pay and Wilmar's position on resolution of the 2017 contract arrangements.

Letters were sent by both Kalamia and BDCG to QSL expressing concern at the way the reduction in Pool Valuation was managed with the reduction in January payment, and suggesting a way to restructure the payment program. It is of great disappointment that these letters have not been acknowledged let alone replied to.

Similarly whilst Wilmar are indicating

Letters were sent by both Kalamia and BDCG to QSL expressing concern at the way the reduction in Pool Valuation was managed with the reduction in January payment, and suggesting a way to restructure the payment program.

they are working towards a resolution but are yet to have full understanding of the implications of the Growers Choice and how to cover those in the drafting of agreements, the continued absence to opportunity forward price in the current strengthening futures market is of great concern to Kalamia and BDCG.

Both Kalamia and BDCG continue to give these matters their full attention and are striving to sort these matters out as soon as is possible.

This is the 5th edition I have contributed to since arriving at Kalamia and in the last month I have had the opportunity to be a little more involved in the matters of growing cane successfully and understanding a bit more about optimising practices that lead to a better gross margin. Optimal is often different from maximum because it balances a range of considerations. You

look for it in your selection of cane variety to plant, balancing cane growth potential, N demand, sugar content, disease resistance, ratooning ability etc invariably finding that the maximums in each attribute are never all found in the one plant. The research seminars and shed meetings I have been to have talked much of varietal attributes and production responses to types of fertilisers and rates of application, and to watering rates and intervals. It has been interesting to hear adoptions of novel technologies in trying to understand or manage practices on farm. The appreciation of time saving and personal needs for time in non-work

activity has been highlighted by the time demands of watering in this drought season and the trial of telemetry systems and ancillary devices to automate watering and remotely manage watering has potential for a breakthrough in this challenge. Similarly, the use of drones to get high above a crop and feed pictures of how the whole crop is doing can identify if there are patches of a paddock that might need different management to yield better.

But there are also non growing aspects of production that need attention.

There has been quite a lot of coverage of extraneous material (EM) being harvested and the cost to growers of paying for harvest of non-yielding material. Not only does this material account for about 8% of what goes into the bin but up to 50% of this is tops. The other potential impact of extraneous material is that it effectively



reduces mill production capacity and with the Burdekin mills not having a lot of capacity headroom left that is an issue if cane production increases.

Also the harvesting process can improve and reduce costs and improve returns. Blakey base cutters seem to have the potential to reduce soil (EM) by 18% if set up properly, but additionally in harvest, mutilated billets, which account for 5 – 20% of all billets are a source of sugar loss and loss of \$, and the selection of billet length has impact on this too, because it seems clear that the more cuts in any length of cane the less sugar is extracted from that cane.

I guess like in the cane itself, the optimum is never a case of the maximum of all traits in one plant, and the best gain in gross margin will come from looking at all these things. And of course the most important thing for a good result from the crop is a decent rain which has come at last.

And just a reminder Kalamia is in an election year. Nominations close at 5pm on Tuesday 29th March, and voting, if required, will place over the 5th – 22nd April.

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Pool prices and your Advances

By Bryce Wenham, QSL Finance Manager – Supplier Relations

QSL's Advance Payment system is designed to provide cash flow to Queensland cane growers both in and out of the harvest season by paying supplying millers in regular instalments throughout the entire year. Millers then pass these payments on to their growers through agreed local payment arrangements.

Advance Payments take their name from the fact that QSL pays its supplying millers in advance of receiving revenue from customers for raw sugar sales. For example, sugar produced in August may not be delivered to customers and subsequently paid for until the following February. However QSL borrows funds in order to pay the miller in August, and subsequently carries that debt until the customer eventually pays for the sugar upon receipt of the shipment in February.

POOL VALUES AND 'MARK TO MARKET'

QSL pays the first Advance Payment instalment to millers when raw sugar is delivered to a bulk sugar terminal. Due to our funding arrangements, this initial payment is subject to an upper limit of 60 per cent of QSL's weighted average forecast final price for all pools, and is usually paid on a Wednesday for all deliveries up to midnight of the preceding Sunday. Top-up payments are then usually made at monthly intervals based on the results of the prior month. For example, this month's March payment will be based on pool and individual pricing results as of the last day of February.

Because pricing of QSL's pools continues until the season finishes in June each year, a portion of each pool usually remains to be sold until the final months of the season in May and June. The indicative pool results used to determine advance payments are therefore a combination of the actual pricing that has been secured, and an estimate of the value of pricing that remains to be undertaken in the pool concerned.

For example, at the end of January 2016 the 2015 QSL Harvest Pool was approximately 78% priced, which means there was still 22% of the pool to be locked in to pricing. When this pricing

is undertaken depends on a combination of the pricing guidelines for the pool and when physical sugar sales have been secured (i.e. sales and pricing must be aligned to the relevant ICE 11 contract. You can't price against October if you not physically selling that sugar until June). Until 100% of a pool's pricing is complete and the final Shared Pool result secured and applied to all pools, the final result of each pool is unknown. But in order to value the pool for Advance payments, QSL must make an estimate.

To achieve an indicative value for each QSL pool, the pricing that has not been undertaken is valued at what is known as a mark to market. This means that if 22% of the pool is yet to be priced, this portion of the pool valued at whatever the spot sugar price is on an assigned day, usually the final day of the month prior to payment. If the market improves, there is a possibility the pricing yet to be undertaken will actually be done at a higher rate, increasing the indicative pool price and its subsequent final result. However, if ICE 11 prices are falling, the pool values can reduce further as the actual pricing achieved may be lower than the mark-to-market estimate. In short, the pool price is variable until the end of the season and all pool marketing and pricing activities are completed. But we need to draw a line in the sand in order to come to a value to base the Advances on - hence the use of "mark to market".

CURRENT MARKET IMPACT ON ADVANCES

During recent months the ICE 11 market has experienced considerable volatility, despite a generally optimistic view that the world is moving towards a more balanced raw sugar production/consumption dynamic and improved prices. As three months remain in the 2015-Season, QSL still has sugar to price and so the mark-to-market values used to determine QSL's indicative pool prices have reflected lower ICE 11 prices. This is why QSL's 2015 Indicative Pool Prices in December, January and February had reduced in recent months and Advance payments based on these also decreased accordingly. Growers conducting individual grower pricing will have also noticed



Bryce Wenham

that the Advance rates based on their pricing may also have fallen, as many growers have avoided pricing at those lower prices. However, QSL expects the recent strengthening of the ICE 11 will be reflected in the next few Advance payments.

