GIVE 2009 project report

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Moving Farm Businesses into the Future

GIVE 2009
Project Report

Prepared by
Lawrence Di Bella (HCPSL)

Supporting organising groups of GIVE 09.
Background
The Grower Innovation Virtual Expo (GIVE 09) was hosted by the Herbert Young Farmers and Herbert and Tully grower groups. The event was also supported by Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL), Tully Cane Productivity Services (TCPST), BSES Limited, CSR Sugar, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F), CANEGROWERS Herbert River, Grower Group Services (GGS) and the Tropical City Group.

The primary objective of the event was to encourage growers to discuss their own experiences, research and development which they were undertaking in their own businesses. The Tully/Herbert organizing group also wanted to challenge and encourage growers within their regions to seek opportunities to improve their own farming businesses.

The event was held on the 24th and 25th of March, 2009 in the Tully/Ingham area.

It is perceived by all involved that the GIVE 09 event was a major success.

Working group
The working group consisted of the following members:

- Lawrence Di Bella (HCPSL)*
- Graeme Holzberger (HCPSL)*
- Michael Waring (NFI Farming Group and HCPSL)*
- Mark Poggio (NFI Farming Group and QDPI&F)*
- Ashton Benson (BSES-Herbert)*
- Adam Royle (BSES-Herbert)
- Tanya Sheahan (BSES-Herbert)
- Heidi Clements (BSES-Herbert)
- Kirrily Low (BSES-Herbert)
- Samantha Sellick (BSES-Herbert)
- Greg Shannon (BSES-Herbert)
- Errol Cantamessa (Tropical City Group)*
- Peter Larsen (CSR Sugar)*
- Danielle Scokaj (BSES-Tully)
- Trent Stainlay (TCPST)
- Jordan Villacruz (TCPST)*
- Maria Battoraro (CANEGROWERS Herbert River) and her staff

Members of the working group attended GIVE 08 in Mackay to investigate the format of the event and event requirements (indicated above by an *). On return a larger group was established to assist with coordination and preparation of the event.

Meetings were conducted monthly for the 6 months prior to the 2009 event. In the last month meetings were conducted fortnightly. The working group shared the role of meeting chair based upon the group they were representing.

The working group worked well together and with no mishaps. The event also energized the members and built a closer working bond between the groups.
Sponsorship
After the development of an initial budget it was soon realized by the working group that sponsorship was required to minimize costs associated with conducting such an event.

Letters were sent to potential sponsors (refer to appendix 1) seeking their support for the event. It was decided that sponsors would be recognized for their level of sponsorship ranging from platinum through to bronze.

Sponsorship for the 2009 event was overwhelming. There was competition between companies to obtain Platinum sponsorship; with Syngenta securing the position and major sponsor naming rights.

Sponsors for GIVE 09 were:
Platinum: Syngenta
Gold: YLAD Living Soils, CSR Sugar, Grower Group Services, SRDC, Herbert River Express (newspaper)
Bronze: CSR Ethanol, Andrew Cripps MLA

SRDC sponsored the event in the form of a Travel and Learning Project (TLOP). This project covered the cost of the keynote speakers for the event. This report will be used as the reporting mechanism for the discussed TLOP.

Budget

The project budget was able to meet all expenses associated with hosting the event. At the time of publication of this report total expenses were yet to be finalised, however it is not anticipated that expenses would exceed the income.

It must be noted that sponsorship of the event was essential to contain costs.

It was decided that any remaining funds would be used to fund grower participants from the Tully/Ingham area to attend the next GIVE event or be used to fund a regional grower activity.

