

► LIFE ON THE LAND

Rural news

Disease forum a must for growers

PROSERPINE growers are invited to attend a Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS) information forum held by Sugar Research Australia at the Proserpine RSL hall at 8.30am tomorrow.

The forum forms part of a series of six industry Q&A sessions across Queensland

cane growing regions and will provide growers with the latest info on YCS.

Proserpine district recorded its first cases of YCS late last month.

Sugar Services Proserpine's Peter Sutherland said it was important for growers to

attend the session as YCS appeared to be slowing the growth of cane and affecting CCS levels.

The forum follows on from a recent YCS scientific reference panel meeting in Townsville, chaired by Professor John Lovett, which was attended by all

researchers involved in three key projects to investigate YCS.

The chief researchers from the three research projects will be presenting at the upcoming forum.

YCS remains a critical issue for the sugar cane industry.

Farmers can save money and reef

REEF Catchments and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) have collaborated on a series of workshops to educate farmers on how to improve herbicide management on sugarcane farms.

Farmers met with representatives last Wednesday to observe a practical demonstration of two types of spray rigs that can help reduce the cost of controlling weeds, as well as information on nozzle selection and regional updates from the national landcare Reef Programme and regional catchment monitoring.

DAFF has developed a spray rig to accurately apply a range of residual and non-residual herbicides against cane stool.

Phil Trendell, senior project officer from DAFF, said farmers had enjoyed the demonstrations.

"They've seen how this machinery works," Mr Trendell said.

"The nozzles have been quite popular - we're using what we call a patternator to demonstrate the range of coverage and drift [that] farmers get from different nozzles they use."



MIGHTY MACHINE: Reef Catchment's Scott Underdown, DAFF senior project officer Phil Trendell and Reef Catchment's catalyst grower Lou Raiteri with one of the new sprayers.

PHOTO: JOSH DUTTON

Reef Catchments contact officer Scott Underdown said the environmental impact was taken into consideration.

"Moving away from residuals is a big plus," Mr Underdown said.

"We won't say to move away from them - there's always a place for them."

Reef Catchments catalyst

grower Lou Raiteri said the new spray rigs were very effective.

"They cut down our chemicals going out to the reef dramatically," Mr Raiteri said.

"Some commendation has to go to the government."

"They could have come at us with a big stick. Instead they've allowed growers to

be ambitious - mainly with chemical equipment. "If I do nine hectares it only sprays three hectares of chemical on cane - the other six is round up." Growers were also given information on the Reef Programme and how to access funding for effective long-term farm management. Go to reefcatchments.com.au.

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