It is important to understand that while QSL has the ability to and does adjust Advance rates to try and maintain cash flow to growers, to increase the payment rate in a falling price environment increases the risk of potential overpayment. This issue is just one of the factors the QSL Board takes into account when it reviews the indicative Advances rates each month. Other considerations when determining the Advance rate include:

- » QSL's expected cash flow from shipments of raw sugar to customers
- » The expected rates of deliveries from Suppliers to bulk sugar terminals
- » The margin calls QSL may need to pay on forward pricing; and
- » QSL's available borrowing facilities

While QSL aims to provide as much payment as possible as early as possible, it must also manage the risk that growers are not overpaid based on an indicative Advances rate that leaves no room for adjustment, particularly in a falling market.

For full details of how much remains to be priced in each QSL Pool and an estimate of how future movements in the ICE 11 and our exchange rate could change the final value of each pool, just click on the pool prices on the QSL homepage (www.qsl.com.au) to be redirected to a detailed matrix for each pool.

Wilmar Sugar Update



Dear Grower

Rain received since my last update has further boosted crop prospects for the rapidly approaching 2016 crushing season. The Proserpine and Plane Creek regions have received good falls in recent weeks and the respective crops are responding well.

While parts of the Herbert region have also recorded useful rain during the same period, other areas, such as around Stone River, remain uncharacteristically dry for this time of year. However, this situation may change in the coming days, with heavy rain forecast between Cairns and Townsville due to the remnants of ex-Tropical Cyclone Winston. Rain received in the past 24 hours fell predominantly in coastal areas but is expected to move further west today and tomorrow.

Significant rain in the Burdekin Dam catchment last month saw levels jump from about 40 per cent capacity to about 90 per cent within a few weeks. The dam is currently at 88 per cent capacity, which has alleviated immediate concerns about water allocations for irrigation.

Unfortunately, most parts of the Burdekin Shire are still waiting for good rainfall and the underground water supply is very depleted. This is contributing to some growers' reluctance to commence planting for next year.

Progress on the mills' capital projects is increasingly visible, as the installation of new equipment continues. All mills are aiming to have their season preparations finalised by early June.

More than \$6.3 million is being spent on the Herbert region's top five capital projects. Among the largest is the manufacture of 90 new cane bins, at a cost of \$1.5 million. The project marks the return of double-axel bogey bins to the Herbert. The chassis and frames (pictured below) are being manufactured at Kalamia Mill's bin shop and then sent to Townsville for galvanising.

All of the chassis and bogies have now been manufactured, with some galvanising still under way. The bins will be assembled at our Herbert workshop after Easter.

In the Burdekin, parts of Invicta's new



number five pan have been installed, as well as several new components for other pans. Pioneer Mill's high-grade fugal replacement is also progressing well and the installation of Inkerman's new stack has commenced (pictured below with the new dust collectors and ducting). The replacement of Kalamia's bagasse reclaimers is also tracking to schedule.

Proserpine Mill's new number seven turbine and generator are both expected to be installed later this month. Meanwhile, the overhaul of Plane Creek Mill's number four turbine alternator and rebuild of the boiler one grate are both progressing well.

Discussions about potential season start dates will commence after we have a firmer view of crop estimates for each region. Based on current assessments, most crops should be similar to or slightly larger than last year.

Best regards John Pratt

Executive General Manager – North Qld



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Wilmar Sugar Update

Industry news

APPRENTICE INTAKE BOOSTS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Wilmar Sugar has reaffirmed its commitment to youth employment, with 28 new apprentices starting work this month.

The new recruits join about 120 apprentices already undertaking trade training at Wilmar Sugar's eight sugar mills.

The new starters include budding electricians, fitters, boilermakers and diesel fitters.

With high youth unemployment across North and Central Queensland, this year's apprenticeships were hotly contested. More than 660 applications were received for the positions.

Of the group, 13 are based at Burdekin mills, seven are in the Herbert, four at Proserpine Mill, two at Plane Creek Mill and two at the Sarina Distillery.

Wilmar Sugar is also offering two boiler operator traineeships for the first time this year - one based at the Herbert mills and the other in the Burdekin.

The new apprentices commenced employment on 1 February, undertaking a three-week Safe Start Program to introduce

them to safe workplace behaviours.

Former Australian Test and Queensland Origin representative player Brent Tate was invited to talk to the group to reinforce the importance of making good decisions and always putting safety first, whether at work or at home.

The apprentices started work at their respective mills last week.

BURDEKIN RESTRUCTURE IN PLACE

The Burdekin restructure announced late last year is now in place. The change sees a stronger regional focus within the areas of Production and Engineering.

Paul Turnbull is the Burdekin Regional Operations Manager.

Directly reporting to Paul are the production superintendents for each site: Brett Kuskopf (Invicta); Doug Sockhill (Pioneer); Brendan Rich (Kalamia); Glen Griggs (Inkerman). Colin McLean is the Regional Production Improvement Technologist.

The Regional Work Execution Manager also reports directly to Paul. Robert Borg has been appointed to this position after the recent departure of Craig Wood.

Robert is responsible for work execution at Inkerman, Pioneer and Engineering Services. Chris Scovazzi is the Work Execution Manager. He will report to Robert and be responsible for work execution at Invicta and Kalamia. Chris was previously a reliability engineer at Victoria Mill.

Sharon La Spina is the Regional Asset Manager.

Directly reporting to Sharon are: Rodney Roveglia - Projects Manager for the capital projects team; Glen Miller - Planning Manager for the planning team; and Glenn O'Malley - Reliability Manager for the reliability engineering team.

A number of engineering, planning and production roles have been adjusted to fit within the new structure.

Most regional positions are now based at Pioneer Mill, in either the Engineering building, Business Services Centre (BSC) or the Training Centre.

To make way for these changes, the Burdekin Cane Supply & Transport team has relocated to Inkerman Mill. The Finance department, including Cane Pay, remains in the BSC.