Budget

Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>$7,240.00</td>
<td>Ingham and Tully Tours, Buses from Mackay and Mossman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>$1,690.00</td>
<td>Hall and Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>$8,378.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$637.00</td>
<td>Tully Times and Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prizes</td>
<td>$214.95</td>
<td>Bottles of Wine and Spirits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incidentals $829.15  Tags, Lighting, Chairs, Water, Receipt Book, Table Cloths
Reimbursement for admin $3,000.00  Administration by BSES, HCSPL and Herbert River CANEGROWERS ($1000/ group)
Comp Conf Pass $1,800.00  Sponsors / NSW
Comp Din Pass $930.00  Sponsors / NSW
$27,419.77

Tom Rainey $297.70  Flight ( $ 247.70 ), Accom ( $ 50 ), Accom ( $ 78 )
Deepak Desai $85.00
Herbert Valley
Motel $78.00  T Rainey
Hinchinbrook
Marine $85.00  Accom
L Di Bella $139.00  Accom ( Deepak Desai )
Business Brains $3,433.00  Travel and Accom ( Deepak Desai )
$4,117.70

Income

Sponsorship $24,275.00
Registrations $12,850.00
$37,125.00

Report as of the 24.4.09

Program

Agenda :

Day 1(March 24, 2009) Tully–

- 10-12pm. Tropical City group meeting at Tully- Venue: Tully Mill Recreational Hall. The Tropical City group conducted their annual meeting prior to the commencement of GIVE 09.
- 12-1pm. Lunch- Venue: Tully Mill hall

Start 1pm  Title – GIVE DAY- “The Australian Sugarcane Industry Beyond 2010”

- 11:00am Mini bus leaves BSES Ingham (limited number of seats)
- 1pm- 4:30pm Tully Field Tour (GO NORTH GROUP)
  Assemble at the Tully Sugar Mill Recreation Hall
    - Mackay Farm - Large family owned sugarcane and banana farm
      – ISO140001 Environmental Accreditation
    - Boar Creek Harvesting Business - Look at a large harvesting group and how they manage their business
    - Blenner’s farms - Controlled traffic, new farming systems and composting
    - Syngenta demonstration site
- 5:30 pm- till late. Meet and greet BBQ – Venue: BSES, Ingham.

Day 2 (March 25, 2009) Ingham– Venue: Kelly Theatre

- 5:30- 6:30 am Radio interviews with ABC regional radio
- 8 – 8:05 am Opening address- Hinchinbrook Shire Council Mayor Pino.
8:05-8:15 am SRDC Grower Group Services presentation (Joe Muscat)
8:15-8:45 am  
Guest Speaker: Nick Hughes (Department of Climate Change.  
Topic of guest speaker: “The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the Australian sugarcane industry?”
8:45-9:00 am  
Guest Speaker: Terrain speaker- Allan Dale  
Topic of guest speaker: “The Reef Rescue Program ”
9:00 am to 9:30 am Morning Tea- Venue: Kelly Theatre (TAFE room)
9:30 am to 12:30 pm Grower group presentations – Venue: Kelly Theatre.

Concurrent sessions:

Room 1 (Main theatre)
9:30-10:00am- NQ Bio Energy Group- Value adding in India and what does the future hold for Australia (Robert Carey and Anthony Castorina)- aecastorina@bigpond.com.au and robert@bjcarey.com.au
10:00-10:30am- YLAD- The benefits of compost and making composts (Rhonda and Bill Daly) 
Rhonda.daly@yladlivingsoils.com.au
10:30-11:00am- Mackay Fibre Group (Joe Muscat) Fibre Crop trials – sun hemp, hemp, kenaff and nitrogen fixation trials- jmuscat@bses.org.au
11:00-11:30am- Advanced Nutrient Solutions (John Ross & Dennis Werner) compost manufacturing and field trials- bwalker@orion-online.com.au
11:30-12:00pm- A sustainable farming in the North Eton area- controlled traffic, GPS, precision mill mud applications and legume fallows (Gerry Deguara)- deguarag@bigpond.com
12:00-12:30pm- Improving billet planter efficiency for controlled traffic / zero tillage farming in NSW (Chris Shannon)- cndkshannon@bigpond.com.au

