



Understanding enhanced efficiency fertilisers to optimise on-farm decisions

A new collaborative project will provide Australian sugarcane growers with valuable information on the potential for enhanced efficiency fertilisers (EEFs) to be incorporated within their farming systems.

This project will build on four years of work conducted as part of EEF60, which will finish in June. Through EEF60, industry partners worked together to conduct trials of EEFs on 60 sites in regions between Childers and Mossman. The project discovered valuable information about the practical application of EEFs including considerations such as weather and farming scenarios, the economic implications of their use, and how this relatively new fertiliser technology compares to more traditional fertiliser.

The new project sees SRA continuing with 17 on-farm trial sites in Far North Queensland and is partnering with CSIRO and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) on key research activities.

The new work is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF), with support from SRA, CSIRO, CANEGROWERS and productivity services companies.

SRA Researcher Julian Connellan is leading the project and said that the new project was an opportunity to build on the information gathered through EEF60.

He added that SRA will coordinate the research with CSIRO, and then with project collaborators, in order to produce a package of information for Australian sugarcane growers.

"The industry is very keen to understand if using EEFs can improve productivity and profitability by better matching nitrogen requirements to crop needs. This understanding is crucial, given the additional cost that is associated with purchasing EEFs," Mr Connellan said.

"EEFs may not suit every farm, every year, and every situation, but we now know they offer opportunities in some cases."

EEF60 was funded by the Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy (Reef Trust 4) and the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science.

In addition to the 17 controlled and replicated trials, the project will fine-tune a decision support tool for growers on selecting EEFs, which is building on other recent work delivered by CSIRO and the Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL).

The new project will also involve CSIRO researchers, led by Tony Webster, who will use the APSIM farming systems model to develop information on the expected benefits of EEFs to inform when and where EEFs can be used in place of urea to reduce nitrogen losses.

“Through this collaboration, we are bringing together the latest information on EEFs in sugarcane-specific scenarios, to package that information for practical application,” Mr Webster said.

- An information sheet summarising recent findings from the EEF60 project is available [here](#).



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