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Advances and payments by pricing category



2015 Season: Herbert, Burdekin & Plane Creek

8 March 2016

		US Quota	Wilmar Managed Pool	FSP 2 - 2 Season Forward Pool	FSP 3 - 3 Season Forward Pool	Actively Managed Pool	Guaranteed Floor Price Pool	Harvest Pool	Totals & Averages
POOL PRICES									
Previous Net Pool Price Estimates	A/t IPS								
27 Mar 2015		\$545.48	\$359.83	\$407.04	\$423.30	\$362.82	\$393.79	\$360.77	
24 Apr 2015		\$545.84	\$374.53	\$423.57	\$433.97	\$386.21	\$400.93	\$384.38	
29 May 2015		\$557.58	\$356.26	\$415.32	\$430.45	\$368.78	\$400.12	\$365.94	
30 Jun 2015		\$562.46	\$358.07	\$416.65	\$431.22	\$377.25	\$400.03	\$369.39	
31 Jul 2015		\$583.99	\$337.82	\$413.72	\$430.54	\$374.38	\$401.93	\$359.37	
28 Aug 2015		\$605.63	\$323.69	\$417.38	\$431.68	\$370.14	\$400.97	\$352.64	
25 Sep 2015		\$612.43	\$358.47	\$423.43	\$437.76	\$382.23	\$403.06	\$361.27	
30 Oct 2015		\$608.16	\$393.55	\$434.40	\$443.61	\$405.34	\$405.90	\$385.08	
27 Nov 2015		\$601.53	\$394.38	\$434.05	\$443.38	\$414.80	\$406.89	\$386.09	
25 Dec 2015		\$605.01	\$399.24	\$434.38	\$443.63	\$416.23	\$406.80	\$387.77	
29 Jan 2016		\$619.24	\$385.19	\$429.83	\$438.82	\$409.84	\$405.70	\$378.01	
Current Gross Pool Estimate	A/t IPS	\$706.55	\$391.04	\$435.32	\$442.48	\$415.04	\$407.65	\$383.22	
Shared Pool Premiums	A/t IPS	-\$57.49	\$30.43	\$30.43	\$30.43	\$30.43	\$30.43	\$30.43	
Shared Pool Charges	A/t IPS	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	-\$32.49	
Net Pool Price Estimate	A/t IPS	\$616.57	\$388.97	\$433.25	\$440.41	\$412.97	\$405.58	\$381.15	
26 February 2016 Pool Reports									
ADVANCE RATES	A\$/t IPS	% Advance	Status						
In-Season \$ Rates									
Initial	\$227.00		Paid	\$227.00	\$227.00	\$227.00	\$227.00	\$227.00	\$227.00
20 Aug 2015	\$243.00		Paid	\$243.00	\$243.00	\$243.00	\$243.00	\$243.00	\$243.00
22 Oct 2015	\$266.00		Paid	\$266.00	\$266.00	\$266.00	\$266.00	\$266.00	\$266.00
17 Dec 2015	\$304.00		Paid	\$304.00	\$304.00	\$304.00	\$304.00	\$304.00	\$304.00
Post-Season Differential Rates									
21 Jan 2016	80.00%		Paid	\$484.01	\$319.39	\$347.50	\$354.90	\$332.98	\$325.44
18 Feb 2016	82.50%		Paid	\$510.88	\$317.79	\$354.60	\$362.03	\$338.11	\$334.70
17 Mar 2016	85.00%		Scheduled	\$524.08	\$330.62	\$368.27	\$374.35	\$351.03	\$344.75
21 Apr 2016	87.50%		Scheduled	\$539.50	\$340.35	\$379.10	\$385.36	\$361.35	\$354.89
19 May 2016	90.00%		Scheduled	\$554.91	\$350.07	\$389.93	\$396.37	\$371.68	\$365.03
23 Jun 2016	95.00%		Scheduled	\$585.74	\$369.52	\$411.59	\$418.39	\$392.33	\$385.31
Final	100.00%		Scheduled	\$616.57	\$388.97	\$433.25	\$440.41	\$412.97	\$405.58
FORECAST RETURN FOR A 'DEFAULT GROWER' (i.e. A grower with no Forward Pricing or QSL Fixed Tonnage Pools)									
% Allocation to US Quota and Harvest Pools				2.39%				97.61%	100.00%
Advances to be Paid on 18 February 2016	A/t IPS			\$524.08				\$323.98	\$328.77
Final Forecast Advances to be Paid	A/t IPS			\$616.57				\$381.15	\$386.79
% Paid Season-to-Date				85.00%				85.00%	85.00%

NOTES TO ADVANCES PROGRAM

Forward Pricing pools

In addition to the above pools, many growers have undertaken pricing via Wilmar's Forward Pricing program, namely under the Target Price and Call Pool pricing mechanisms. The final returns from these pools are subject to the same Shared Pool adjustment as for the ICE No.11 pools referred to above.

Shared Pool Element

The 'Shared Pool Premiums' and the 'Shared Pool Charges', as shown above, together comprise the 'Shared Pool Element' as defined in the Forward Pool and Pricing Agreement (FPPA).

General information

Advances are quoted EXCLUSIVE of GST. All advances are subject to QSL Board approvals, final returns for each price category, Wilmar's final sugar production for the season and tonnage allocations to various pricing methods. All growers who have used any form of Forward Pricing will have different advances depending on their price outcomes and tonnages fixed.

MEMBERS INFORMATION NOTICE BOARD

REMINDER TO MEMBERS - CORES Levy for Crush Season 2016

Members would have received a letter recently regarding the choice to support the CORES program through a minimal levy charge commencing the start of the 2016 crush season.

If you would like to contribute to this worthy cause, the attached Wilmar form you received, is required to be completed and returned no later than Friday, 27th May 2016.

Changing Ownership/Leasing & Kalamia Member Changes

Existing Kalamia CaneGrower members are asked to notify our office of any changes concerning farm sales/leasing arrangements.

This information will help to keep our membership accurate in communication and allows staff to assist with these matters if required.

This will also assist your organisation to provide any prospective members with our extensive range of services including, industry representation, negotiation of CSA agreements, special fuel prices, crop insurance, wage preparation and other benefits.



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Women in Sugar



Burdekin wrap up for 2015

Thanks to the generosity of the industry and the community, our members have had a very full and educational year.

Starting with our AGM in February, we started the year off with an update on our first aid skills.

March came around very quickly with Kimberley Mallon presenting at the Canegrowers Burdekin lunch for International Women's Day. Her presentation outlined the formation of the group and the aims and activities of the Women in Sugar Burdekin.

During March, members travelled to Ingham for the annual Women in Sugar Australia conference which was hosted by the Women in Sugar, Herbert. The two day conference consisted of a day of informative presentations on our industry, business and health, conference dinner and a bus tour. Due to the wet weather, some of our tour had to change but the high light was the chance to visit and tour the Lucinda Bulk Sugar Terminal and jetty. The wet and windy conditions on the day didn't deter our excitement at going out onto the jetty.

