



N+P Budget regulations. Conveniently the refocused fertiliser program can fall in line with BMP/6ES and can form part of the submission for BMP accreditation.

In Maryborough and Isis most of the hard work in preparing BMP planning and N+P Budgets is undertaken by the productivity board staff. The challenge for the grower is to ensure soil tests are taken in a fallow block of each management unit, and the fertilizer application data is recorded. This is the data required by the productivity boards to develop a fertilizer program. This data is also required to check compliance with N+P Budgeting, comparing the variance between recommended application rates against actual application rates.

BMP by default is now being accepted by growers as a means to better plan and fine tune their farming operations, particularly in relation to nutrient planning. ■

Pictured left: Maryborough local, Alan Otto, a proudly accredited Smartcane BMP grower. Greg and Owen Touzeau farm's damage from the intense rain runoff in the second flood event pictured right. Col Clayton and Tom Malouf, pictured below, are part of a positive increase in the number of Smartcane BMP accreditations for the Maryborough district.



DESIRE TO GROW – THE MARYBOROUGH STORY

By Tony McDermott
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The desire to grow sugarcane in the Maryborough region continues despite the setbacks in the past 2 years.

The Maryborough Sugar Mill closed in 2020 after 126 years of operation. MSF also sold their 5000ha company farms to a Macadamia investment group, RFM.

In 2021 the remaining cane supply was transferred north to the closest mill, Isis Central Sugar Mill. The 2021 harvest experienced unseasonal rainfall and significant transport and cane transfer teething problems.

In early 2022 the Mary River flooded twice and damaged the rich soil alluvial farms bordering the Mary River.

Surprisingly the sugar industry in Maryborough remains as resilient as the crop itself and is determined to

continue with a future in sugar and fibre. An upward trend in sugar pricing and a positive short-term outlook for sugar sales, combined with improved yields in the last two seasons from more consistent rainfall, has encouraged optimism in Maryborough.

The outlook for Maryborough remains positive in 2022 with dryland crop yield improvements more than compensating for the flood damaged cane loss.

Evidence of the district optimism is also found in the progress made in BMP accreditation. In the last six months four growers have achieved BMP accreditation and one grower has

been re-accredited, resulting in 3430 ha of farmland being accredited. Prior to this only one grower had achieved accreditation in the last five years. Several additional growers are currently preparing BMP submissions.

Rising fertilizer prices are now driving growers to review their crop nutrition plans to guarantee they get the best value for their \$buck, that is, to ensure their fertilizer program is fine-tuned using soil test recommendations to suit their yield expectations, fallow cropping outcomes, and amelioration strategy.

At the same time the fertilizer plan can also be formatted to be compliant with

