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New sugarcane variety approved for Burdekin Region sugarcane growers and millers

A new variety of sugarcane has been approved for growers and millers in the Burdekin Region.

This variety is named SRA23 and it has been created as a result of extensive work through the SRA plant breeding program and more than a decade of development.

SRA Principal Plant Breeder (Burdekin), Dr Xianming Wei, said that SRA developed new varieties to maximise profitability for sugarcane growers and millers by optimising characteristics such as tonnes of cane, sugar content, resistance to diseases, and ability to be processed within the mill.

In SRA trials, SRA23 had similar performance to the average of the current major commercial varieties, including Q183, Q208, and KQ228, in terms of tonnes and commercial cane sugar (CCS). However, it is its resistance to smut, which is important for the local industry as it means the overall resistant level to smut from the available varieties in the region could be further improved.

It is available as tissue culture, and on a broader scale through Burdekin Productivity Services (BPS) in 2021.

Dr Wei said that the variety was recently approved by the Burdekin Regional Variety Committee (RVC), which consists of representatives of growers, millers and productivity services organisations. It follows the recent approval of WSRA17, which is a variety developed in partnership between SRA and Wilmar Sugar.

“The RVC makes the decision on potential new varieties in the final stages of the breeding pipeline and, most importantly, whether a variety is released to be grown commercially in the field,” Dr Wei said.

Cane grower Mr Kris Tasselli has strip trial on his farm in collaboration with BPS where these trials looked at SRA23 and WSRA17 in commercial farming conditions.

“The strip trials with BPS help us have a good look at new varieties, and also compare them closely to established varieties like Q240,” Mr Tasselli said. “As growers we are obviously looking to maximise tonnes and sugar, so we are looking at how these new varieties perform in our conditions.

“We look forward to learning more about them in the next couple of years.”

Data from BPS strip trials is conducted in a range of soil types and sub-regions across the Burdekin, and communicated to growers through BPS. Growers also receive information on new varieties through the SRA online tool, QCANESelect and the SRA Variety Guides.

- More information on this varieties, and other varieties, will be published in the SRA 2019/20 Variety Guide for the Burdekin region, which will soon be available for growers and millers.

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