



SMARTCANE BMP - NOT A FLASH IN THE PAN!

By Kate Gowdie, Smartcane BMP Manager

Smartcane BMP accredited growers now manage 35% of Queensland's sugarcane area, after the program accrediting a 600th enterprise. Just as important as new accreditations, is the retention of existing participants as 20% of the current crop of Smartcane BMP growers are already accredited for five or more years.

Accreditation is granted to successful enterprises for a period of five years (based on an average crop cycle).

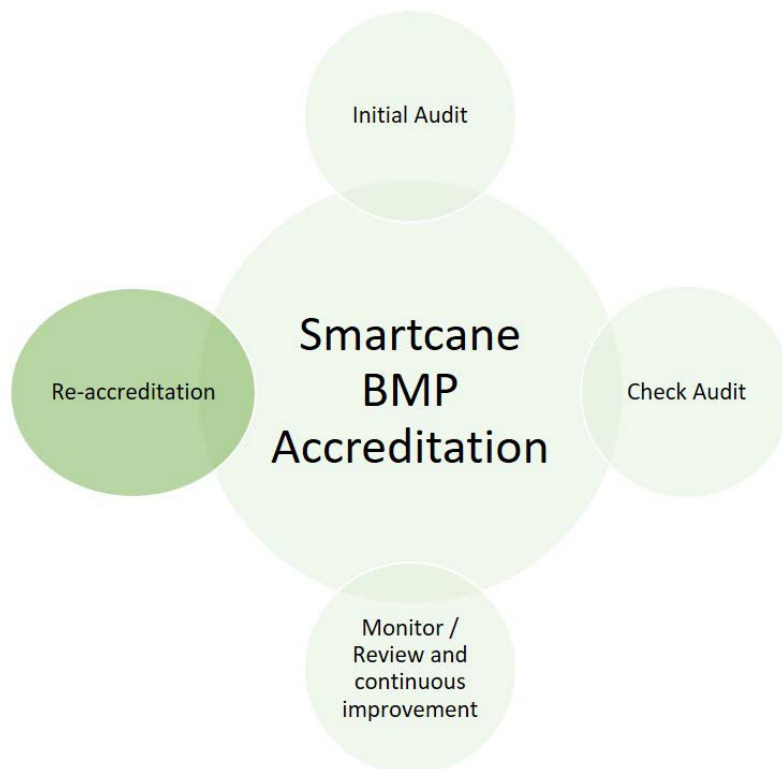
During that time growers may be randomly selected to undertake a check (surveillance) audit.

Successful check audits extend accreditations by another five years from the date of the audit.

Growers who have maintained their accreditation for five consecutive years, but haven't been selected for a check audit, can undertake a reaccreditation audit in the fifth year.

The voluntary nature of the program means that individual growers decide if they want to become and remain part of the program.

To date, the impressive rate of retention and reaccreditation demonstrates the commitment of growers to the long-term sustainability, profitability and productivity of their industry.





Big year ahead

There are over 100 enterprises due for reaccreditation in 2021, the largest number since the start of the program in 2014.

The ongoing compliance and retention of growers is one of the key strengths of the program.

There will always be natural attrition when farms are sold or cane production ceases, however the program has a retention rate above 95%.

Growers aren't just talking the talk, they're walking the walk when it comes to using best practice on their farms and are continuing to demonstrate this very high compliance long after their initial accreditation, said Lana Shoesmith, General Manager of Audits and Compliance with Ardent Group.

Lana is one of the independent auditors who accredit growers in the Smartcane BMP program.

"The majority of growers undertaking a re-accreditation or check audit have demonstrated that their record keeping and on farm practices have continued since the initial certification audits and they are in full compliance," Lana said. "The only lapses I have seen are where the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) have not been maintained.

"A current SDS is required to be kept for all products used (not just the active ingredient) and these SDS expire after five years.

"Growers are recognising the value in keeping a register of the products that they have on farm together with the SDS expiry date as a means of maintaining compliance." ■

Pictured: (above) Lana Shoesmith working with a canegrower for reaccreditation; (right) Cairns Region grower Don Hussey recently received his five-year reaccreditation.

"Growers aren't just talking the talk, they're walking the walk when it comes to using best practice"

Smartcane BMP is supported by the Queensland Government until 2022.

ARE YOU UP FOR REACCREDITATION?

Some key things to remember:

- Ensure your SDS register is up to date
- Have drumMUSTER receipts on hand
- Ensure your nutrient and chemical records are easily accessible
- Ensure you are up to date with all legislative requirements, including any introduced since your initial accreditation
- Chat to your local facilitator if you need any assistance