Room 2 (Upstairs theatre)
9:30-10:00am- MAFIA Group (Chris Hesp) Comparison of overhead, trickle and flood irrigation systems in the Burdekin 
sonyah@austarnet.com.au
10:00-10:30am- New Innovative Double Row Chopper Harvester System (Chris Cannavan- 91 Iona Rd Home Hill or cjcannavan@bigpond.com
10:30-11:00am- Sugar HELP harvester system and the use of the harvest data in the Herbert (Anthony Girgenti & Michael Sefton)- msefton@csr.com.au and ant95@itnq.com.au
11:00-11:30am- Nutgrass research and frost tolerant varieties in NSW (Alan Munro) – alan@rmunroandsons.com.au (0427476491)
11:30-12:00pm- Development of a farm record keeping and geo-spatial mapping systems (Mark Savina)- msavina@ozemail.com.au
12:00-12:30pm- Herbert Landcare Group- Water quality from cane lands (Keith Phillips and John Pavetto)- John Pavetto & Keith Phillips
PO Box Macknade Qld 4850

12:45pm Get onto buses (pick up point in front of the Kelly Theatre)

- 1:00 pm to 5 pm Field tours (3)
  Lunch – Venue: In the field

Tours:

Herbert Tours:

Group 1 (GO WEST GROUP)
- Russo min tillage land preparation and liquid fertiliser application equipment (Vince Russo)
- New GPS systems (BMS-Trimble)
- NFI grower group (SRDC GGIP group)
- Plant tissue culture (Pace Farming & BSES staff)
- Syngenta trials

Group 2 (GO SOUTH GROUP)
- Liddles liquid fertiliser plant & variable rate liquid fertilising equipment
- EM mapping and yield variation- Managing the farming system.
  (Ross Coventry- SRDC project leader for BPS001 and Peter McDonnell).
- Mizzi mound planting system (Landcare project group)
- SCYDJV Morris site (BSES)
- Composting- Its value in the cropping system

Group 3 (GO EAST GROUP)
- Two in One harvester operation and automatic basecutter systems (Castallani harvesting group) (SRDC GGIP group)
- Techagro harvester tracking and yield monitor systems (Techagro and HCPSL)
- New pre-emergent herbicides by Bayer
- PAD mound planting system (SRDC GGIP group)

- 7 pm- till late Industry Dinner – Venue: Shire Hall
  Guest Speaker 1: Deepak Desai (International speaker)
  Topic of guest speaker: “Value adding –Where is the rest of the world going?”
  Guest Speaker 2: Tom Rainey (QUT)
  Topic of guest speaker: “Bagasse to paper”

To coincide with GIVE 09, Generation Next was held on the 26-27th of March at Lucinda (near Ingham).

Guest speakers
SRDC through a TLOP met the costs associated with the key note speakers and venue hire for GIVE 09.

The key note speakers were:
- Nick Hughes from the Department of Climate Change, Canberra. His topic was: “The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the Australian sugarcane industry?”
- Deepak Desai from the Business Brains Consulting Group and Ethanol India, from India.
His topic was: “Value adding – Where is the rest of the world going?”

- Tom Rainey from QUT, Brisbane.
  His topic was: “Bagasse to paper.”

Promotion

Within the working group a sub-group was responsible for the promotion and publicity for GIVE 09.

The event was promoted through the following publications:

- Herbert River Express (refer to appendix 3). The Herbert River Express ran advertisements and a 5 page feature prior to the event. Follow up stories also appeared in the paper after the event.
- Tully Times
- North Queensland Advocate (refer to appendix 3)
- Innisfail Advocate
- Ayr Advocate
- Numerous BSES publications
- Herbert Cane Productivity Services newsletter
- Herbert River CANEGROWERS newsletters
- The Australian CANEGROWER

The event was also promoted in the following electronic media:

- ABC radio. ABC radio broadcasted live from the Herbert BSES office on morning of the 25th of March to report on the event.
- Emails to growers through the BSES, HCPSL, TCPS and Herbert River and Tully CANEGROWERS networks.
Participant details

Figure 1. Of the 205 registrations received it was not surprising that the largest group attending the event was from the Herbert region at 40%. The group with the lowest attendance was from the Southern region (1%).

![Location for which GIVE 09 participants came from as a percentage.](chart)

Figure 2. Of the 205 participants registered for the event, the overwhelming majority were growers (74%). Also represented were extension officers (12%) and research officers (5%). The participants grouped in “Other” (9%) were varied and included: Fertiliser Sales, Chemical Sales, GPS resellers, Government advisors, Media, Mill staff and industry support staff.
Feedback

GIVE 09 participants were asked to complete an evaluation form (refer to Appendix 2); 115 feedback sheets were returned to event coordinators.