We continued our activities in April by traveling to the Australian Institute of Marine Science facility located at Cape Cleveland, south of Townsville. Dr Andrew Negri provided an informative presentation on the work that AIM's offers locally and all over Australia. During our visit we were able to enjoy a sensory tour of the new SEA SIM facility and meet some of the locals in their tanks. The day continued on as we travelled to the Port of Townsville where CEO, Raneé Cosby provided us with a presentation on the humble beginnings of the port on the work in progress to expand for the future needs of the area. Throughout our visit we witnessed sugar being loaded onto one of the many ships heading off shore.

With the devastation of the drought in our communities, Women in Sugar Burdekin decided to do something to help out. So we joined the Buy-a-Bale campaign and held a sausage sizzle outside Woolworths in June. With the generous donations from businesses in both Ayr and Home Hill, we ran some raffles and between the two, managed to raise



nearly \$1000.00 for the cause.

With July being half way point of the year, members attended the Readers and Writers course in the Burdekin and we also had North Queensland Insurance Brokers present us with information on our insurance needs for both business and personal. The presentation outlined the need for insurance as well as some case studies on the need for insurance. Terry Granshaw from Burdekin Productivity Services, also informed us on the latest outcomes of the industry Smart Cane Best Management Practices.

Continuing on into August saw the members tour Inkerman Sugar Mill, Mr Colin Mclean, Factory Manager from Wilmar Sugar and Christine Mann, Coordinator from Burdekin Cane Audit Services lead the tour. Members had the opportunity to tour the mill and see the facility in action, and then during morning tea provided, members were able to ask questions about the mill process and the cane payment system.

During our September general monthly meeting, Canegrowers Burdekin

Insurance broker, Martine Bengoa provided us with information on types of insurance that they could provide. Then Joanne Barbagallo Owner / Manager of Curves explained the importance of exercise in our everyday lives as part of general health. She then took us to the Curves gym and put us through our paces. We all felt new muscles over the next few days.

As we approached the later half of the year we combined our tour of Pacific Reef farm with NQ Dry tropics. We had the opportunity to look at the facility to see the Cobia and prawns being farmed for the up and coming season. They also displayed an Algae harvesting system that they were researching and experimenting with for future food sources for the animal industry. The morning was finished off with lunch and presentation from James Cook University of the uses of Algae.

Finishing off a very successful and informative year, Women in Sugar members came together for lunch at the Crown Hotel Home Hill.

SUICIDE AWARENESS

BASKETBALL COMP

SUNDAY MAY 8 2016

\$40/Team

Burdekin Amateur Basketball Courts (10-12 Little
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For registration and info:

<https://events.adventist.org.au/Registration/Event/893?NAYouthBasketballComp>
or facebook



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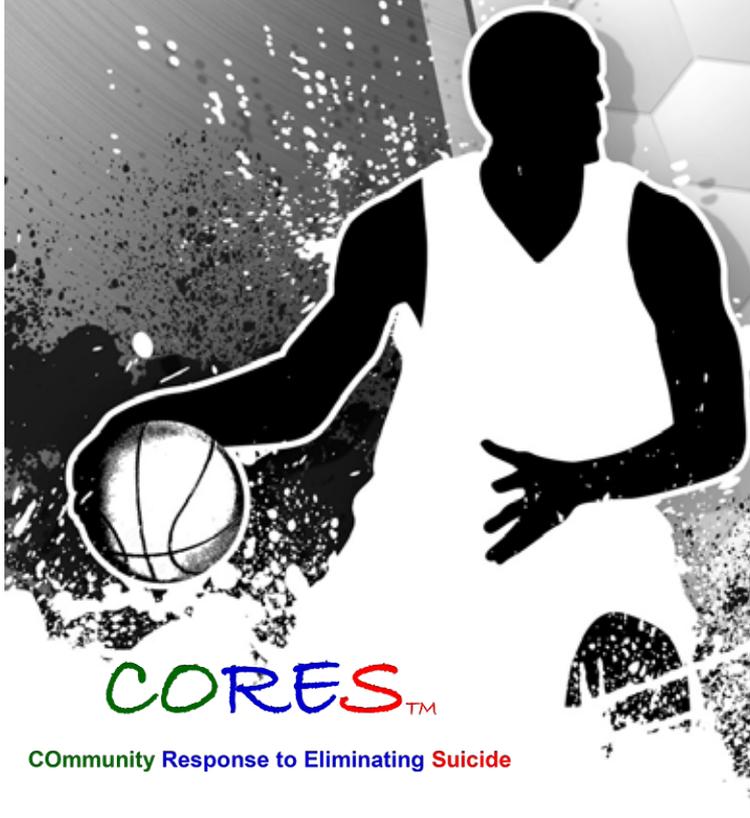
Team prizes

Community Awareness Info

Sausage Sizzle

Mens, Womens and Mixed

JR and Sr Div



CORESTM

COmmunity Response to Eliminating Suicide



Sweet Memories



Aerial view of the Burdekin River - 1947



Crown Hotel cyclone damage - 1956



Burdekin Dam before completion



Loading and Carting cane - Olsen Brothers Farm, Charlie Hill Home Hill 1926



Building road to Burdekin Bridge



Inkerman Sugar Cane - 1947



Ayr - Home Hill Bus Service - Date Unknown

Interesting News Articles

Sunflowers the key to improving soil health, North Queensland farmer says

By John Taylor, Landline – www.abc.net.au/rural

A pioneering North Queensland cane-grower believes farming sunflowers may be the key to improving declining soil health in Australia's sugar cane heartland.

Simon Mattsson has harvested his first commercial sunflower crop on his property at Marian, west of Mackay.

"If we go step back 20-odd years the annual average production in Mackay was in that 90 tonne-to-the-hectare range, and now it's in the low 70 tonne-to-the-hectare range," Mr Mattsson said.

"Now, there are many different reasons why that's so — it's not entirely down to soil health.

"But I firmly believe that soil health is the biggest single contributor to that decline."

In 2014 Mr Mattsson was awarded a prestigious Nuffield Scholarship — becoming part of an elite agricultural alumni of industry leaders and innovators roaming the world studying an agricultural topic.

Mr Mattsson has been investigating soil health, including the benefits of growing sunflowers around Mackay.

Sunflowers extract different nutrients from the soil to sugarcane, and promote different soil micro-organisms.

"Sugarcane is probably ... the granddaddy of all monocultures," he said.



