

# Welcome to the first edition of CaneConnection

*Dr Andrew Ward*

Executive Manager

Professional Extension and  
Communication Unit

*With the formation of Sugar Research Australia (SRA) I am pleased to launch CaneConnection, our new quarterly grower-focused technical publication.*

The Professional Extension and Communication Unit has spent a great deal of time this year out-and-about, and talking to you and the industry that supports you.

We've heard from every cane-growing region that you want to know about relevant information that could help you boost production and profitability on your farm.

And you want this information to be timely and topical.

In this edition we cover a variety of seasonally relevant issues as well as an update on our work into understanding Yellow Canopy Syndrome.

With sugar prices down, we focus on a range of areas that have the potential to minimise costs without reducing yields. Firstly, we look at pump efficiency, a potential source of savings with electricity costs continuing to rise. Secondly, we look at the impact of row spacing on yield and production costs, and finally we look at the important issue of optimising fertiliser inputs.

We also spend some time looking at diseases in plant cane as well as the management of rats. Finally, we discuss red witchweed, a recently discovered biosecurity threat to sugarcane and other crops in the Mackay area.

As this edition reaches you, I hope that the crush will continue seamlessly and that your yields and CCS levels will meet or exceed your expectations.

I trust that *CaneConnection* and the other informative publications we have planned for the rest of 2013 will meet your needs.

We value your input. If you have any suggestions about topics that you would like to see covered in future editions or have any suggestions on how we can improve this or any of our other publications, please let me know by emailing [communications@sugarresearch.com.au](mailto:communications@sugarresearch.com.au)

## Contents

*Spring edition*

Which fertiliser should I apply on my ratoons?  
Pages 5-6

For our growers in New South Wales  
Pages 11-12

Yellow Canopy Syndrome update  
Page 2

Benefits of controlled traffic farming  
Pages 7-8

Are you rat ready?  
Pages 12-13

Efficient pumps: keeping your costs down  
Pages 3-4

It's planting time and diseases are waiting to attack  
Pages 9-11

Exotic weed finds its way to Australia: red witchweed  
Page 14