

## Ag Newsletter 81—Clarence—May 2025

### THE SHED ZONE

Our Pre-Harvest Grower Meetings will be held on 10 & 12 May 2025. Presentations will include updates from CEO, Chris Connors, Harwood Operations Manager, Scott Thompson & Cane Supply Superintendent—Harwood, Simon Hollis, as well as key information from Ag Services. Breakfast will be served from 7.00 am with the presentations beginning from 7.30 am. Please RSVP to Alister on [alister-smith@sunshinesugar.com.au](mailto:alister-smith@sunshinesugar.com.au) or 0429 842 472 by Friday 6 June 2025.

**Date:** Tuesday, 10 June 2025  
**Venue:** Alan Munro's Shed  
 321 WOODFORD DALE ROAD  
 WOODFORD ISLAND NSW 2463  
**Time:** BBQ from 7.00 AM and Presentations from 7.30 AM

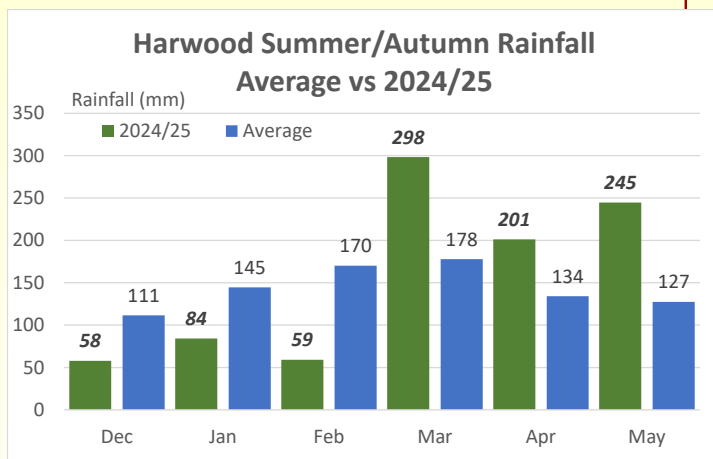
**Date:** Thursday, 12 June 2025  
**Venue:** Andrew Fischer's Shed  
 213 FISCHER'S LANE  
 CHATSWORTH ISLAND NSW 2469  
**Time:** BBQ from 7.00 AM and Presentations from 7.30 AM



### ♪ WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN? ♪

It's easy to forget that we began the year with pretty dry conditions. After a very wet spring, conditions turned in the summer and December, January and February were all well under average with February receiving just 41% of the annual average. That all changed very quickly in March when we received 231 mm over an 8-day period, from ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. The Clarence River went over the major flood level by 34cm at Grafton but fell 20cm short of the major flood level at Maclean.

While the flood was well short of records, the wet spring meant later planted crops and later harvested ratoons, along with soybean crops, were damaged. April had some longer periods without rain. We had two stretches of 5 days without any rain recorded, which was actually better than April 2024. However, monthly rainfall in April 2025 of 201 mm, eclipsed the April 2024 result of 194 mm and was almost 70 mm above the monthly average. May has continued wet with 245 mm recorded, approaching 120 mm above the monthly average.



### MUD, SWEAT AND GEARS

It's no surprise to anyone that, with all the rain about, we've made a fair bit of mud as well. Transport charges for mud delivery have increased and, as a result, the grower price, which is subsidised by roughly 50% by the mill, has increased by 10%. Order forms and price lists for Mill Mud have been sent with this Newsletter. Please complete them and return them to Alister as soon as you can. Please remember to note the paddocks where you would like mud applied and any wet dump sites that you may have available. Note that, under Environmental Protection Agency regulations, mud can only be applied to the same area once every four years. For those taking wet dump, you are required to record where mud is eventually applied as you may be audited by the EPA and have to show evidence of where it has been applied. With spread/banded mud, we collate this data from the drivers records. This year we have a new contractor, Tunsted Haulage, who will be taking over from Lewis Bros. Many of the faces will be familiar but we do have some new drivers. Contact numbers will remain the same but call Alister Smith if you have any issues getting through.

## SHOW STOPPERS

It was a win generations in the making for Andco Farming at this year's Maclean Show. Pictured top right are four generations of the Anderson clan, Jamie, Graham, Talon and newest addition Tucker (Aunty Jodie was on the camera), in front of their prize winning SRA29, which took our first place in the Weight & CCS Class at the 132nd Maclean Show, earlier this month. The picture immediately below shows Graham winning the same award in 1978. Andco Farming took out the top three places in this year's competition. The first placed SRA29 had a stalk weight (8 Stalks) of 28.5 kg and CCS of 14.94, giving an overall score of 425.8. Second place went to a sample of Q254 with the Anderson's Q252 taking third place.

Highest CCS went to Shane Causley, with his Q240 recording an unadjusted CCS of 15.84. That was closely followed by Matt Blanch with Q252 at 15.37 and Harry Green's Q252 at 15.18.

This year's cane exhibit was pared back, due to wet weather conditions and difficulties in getting big two year old samples out but thanks and congratulations to Milton Lewis and all those involved in ensuring the show did go on.

The results also gave us a few clues for the upcoming harvest. The first lesson was the better than expected performance of SRA29 in terms of CCS. SRA29 had the highest CCS of the four varieties that the Anderson's submitted, outperforming Q254, Q240 & Q252. Q240 had the best CCS overall, with Q252 also up there but single sample of SRA11 wasn't as impressive—1 unit or so below the better varieties.

## PASSING THE ACID TEST

We have included the Acid Sulphate Soils Compliance Record with this communication. Please complete it and keep it as part of the your farm records. In early July, 10 farms will be identified for audit and you will need to provide that completed paperwork and may get a visit from Alister and a member of the Clarence Valley Council.

Operating in the floodplain is extremely challenging and good drainage is one of the most, if not the single most, important way that we can maintain and improve our yields and our financial sustainability. The annual Acid Sulphate Soils Audit process is a key part of our self-regulation scheme, which allows us to maintain and improve our own farm drainage without requiring a CVC Development Application. It is a key part of our efforts to demonstrate that we are responsible land managers and practice sustainable farming methods. Your assistance in this is very much appreciated.

## SOWING THE SEED

Planting conditions were less than ideal last year but somehow Dicky, along with some help from the planting crew at North Clarence, managed to plant an Approved Seed Plot. The Mother Plot proved a bit more of a challenge, but Dick eventually met that challenge too. Despite a dry summer and subsequent flooding and waterlogging across the autumn things are looking pretty good. We will also have a new track harvester to cut it this season, with Bonsucro Certification credits used to update harvesting equipment at all three mills.

## APPROVED VARIETY LIST

The following list of varieties was approved for planting at Harwood, Broadwater and Condong at the June meeting of the Agricultural Services Committee.

ARRIS	BN81-1394	BN83-3120	EMPIRE	KQ228	Q183	Q200	Q208
Q211	Q232	Q240	Q242	Q244	Q252	Q254	SRA2
SRA11	SRAW18	SRA29	SRAW30	SRA35	SRA40	SRA41	SRA45

Varieties recently removed from the list can be ratooned to the end of the normal crop cycle.



### Contact:

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