Photo: A different type of harvester on Simon Mattsson's cane farm near Marian, west of Mackay. (ABC: Chris Gillette)

The idea of rotating alternative crops to improve soil health in between sugar cane crops is not new — but the large scale commercial use of sunflowers is.

On part of his farm, Mr Mattsson grows commercial sugar cane and sunflowers in rows with each other to promote soil health.

"It's the first one anyone's tried, to have a dual crop of sugar cane and sunflowers at the same time," Mr Mattsson said.

Katrina Dent from Mackay-based Reef Catchments, a natural resources

management group, said Mr Mattsson's work was interesting — and important.

"I think there are a few people actually quite intrigued, particularly those who have already made changes on their farm and are looking for new improvements," Ms Dent said.

"They've reached a certain point and they need a new idea to come along."

You can see more on this story on ABC Landline on Sunday at midday on ABC Television.



Photo: Simon Mattsson is using part of his farm to grow sunflowers with sugar cane to improve soil health. (ABC: Chris Gillette)



Photo: Sunflowers, grown commercially at Simon Mattsson's cane farm, may improve soil health. (ABC: Daniel Battley)

Interesting News Articles

Cyclone Winston delivers hit to Fiji sugar industry, Cane Growers Association says

Pacific Beat

Posted Wed 9 Mar 2016, 9:09pm

Fiji's sugar industry has taken a massive hit from Cyclone Winston, and will struggle to produce at the next harvest, the Fiji Cane Growers Association says.

The category five cyclone, one of the most powerful ever in the region, hit Fiji on February 20, with wind gusts of up to 330 kilometres per hour.

Association CEO Mohammed Rafiq told ABC's Pacific Beat the extent of damage to the country's sugar cane crop was substantial.

"We can see all the farms are flattened, the canes have been uprooted — I would say extensive damage has been done to the sugar cane farms," he said.

Mr Rafiq said it was now too late to plant a second crop, so the amount of cane available for crushing at this year's harvest will be small.

"Even if we do the planting now, we face so many problems — it won't be harvested in this season, so one season would be gone," he said.

"The other thing is if we tell the farmers to do the planting — they don't have the



Photo: "Now the worse has come... the crop has been ruined, and their house has been devastated." (AFP: Bruce Southwick, file photo)

house to live in, [so] how can they do the planting now?"

Mr Rafiq said the cyclone damage was a massive blow to the sugar cane farmers, who already struggled on low incomes from the sugar they harvest.

"In previous years we saw that slowly the sugar industry [in Fiji] was becoming viable and the crops were improving, we were getting good returns ... but now the farmers will not be able to produce what

they were expecting.

"Now the worse has come when whatever little money they were getting from the crop, the crop has been ruined, and their house has been devastated."

Radio Australia attempted to contact the executive chairman of the Fiji Sugar Corporation, Abdul Khan, and Sundresh Chetty, CEO of the Cane Growers Council, but they have yet to respond.



Photo: An aerial shot shows the destruction from Cyclone Winston in Tavua, Northern Fiji. (Facebook: Fijian Government)

Interesting News Articles

Australian sugar cane biosecurity threats give researchers new focus

By Lara Webster, QLD Country Hour - www.abc.net.au/rural

Biosecurity is a major concern in any agricultural industry and this year Sugar Research Australia is furthering its research into major threats posed to cane.

The focus is primarily on two potential threats in particular, which have not yet reached Australia but have decimated Indonesian cane crops.

Those threats are moth borers and Sugar Cane Streak Mosaic Virus, and principal researcher Rob Magarey is one of the many people trying to work out how the diseases are transmitted.

Very little is known about both diseases, how they spread or how they would cross the border and Mr Magarey has been working with Indonesian researchers to try and find the answers.

Without knowing how the diseases spread, he said it would be difficult to put in place the appropriate biosecurity measures to ensure there was not an outbreak in Australian sugar cane crops.

Sugar Cane Streak Mosaic Virus (SCSMV) is one of the biggest mysteries the researchers will try to solve.

"Because it has [only] recently been discovered in Indonesia, we don't really know yet how it is transmitted and that is really

important," Mr Magarey said.

"If it came into our industry we would obviously want to stop the transmission straight away.

"There are some suggestions there might be an insect vector, which is an insect that actually transfers the virus or it could even be transmitted with cane knives and machinery."

What they do know is that SCSMV has a significant impact on yields.

"It does not actually kill the cane, it just reduces the yield between 10 and 20 per cent, but because it affects almost all crops, then the overall yield loss is still very high," Mr Magarey said.

This year Indonesian researchers have begun yield loss studies to work out the extent of the financial losses caused by SCSMV.

MOTH BORERS LESS OF A MYSTERY

Mr Magarey said there was more known about the threats posed by moth borers.

There are three different species of the pest, but essentially it destroys the inside of sugar cane stalks.

"The larvae of the moths actually tunnel into the stalks and chew the inside of the stalks up, and I think many Australian cane



Sugar Research Australia principal researcher Rob Magarey is looking into major biosecurity threats to Australian sugar cane. (ABC: Lara Webster)

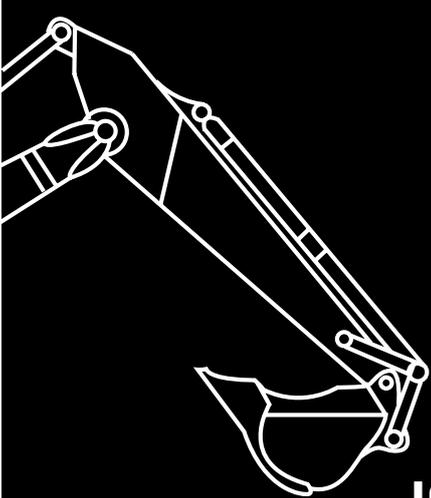
growers would be appalled if they sliced open some stalks of cane and saw what we see in Indonesia," Mr Magarey said.

Mr Magarey has also been a part of a project to find ways around the management of the pest.

"We have been assisting the Indonesians to be able to manage those moth borers better and reduce the yield impacts," he said.

"From our side of things we are understanding how to do that and so that if it ever came in we would have a better idea of management."

Mr Magarey said the research project would wrap up in 2018.



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Interesting News Articles

Medicinal marijuana crops could open up new opportunities for Queensland cane growers

By Lara Webster, QLD Country Hour – www.abc.net.au/rural

Some cane growers are hoping the possibility of new laws allowing medicinal cannabis to be legally cultivated and manufactured could improve soil health and boost profitability.

