# Regional Variety Committee Meeting 2021

## Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 4 May 2021

Time: 09.00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Maryborough Canegrowers, 106 Bazaar str, Maryborough, Qld, 4650

Chair: Tony McDermott

| 1. Welcome and Apologies | | |
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| **Attendees:**<br>George Piperidis (SRA)<br>Shamsul Bhuiyan (SRA)<br>Alison Jensen (SRA)<br>Roy Parfitt (SRA)<br>Paul Nicol (ICM)(voting member)<br>Peter McLennan (Isis Canegrowers)(voting member)<br>Tyler Bengston (IPL)(voting member)<br>Don Halpin (IPL)<br>Juliette Greenwood (IPL)<br>Anthony LaRocca (IPL)<br>Michael Cavallaro (Bundaberg Canegrowers/Sugar Services)(voting member)<br>Michael Turner (Bundaberg Sugar Services)<br>Victor Schwenke (RPPS)(voting member)<br>Ben Spann (RPT Canegrowers)(voting member)<br>Isaac Schmidt (MCPS)(voting member)<br>Mark Pressler (on-line) (BDB Canegrowers/Sugar Services)(voting member)<br>Matthew Curtis (Bundaberg Sugar)(voting member)<br>Tony McDermott (MCPS)(voting member) | **Apologies:**<br>Matthew Leighton<br>John Gorringe<br>Ian Dart<br>Allan Dingle<br>Chris Coutts-Smith<br>Jason Eglinton | |
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| 2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting | | |
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| No discussion, or points raised from previous minutes | | |
| Previous minutes accepted | Moved: Ben Spann | Second: Tylor Bengston |
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| 3. Changes to southern RVC | | |
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| Members | Michael Cavallaro to replace Allan Dingle as voting member. | |
| Constitution | With closure of MYB mill should the southern RVC constitution be amended? After brief discussion agree to leave constitution unchanged but review again in future. | |
| Quorum | Yes, one voting member from each mill area. | |
| Next meeting (2022) | Rocky Point | |

| 4. Varieties | | |
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| 1. Release | QS09-1008 | Unanimous vote to discard QS09-1008 – average variety. |
| | QS09-7888 | QS09-7888 to remain on hold till 2022 RVC meeting (status remain as MaxProp). Distribute to IPL. |

| 4. Varieties | | |
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| 2. Maximum Propagation | KQ07-4897 | 8/10 voting members vote to release (fast-track) KQ07-4897. Against Paul Nicol and Matthew Curtis. |
| | QS09-205 | Discard QS09-205 – Leaf Scald 6 and questionable FQM. |
| | QS09-602 | Discard QS09-602 – Fiji 6 and average rEGV. |
| | QS10-445 | All agree to promote to Maximum Propagation; Need to fill disease and Floc gaps. |
| | QS10-714 | Discard QS10-714 – Pachymetra ratings (1,7), low fibre content and questionable FQM. |
| | QS10-863 | All agree to promote to Maximum Propagation; Need to fill disease and Floc gaps. |
| 3. Accelerated | QS10-7063<br>QS10-7123<br>QS10-7246<br>QS10-7333<br>QS10-7354<br>QS10-7358<br>QS10-7620<br>QS10-7640<br>QS10-8209<br>QS10-8397<br>QS10-8459<br>QS10-8469<br>QS10-8892 | Promote 6 of the 13 clones to Accelerated status:<br>QS10-7063<br>QS10-7123<br>QS10-7333<br>QS10-7354<br>QS10-7358<br>QS10-8469<br><br>Considerable discussion about QS10-7358 with good rEGV but questionable FQM. Also, discussion about QS10-7620, but borderline for fibre. |

| **4. Varieties** | | |
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| 4. Discussion | | There was a group discussion regarding the standard varieties in trials. Group agreed with planned change to replace Q242 with Q252, but needed to consider SRA11, SRA19 or SRA20 in near future.<br><br>*Peter McLennan* commented that it was concerning that clones were reaching stages of Accelerated/Maximum Propagation without the necessary disease/floc information to make an informed decision.<br><br>*George Piperidis/Roy Parfitt* investigated and identified a couple of points in the pathway to floc trials that failed for clones QS10-445 and QS10-863, and these will be addressed to ensure that this does not happen in the future. |