Participants were asked a series of questions and asked to rate them from 1-5. One being poor and 5 being great. The results are as follows:

Figure 3: New information learnt.

Figure 4: Interesting / interest.
Figure 5. Suitability of the venues.

Figure 6. The appropriateness of the time of the year the event was held.
Figure 7. The content of information presented on the bus trips.
Figure 8. The appropriateness of the meals provided.

In the evaluation form participants were asked a series of questions, below are the responses:

1. “What did you think was the best aspect of the conference?''
   (in order of highest number of replies to lowest):
   - The networking
   - Grower group presentations
   - Knowledge sharing
   - Talking to innovative growers
   - Learning experience
   - Meals
   - Well organized
   - Field trips
   - Guest speakers
   - Mix of presentations and field trips

2. “Do you have any suggested improvements for future GIVE conferences?''
   (in order of highest number of replies to lowest):
   - Keep having them
   - Join with ASSCT
   - Keep bus trip moving
• Avoid concurrent sessions
• Keep grower group focus and avoid having too many guest speakers

3. “Which presentation did you enjoy the most?”
(in order of highest number of replies to lowest):
• Deepak’s presentation on by-products
• The presentation on the double row harvester
• The Nth. Queensland Bio-Energy’s presentation on findings from India
• The new design billet planter
• Gerry Deguara’s farming system presentation
• Chemicals for nutgrass control

4. “In which region do you think the next GIVE conference should be held?
Figure 9.

![The region to host the next GIVE event](image)

5. “Should the GIVE event be held annually/ bi-annually/ tri-annually?”
80% of responses indicated bi-annually and 20% indicated annually.

6. “Would you attend a future GIVE conference?”
100% of responses indicated yes.

7. “How did people hear about the GIVE 09 event?”
Word of mouth (36%) appears to be the most effective way to promote the event, followed by emails (21%). Radio had the least impact at 3%. Other (12%) consisted of articles in the CANEGROWERS magazine and other similar publications.
Presentations

Copies of all the grower group and keynote speaker presentations can be found on [www.growergroupservices.com.au/give](http://www.growergroupservices.com.au/give)

Recommendations

The recommendations for following GIVE event coordinators to consider are as follows:

- The survey indicated that NSW should host the next GIVE event
- The event should be held bi-annually
- Be well organized
- Establish a working group which is multi-skilled. “Many hands make light work”
- Find an appropriate venue(s)
- Seek sponsorship early and aim to obtain has much sponsorship money to assist in reducing event costs
- Maintain the participant registration fee as low as possible
- Minimise the number of invited quest speakers and maximize the number of grower group presenters
- Have a mix of indoor grower group presentations and outdoor (field trip) presentations
- Avoid con-current sessions as much as possible
- Have one or two keynote speakers who can be used as a draw card
- Maintain a strict time schedule for all events, to ensure the event will flow smoothly
- Allow enough time to receive presentations from presenters
• Review all presentations for content and for time allocations.
• Allow time for networking
• Don’t make the coordination of the event a task—enjoy your time working together

Appendices

Appendix 1.
Dear Potential Sponsor,

Thankyou for the opportunity to present the following proposal for sponsorship of GIVE 2009.

**GIVE** is a Grower Innovation Virtual Expo which is a conference and expo unique to the Australian Sugarcane industry.

**GIVE** is a concept developed by a group of sugarcane growers in the Burdekin region in 2006. These growers identified a need for increased sharing of information between innovative farmers throughout the industry. There are over 40 grower groups throughout the Sugarcane Industry (Northern NSW to Far North Queensland) that have commenced or completed research and development projects aimed at addressing productivity, profitability and sustainability issues. While the industry runs a number of conferences and field days aimed at transferring information from researchers to growers, there was no effective means for innovative growers to transfer their information to other growers industry wide.