State Cabinet will consider draft legislation to provide therapeutic marijuana to Queensland patients, and some Mackay cane growers have shown interest in getting an industry up and running in the tropical north.

Mackay cane grower Joe Muscat has trialled the hemp variety used for medicinal cannabis as a rotational crop beside his cane since 2002.

He said there were both economic and soil-health benefits gained from medicinal cannabis, but there were hurdles to overcome to establish a sustainable industry.

Medicinal marijuana, is derived from the extremely versatile cannabis or hemp species and different varieties of hemp have been used to produce fibre for clothes and paper, food, medicines and hallucinogenic drugs.

Mackay cane grower Joe Muscat said the legalisation of medicinal hemp opens up

new opportunities but he would like to see other markets as well.

"It has got a multitude of uses, whether you are talking about building materials, car components [or] as a food," he said.

"I read articles that documented something like 20,000 uses for a fibre plant, so there is just about nothing that it cannot do but at the end of the day you have got to have something that the market is prepared to buy and want."

However, he said if there was money to fund research and development projects to get a medicinal cannabis market off the ground, there would be plenty of potential, especially around the tropical north.

Mr Muscat found the humid conditions of the Mackay region provided the right conditions to grow hemp crops.

MARIJUANA CROPS COULD IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH

For fellow Mackay cane grower Simon Mattsson, the hemp variety used to grow medicinal cannabis could provide soil-health benefits too.

Mr Mattsson, a Nuffield Scholar, has spent years studying plant diversity, particularly in sugar cane crops.

He said soil throughout the Mackay



Federal MP George Christensen discusses the possibility of growing medicinal cannabis with Mackay cane growers Joe Muscat and Simon Mattsson. (ABC: Lara Webster)

region suffered from compaction issues and a range of other problems.

"The variety that I would choose to grow initially probably would not be something that would be targeted specifically at the medicinal side of it," Mr Mattsson said.

"Because it [hemp] is an entirely different root system, an entirely different plant to sugar cane, it adds to diversity.

"In my Nuffield travels, plant diversity has come up as being one of those things that is the absolute key to a healthy soil system."

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Interesting News Articles

Burdekin cane crop estimate down as growers wait for Wilmar's next move on marketing

By Charlie McKillop, ABC Rural

– www.abc.net.au/rural

A downgrade of the sugar crop in Australia's largest growing region has been blamed on ongoing uncertainty about sugar marketing arrangements.

In the Burdekin region, south of Townsville, Wilmar is yet to begin negotiating with suppliers to its four sugar mills next year.

Wilmar executive general manager John Pratt said the company was still working through the complexity of the new sugar marketing legislation introduced in December.

But grower collectives have maintained the changes are relatively minor and claim they have not prevented other milling areas from reaching 'broad agreement' on cane supply next season.

An unofficial estimate released by Canegrowers Burdekin puts the current crop at 7.6 million tons, down by 600,000 tons from last year.

...Some growers are definitely not going to grow cane because of the fact there is no contract... they're going to go out to 18 months fallow, they're going to try a few beans, a bit of rice in the next few years.

Gary Stockham, Giru cane grower and planting contractor

It said delays in securing a cane supply agreement with the miller was weighing heavily on growers, as they contemplated an investment of up to five years of planting and growing a sugar crop.

Without a contract to crush their cane, contractor Gary Stockham said growers were delaying the decision to plant new cane and were looking at other options.

"Well I just know my growers in my area, in my group, they've said they're going to go out to 18 months fallow, they're going to try a few beans, a bit of rice in the next



Photo: The window of opportunity for planting sugar cane is a narrow one, usually between February and May, and is an investment that continues for five years. (Charlie McKillop: ABC Rural)

few years," Mr Stockham said.

"It's only early yet but in my area I'd be 10 to 20 per cent less than last year.

based at Giru, said the impact of the marketing impasse had been exacerbated by prolonged dry weather and uncertainty about future water allocation from the Burdekin Dam.

Canegrower collectives in the Burdekin, Herbert River, Proserpine and Mackay districts have indicated they are willing to meet with Wilmar in the coming weeks.

Wilmar declined to be interviewed, but recently sought to clarify its reasons for not moving into discussions with growers as it sought to clarify the implications of the Sugar Industry (Real Choice in Marketing) Amendment Act.

"The Act establishes a very complex and potentially costly set of commercial and legal relationships between growers and mills, growers and marketing entities, and mills and marketing entities," it stated.

"The implications have not yet been fully explored, let alone fully understood."

"Some growers aren't worried about contracts, they'll plant a bit of cane and see what happens, but some growers are definitely not going to grow cane because of the fact there is no contract and Wilmar not coming to the table to discuss things.

"You know, nothing's happened yet and people are getting worried. "The longer they wait, the worse it's going to be, because people do want to know their future and what's going to happen on their farms."

Mr Stockham, whose contract business is

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Interesting News Articles

The mysterious Yellow Canopy Syndrome is back to haunt cane growers

By Lara Webster, QLD Country Hour – www.abc.net/rural

It is the mystery that just can't be solved and it has returned to haunt cane growers in 2016 — the ever elusive Yellow Canopy Syndrome, or YCS as it is better known.

The disease affects the sugar content in cane crops and it has already ramped up in the tropical north.

Last year it reduced Queensland cane growers production by 10 per cent, possibly more.

Canegrowers Queensland Chair Paul Schembri said he could not believe how much YCS had spread in the past three weeks on his farm.

"I've been away for four or five days on industry duties and I came back to Mackay and I rang my brother [and] he said 'go down to this paddock, you'll be surprised'," he said.



Photo: Queensland Canegrower chair Paul Schembri has seen the spread of Yellow Canopy Syndrome ramp up in the last three weeks. (ABC: Lara Webster)

I have had to knock ratoons out that I would have budgeted for five or six years, so that is a cost to me and a lot of other growers.

Paul Schembri, Queensland Canegrowers Chair

"In level of YCS is ratcheting upwards and you can see it [the crop] is exhibiting the tell-tale signs of YCS which is the parallel yellowing of the leaf.

"This is now elevating to a vary dangerous level in this crop."

Towards the end of January Mr Schembri had seen little signs of the mysterious disease and held hope there may be little YCS to affect sugar cane crops throughout the Mackay region this year.

He said it had looked like his best crop in 10 years, but now he would have to downsize his expectations, as would others.