| **5. Re-structure of the SRA southern plant breeding program** | | |
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| 1. Background | | *Roy Parfitt* gave a brief overview for the reason for the SRA restructure (refocus and sustainability). He outlined the current SRA plant breeding program (parent selection, crossing, 4 core programs, 100,000 seedlings) and the potential reduction in plant breeding capability to service the southern region (merger of NSW/southern and central regions PB programs). |
| 2. New program | | Going forward, the southern program would focus of stage 3 trials (FATs) only, relying on selections progressing through stage 1 and stage 2 trials conducted in Mackay for inclusion in the southern FATs. The same applies to the NSW program. |
| 3. Impacts | | Reduction in the seedling population size.<br><br>Reduction in the first clonal population size.<br><br>Stage 1 and stage 2 trials in central region environmentally/geographically further removed from southern/NSW FATs and area/region where clones will eventually be released.<br><br>New technologies (Genomic selection and phenomics) are going to be put into practice to maintain parent and clone selection efficacy. |

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| 4. Discussion | | *Ben Spann* asked how the seedling (PAT) and first clonal (CAT) populations are to be shared between the Central and the Southern programs? Is it a 50/50 split?<br><br>*Peter McLennan* commented that he was worried about the variation in climate between the regions (C and S), and in fact more crosses and larger seedling/first clonal populations are required to service the Central and Southern regions combined compared to the narrow environmental bands in the northern regions.<br><br>*George Piperidis/Roy Parfitt*: Parents and crosses will still be selected to suit SE Qld conditions. Parents and crosses for SE Qld often overlap with those for Mackay. Final detail and decisions on the workings of the new combined program still to be ironed out. Both George and Roy keen to work together.<br><br>*Roy Parfitt* put out the question whether an RVT type trial addressing a particular issue in the southern region (nematodes, frost, soldier fly, grubs) should replace one of the four FATs in the future? Consensus was not to reduce the program further.<br><br>*Ben Spann/Peter McLennan:* asked about the progress in appointing the district manager for the southern region? What his/her role was? The group expressed concerns and unhappiness about one person covering four mill areas. |

| 6. General | | |
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| 1. Other | SRA11 nematode damage causing crop failure (plant crop after peanuts). | This was on Peter McLennan's farm where he also planted SRA19 and SRA20.<br><br>Severe crop reduction was only obvious in SRA11 on the sandy end of the block; normal growth on the heavier soil type (sandy clay loam).<br><br>A large area of poor growth in SRA11 spring plant 2020 was also noted on Danny Tobin's block nearby (following a double crop of peanuts).<br><br>Imazapic residue from the peanut crop was initially suspected as the main problem.<br><br>SRA nematode test results indicated severe rootknot nematode damage/numbers.<br><br>There is concern over the robustness of SRA11 under some conditions, and over the suitability of a new peanut variety to reduce nematode populations in the fallow break. |
| 2. Other | Sugarcane for fibre | Tony McDermott proposed evaluating/reviewing introgression varieties for dual purpose sugar/trash outcomes based on the growing demand and value for trash in South-East Queensland. The clone QS09-8404 was suggested as a clone readily available as tissue culture material ex SRA BNE that could be strip trialled on marginal soils or soils with limited irrigation in Isis/MYB. Sugar yields/ha and trash yield potential could be evaluated against conventional varieties, particularly Q232.<br><br>An opportunity also exists for a biomass RVT trial in the Sunshine Coast region. The cane crops grown on the southern side of the Maroochy river face cane harvest transport limitations which may force the closure of sugarcane farming. Growers are actively sourcing fibre crop alternatives (non-cane and cane) to enable the ongoing production of baled trash or compost. Leafy cane/introgression/wild cane varieties have been requested to enable assessment of whole crop harvesting for fibre only.<br><br>Paul Nicol objected to trials assessing sugarcane varieties for fibre only. Using resources on such trials was a conflict of interest with sugar millers. |
| 3. Close | | Meeting closed at 12:30 with lunch served. |