The aspects that make **GIVE** unique include:
- The event is hosted and coordinated by grower groups
- The presentations and field displays are conducted by grower groups
- This is the only event in the entire sugar industry that allows innovative growers to share their knowledge and practices with other growers

The **GIVE 2009** is being jointly hosted by the Tully and Ingham grower groups and sugarcane industry service providers on the 24th – 25th March 2009. Over the 2 days, the Expo focuses on information sharing between growers through half hour presentations and field trips. A gala dinner will also be held on the night of the 25th March. The **GIVE** event generally attracts between 200 – 300 people.

The generous support from sponsors in the past has been pivotal to the success of the event. **GIVE** provides a unique opportunity for sponsors to support a sugar industry event that is widely publicized and recognised by growers. With between 200 - 300 growers attending, we believe we can offer significant exposure, promotion, and networking opportunities for our sponsors. We are currently seeking sponsorship for **GIVE 2009**. We have four levels of sponsorship, and their packages are identified below.

**Platinum sponsor** - $ 5,000+ or over (only one company or business will be accepted at this level)
- Sole naming rights to the event (ie. The XYZ company **GIVE 2009**)
- Display of company logos at all presentation sessions and dinner.
- 10 minute presentation time at one particular event.
- Opportunity for a company booth at the gala dinner and in the foyer of the events function rooms.
- Tailoring of field trips to visit/inspect growers using your products/services
- Your promotional material included in the **GIVE 2009** "show bag". “Show bag” will contain CD & written copies of all presentations, contact details for growers and guest speakers etc.
- Two free conference and gala dinner passes

**Gold sponsor**- $2,500- $5,000
- Display of company logos at all presentation sessions and dinner.
Opportunity for a company booth at the gala dinner.
Advertising and recognition selected GIVE media activities (print, TV, radio, internet – www.giveday.org.au)
Your promotional material included in the GIVE 2009 “show bag”. “Show bag” will contain CD & written copies of all presentations, contact details for growers and guest speakers etc
One free conference and gala dinner pass

**Silver sponsor -** $1,000 - $2,500
- Display of company logos at sponsored session and dinner.
- Opportunity for a company booth at the gala dinner.
- Your promotional material included in the GIVE 2009 “show bag”. “Show bag” will contain CD & written copies of all presentations, contact details for growers and guest speakers etc.
- One free conference pass

**Bronze sponsor -** Up to $1,000.
- Display of company logos at a sponsored presentation session and dinner.
- Your promotional material included in the GIVE 2009 “show bag”. “Show bag” will contain CD & written copies of all presentations, contact details for growers and guest speakers etc.

We are more than happy to discuss other sponsorship opportunities should you have any ideas, and will tailor the sponsorship package to suit your budget. If you are interested in sponsoring the **GIVE 2009**, please fill in the accompanying form and return to PO Box 135. Please include you company logo, or email logo to gholzberger@bigpond.com.au.

If you have any questions in relation to sponsorship or the **GIVE 2009** in general, please contact Lawrence Di Bella (0447304963), Graeme Holzberger on 0428761808 or Greg Shannon on 0408180543.

We look forward to your involvement with this event.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence Di Bella     Graeme Holzberger     Greg Shannon

GIVE 2009 Sponsorship Co-ordinators

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**Appendix 2**

**Moving Farm Businesses into the Future**

**Tully / Ingham**

24th – 25th March, 2009

**Major Sponsor**

Web: www.growergroupservices.com.au
GIVE 09 – Evaluation Form

A prize will be allocated to one successful Expo participant for completing the Evaluation Form and dropping it in the allocated box in the Hall.

1. Are you a :
   (please circle the appropriate box/boxes)
   Grower □
   Miller □
   Extension Officer □
   Research Officer □
   Other ________________________

2. Your postal address:

   ______________________________________________________

3. How did you rate the GIVE 2009 Conference
   (1 being poor, 5 being great)

   1  2  3  4  5

4. Please rate the following aspects of the conference
   (1 being poor, 5 being great)

   New information learnt 1  2  3  4  5
   Interesting 1  2  3  4  5
   Venue 1  2  3  4  5
   Time of year 1  2  3  4  5
   Bus trip 1  2  3  4  5

5. Where the quest speakers appropriate for the event (please circle)?
   Yes
   No
   (reason)__________________________________________________________

6. What did you think was the best aspect of the conference?

   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________
7. Do you have any suggested improvements for future GIVE conferences?