"That is money, it is going to hurt me in the pocket somehow and so like every other grower we are just desperate to

find out the cause of this YCS so we can start mitigating the impacts," Mr Schembri said.

YCS WILL HURT GROWERS BOTTOM LINES

Last year Mr Schembri lost more than 1000 tonnes of his crop to YCS, which said was a conservative estimate; that left a hole of around \$40,000 in his income.

Other growers also saw their production hurt to the same extent, or more.

Mr Schembri said the industry had lost tens of millions of dollars but it was too early to say what the impacts would be for 2016.

"I've seen forecasts that there have been losses from one year to another



Photo: The tell-tale signs of Yellow Canopy Syndrome are a parallel yellowing on the sugar cane. (ABC: Lara Webster)

from anything \$40 million to \$70 million, it could be even more or less," he said.

"Either way it is a major problem to us ... I have had to knock ratoons out that I would have budgeted for five or six years, so that is a cost to me and a lot of other growers," Mr Schembri said



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Interesting News Articles

Trade deals 'not as popular as they were', as US presidential election campaign ramps up

By Anna Vidot, ABC Rural – www.abc.net/rural



Photo: The US election campaign may complicate passage of the controversial TPP agreement through the US Congress. (AFP Photo: Mladen Antonov)

A heated political climate in the United States is contributing to a rising tide of anti-trade sentiment, a former USDA chief economist says.

But Joe Glauber, now a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, says he's still hopeful that will change once the elections are over.

The results of so called 'Super Tuesday' contests this week made it more likely that either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton will be elected president of the United States in November.

At the same time, the Obama administration is keen to close off on the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which it struck with 11 other Pacific rim nations including Australia and Japan last year but has not yet ratified.

Mr Glauber said many US agricultural industries and lobby groups supported the deal, and have publicly backed it.

But the TPP is increasingly controversial in the US, and even formerly pro-trade politicians have distanced themselves from the agreement as the election campaign heats up.

"In a major election year - a presidential election year - it's hard to find anyone who really comes out and says they like it," Mr Glauber said.

"As much as I would have preferred politicians to not say much about it, or say we're considering it, or we're looking at it - and it's such a complicated document I think you owe it to [people] to spend a lot of time looking at it - but I am still guardedly optimistic that after the election they'll have some opportunity, with the rhetoric dying down, that people will vote to approve it."

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE TPP

Donald Trump, the frontrunner to be the Republican Party's nominee for president, has called the TPP "horrible" and a "disaster" negotiated by "incompetent people".

The likely Democratic Party candidate for the presidency, Hillary Clinton, supported the TPP negotiations when she was Barack Obama's secretary of state, calling it a "gold standard" trade deal.

But after the text was publicly released last year, Mrs Clinton said she couldn't support it because it "didn't meet [her standards]."

Mr Glauber said her comments about TPP "may have disappointed a lot of people", but noted the last time a Clinton was in the White House, the US signed off on two major trade deals including NAFTA - the North America Free Trade Agreement - with Canada and Mexico.

Mrs Clinton isn't the only candidate walking back support for the TPP in this campaign.

"If you look at Senator Rob Portman, and Senator Portman was our US Trade Representative [chief trade negotiator]

during the Bush years; quite articulate, quite a champion of free trade, and yet he too has come out and said he's not sure about this agreement," Mr Glauber said.

"He's in a very, very tough race in Ohio, and there are industries that are very sensitive to trade there [in Ohio]."

"I don't know, but again, my hope is that when the election's over these candidates will be able to, either before the next administration comes in or before the elections, or after the new administration, we'll see a change.

"But it's certainly the case that trade is just not as popular as it was.

"I find it staggering in one sense, just that things always get overblown in the costs and sometimes in the benefits of these agreements, and TPP, while it is quite important I think for a beef producer or other types of producers, in terms of the overall economy it's not that much.

"It's probably more important geopolitically, and I think that, too, will probably be a selling point at some point."

AGRICULTURE UNLIKELY TO FEATURE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Mr Glauber said that for all the perceived power of the agricultural lobby in the US, it's unlikely that agriculture policy will play a big role in the presidential campaign.

"I remember when Carter ran for president, there was a debate on agriculture, but you just don't see that [now]," he said.

"But TPP really is something that I think is important, and you may see that, particularly at the local level with large farm state senators or representatives being pressed by agricultural constituencies to come out in favour of trade, but I don't think you'll see that in presidential politics."



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Word of the Month

natter

verb (nat-er)

to talk incessantly.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: How come oysters never donate to charity?

A: Because they are shellfish.

Q: What's the difference between a guitar and a fish?

A: You can tune a guitar, but you can't tuna fish.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- » Did you know dragonflies have 6 legs but can't walk
- » Did you know bats always turn left when exiting a cave
- » Did you know Brazil is named after a tree
- » Did you know the Eiffel Tower has 1,792 steps

AMAZING MALTESERS CAKE

Step 1

Preheat oven to 160C. Grease a 20cm round cake pan with butter. Line base and side with baking paper.

Step 2

Place the brown sugar, milk and butter in a microwave-safe bowl. Cook in microwave on high, stirring every minute, for 4-5 minutes or until the butter melts and the mixture is smooth.

Step 3

Use a balloon whisk to whisk the combined flour and cocoa powder into the butter mixture. Whisk in the egg. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake for 55 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Set aside in the pan for 5 minutes to cool before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Step 4

To make the ganache, place the chocolate, cream and butter in a microwave-safe bowl. Cook in microwave on high, stirring

every minute, for 2-3 minutes or until the chocolate melts and the mixture is smooth.

Step 5

Use an electric beater to beat the extra butter in a bowl until pale and creamy. Beat in the icing sugar, malted milk powder and extra milk until fluffy. Beat in 1 1/2 tablespoons ganache.

Step 6

Set the remaining ganache aside for 1 hour 30 minutes or until thick, glossy and spreadable.

Step 7

Meanwhile, use a large serrated knife to cut the cake horizontally into four layers. Place the cake base on a platter. Spread with one-third of the icing. Continue layering with the remaining cake and icing, finishing with cake. Cover and place in the fridge for 1 hour 30 minutes to chill.

