



SMARTCANE BMP – SHOW ME THE VALUE!

By Kate Gowdie
Smartcane BMP Manager

Are you accredited in Smartcane BMP or considering becoming accredited? What's in it for you?

As the uptake of Smartcane BMP accreditation has increased over the years, so too has the reach and recognition of the program. With this has come benefits, new opportunities and potential for future gains.

Smartcane BMP accreditation may be driven by a desire to meet reef regulations in the regulated catchments, but what about growers who are undertaking accreditation in areas not affected by reef regs? What is the value to them?

The ultimate value of Smartcane BMP accreditation for a grower is determined by the individual and may be different for everyone.

The value of Smartcane BMP can also be both tangible and intangible.

A report conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) - Profitability and environmental

implications when growers transition to best management practices - found that:

"Despite variations between farms, the economic benefit or, more specifically, the annualised equivalent benefit, revealed a positive result for all farms ranging between \$25 and \$220 per hectare per year, suggesting that the changes toward Smartcane BMP were economically beneficial for each farming business analysed.

"Smartcane BMP adoption also resulted in reduced environmental impacts over the life cycle of sugarcane production, including reductions in potential water quality impacts from nutrients and pesticides, as well as energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

"Overall, the project findings indicate that Smartcane BMP implementation in the Wet Tropics can be a win-win for both economic and environmental outcomes."

The value of the program has also been recognised by industry stakeholders, some of whom share that value back to the grower. Accredited growers who supply to Wilmar mills can receive a \$0.15/tonne incentive payment.

Opportunities have also been available for growers to participate in rebate projects like the Wet Tropic Sugar Industry Partnership (WTSIP), where accredited growers were entitled to a rebate on equipment purchased as part of their participation in water quality projects.

More and more, external stakeholders are beginning to recognise and request Smartcane BMP accreditation, including financial institutions who have responsible lending criteria and want to ensure their clients have sustainable practices. NAB has requested Smartcane BMP accreditation data for clients in the recent past.



“One box that we can tick when we talk to people is to say that we currently produce sugarcane in a sustainable manner and we’re accredited to do that under the system of Smartcane BMP”

GREG ZIPF
ROCKY POINT GROWER

✓	PRODUCTIVITY & PROFITABILITY	The economic benefit from adoption is \$25 to \$220 per hectare per year
✓	SUSTAINABILITY	The environmental results show adoption can improve water quality and energy efficiency as well as mitigate greenhouse gas emissions
✓	SCIENCE BASED PRACTICES	Underpinned by SRA and cane industry science, research and trial data
✓	WATER QUALITY OUTCOMES	Paddock to Reef modelling shows water quality improvement to Great Barrier Reef catchments
✓	REGULATIONS & COMPLIANCE	Meets QLD Government reef regulations and is a recognised alternative compliance pathway
✓	SUSTAINABLE SUGAR PLATFORMS	Aligned to Bonsucro, Czarnikow VIVE & ProTerra
✓	SUSTAINABLE SOURCING	Recognised by Coca Cola (CCA) & Unilever for sustainable sourcing
✓	SOCIAL LICENCE TO OPERATE	Ongoing commitment supports businesses, community, environment and the Great Barrier Reef
✓	QUALITY ASSURANCE	Independent 3rd party audited using ISO 19011 accreditation system
✓	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Supported by industry adoption, extension and Smartcane BMP facilitators
✓	RISK MANAGEMENT	Recognised by banking, insurance and other service providers to manage risk
✓	VALUE CREATION OPPORTUNITIES	Data and certification supports alternative markets such as natural capital and carbon trading

The Smartcane BMP program is recognised under the current reef regulations, meaning accreditation is an alternate pathway to compliance. Accredited growers are not the focus of compliance activities, including on-farm visits.

But the Smartcane BMP program is about more than just reef regs. The value of the program, beyond compliance, is growing as the success of the program continues.

Social license to operate (often described as community acceptance) cannot be ignored. Consider explaining your farming practices, and how your fertiliser applications or cultivation strategies are sound, to a member of the voting public in southeast Queensland, versus explaining to them that your business operates to industry best practice and

you have been accredited in the process through an independent audit that meets international ISO standards.

The Smartcane BMP program also provides invaluable support and extension services through the network of Smartcane BMP facilitators, spread across Queensland’s cane-growing districts. Their knowledge and expertise are available to all cane growers participating in the Smartcane BMP program.

We must also ask ourselves what cost we as an industry would incur if we did not have our successful, Smartcane BMP program?

How would we demonstrate the standards our industry operates to and how would you be recognised for your achievements? ■