Step 8

Spread the ganache evenly over the top and side of the cake. Decorate with Maltesers



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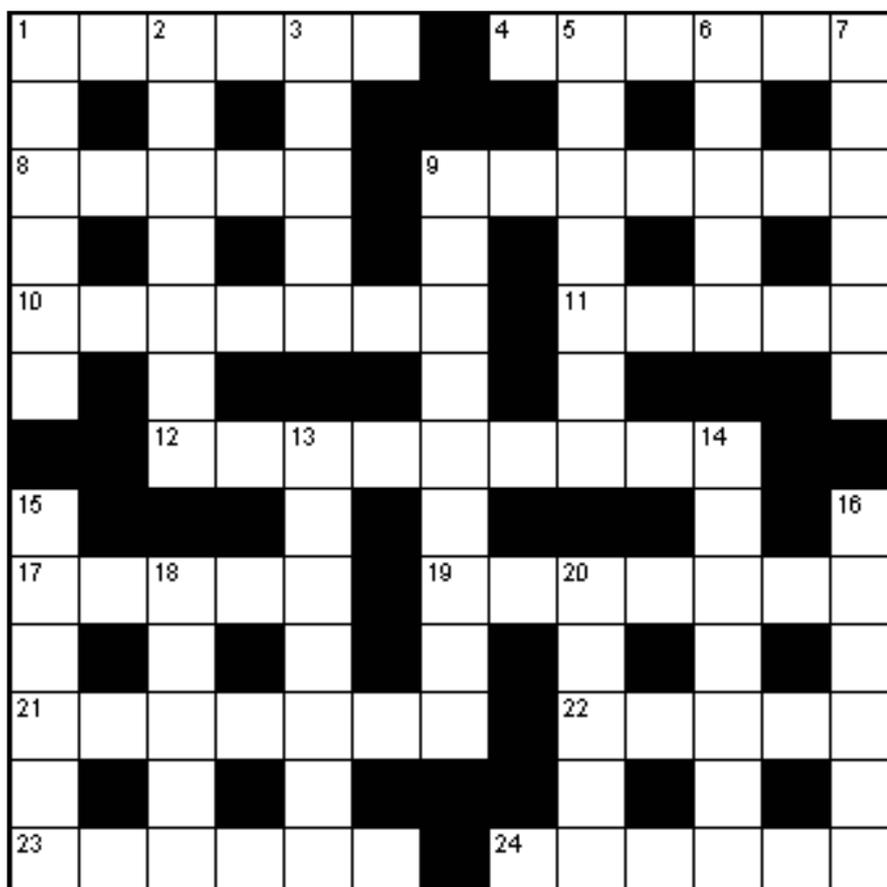
INGREDIENTS

200g (1 cup, firmly packed) brown sugar
185ml (3/4 cup) milk
125g butter, chopped
115g (3/4 cup) self-raising flour
75g (1/2 cup) plain flour
50g (1/2 cup) cocoa powder
3 eggs, lightly whisked
185g butter, extra, at room temperature
345g (2 1/4 cups) icing sugar mixture
95g (3/4 cup) malted milk powder
1 tablespoon milk, extra
465g Maltesers

GANACHE

300g dark cooking chocolate, finely chopped
125ml (1/2 cup) thickened cream
30g butter

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Ladybird, for example (6)
- 4 Sustain (6)
- 8 Pungent (5)
- 9 Liberal (anag.) (7)
- 10 Behind time for arrival (7)
- 11 Row of shrubs (5)
- 12 Highly confidential (3,6)
- 17 Release (3,2)
- 19 Hungarian red pepper (7)
- 21 Bubble raised on the skin (7)
- 22 Bare (5)
- 23 Sheen (6)
- 24 Roof beam (6)

DOWN

- 1 One after the other (2,1,3)
- 2 Excess (7)
- 3 Gave way (5)
- 5 Unlawful taker of game or fish (7)
- 6 Lubricated (5)
- 7 Intensify (6)
- 9 Apiarist (9)
- 13 Conspirator (7)
- 14 Small ornament (7)
- 15 Worldwide (6)
- 16 Prison officer (6)
- 18 Coin-tossing call (5)
- 20 Creature that eats bamboo shoots (5)

Classifieds

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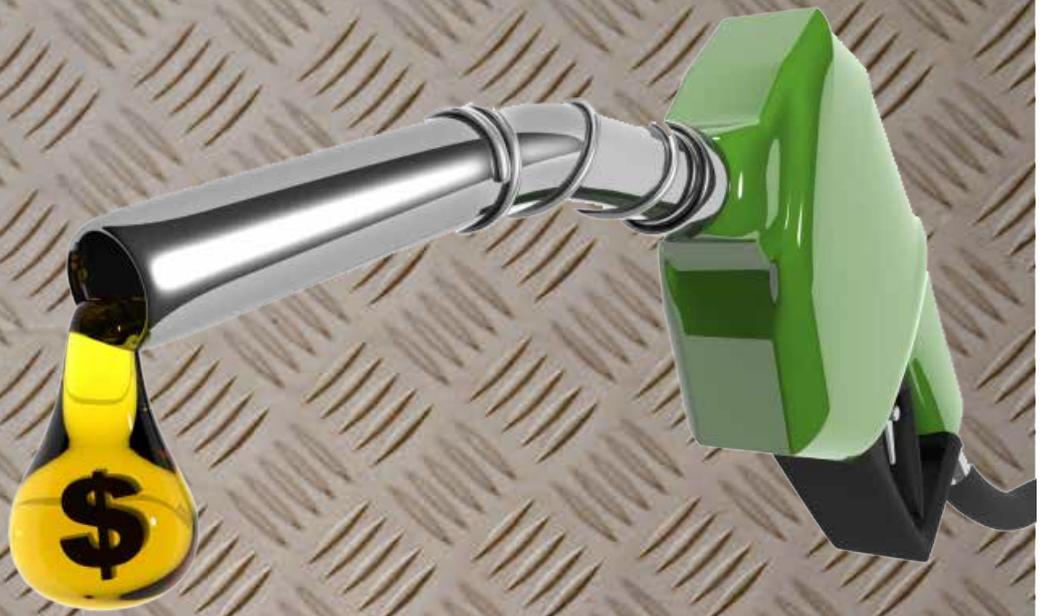
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Across 1 – Insect, 4 – Uphold, 8 – Acted, 9 – Braille, 10 – Overdue, 11 – Hedge, 12 – Topsecret, 17 – Letgo, 19 – Paprika, 21 – Blisters, 22 – Naked, 23 – Lustrous, 24 – Rafter
Down 1 – Inarow, 2 – Surefit, 3 – Ceded, 5 – Poacher, 6 – Oiled, 7 – Deepen, 9 – Beekeeper, 13 – Plotter, 14 – Trinker, 15 – Global, 16 – Warden, 18 – Tails, 20 – Panda



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