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

_________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

8. In which region do you think the next GIVE conference should be held?

New South Wales
Bundaberg
Mackay
Burdekin
Cairns
Atherton
Whitsunday
Brisbane
Mossman/ Port Douglas
Innisfail

9. Should the event be held (please circle)

Annually   Bi-annually   Tri-annually

10. Would you attend a future GIVE conference (please circle)

Yes   No
(reason)________________________________________________

11. How did you hear about the GIVE conference
(please circle all appropriate responses)

Newspaper
Email
Letter
Radio
Word of Mouth
Other (please specify)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE.
HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE NEXT GIVE EXPO.

Appendix 3.

News paper articles on GIVE 09 from the North Queensland Register and Herbert River Express.
Generation Next speakers

Alan Goreide: Leader of the Sustainable Yield Decline Joint Venture, one of the most valuable programs in the last 20 years. He can talk about his experience with resilience as he experienced some difficulties at the start of his program.

Karen Baum: Dairy industry consultant Karen Baum is actively engaged with young dairy farmers (being one herself) and is part of the core People in Dairy project team, as well as leading the careers and mentoring projects and activities in the dairy industry. She will be speaking about initiatives around young people in dairy.

Dominic Nolan: New CEO of Australian Sugar Milling Council. He started just two weeks ago. He is new to the sugar industry and has experience in other industries. He worked previously with WFA and has extensive experience in policy development and implementation. His position in the WFA aimed at reinforcing the image and effectiveness of the federation and the wine industry generally in Canberra. He can talk about this experience in dealing with change.

Andrew Watson: NSW cotton farmer Andrew Watson is the 2008 Cotton Industry Awards Moran’s Grower of the Year Winner. For the past four years he has been vice-chairman of the Upper Nanru Cotton Growers Association. Andrew and his family achieved first place in the Cotton Grower of the Year competition in 2007 and Andrew was named NSW Farmers Association Young Farmer of the Year in 2004. He has many years experience in the growing and trading of cotton and in the irrigation industry. He is also Cotton Australia’s delegate to the NSW Irrigators Council and member of Cotton Australia’s board. He can talk about influencing people and making things happen.

Value adding industry dinner topic

INTERNATIONALLY sought after, Deepak Desai (picture) will be the guest speaker at the 2009 Grower Innovation Virtual Expo industry dinner on March 23.

Chief consultant for one of the largest sugar industry organisations in India, Business Brain Consulting Group, Mr Desai has extensive knowledge and experience in sugar cane factory project management, design and construction, as well as value adding projects, particularly ethanol and co-generation.

Having travelled the globe providing consultancy expertise to sugar cane processing businesses in India, Brazil, Thailand, Philippines and Australia, Mr Desai will talk about “Value Adding – Where is the rest of the world going?” during his dinner presentation.

Herbert Case Productivity Services Limited agreement and team event organiser for the expo, Lawrence Di Bella, said Mr Desai’s credentials made him a very attractive speaker for a region yearning to develop the full potential of sugarcane by-products.

“Deepak is a world recognised speaker, particularly in Asian countries,” Mr Di Bella said.

“He is quite conversant with what’s happening in the Asian region concerning sugarcane value adding and factory design and infrastructure.”

The industry dinner at the shire hall starts at 7pm.

Carbon pollution reduction scheme

WITH environmental issues continuing to plague the sugar industry, keynote speaker Dr Stephen Bygrave’s presentation at this year’s Grower Innovation Virtual Expo could provide the forewarning growers need to be forearmed to tackle climate issues in the future.

Currently on the staff of the newly formed Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change, Dr Bygrave is Assistant Secretary to the Coverage and Market Development Branch working on emissions trading.

Coping on the back of a wealth of experience which includes senior management positions in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of the Environment, Water and Heritage and Australian Greenhouse Office, delegates at the expo will have the privileged opportunity to hear from a well established expert in the field of climate science.

One of a number of guest speakers being brought to this year’s expo, Dr Bygrave will be the first to be heard.

Item two on the agenda for day two of GIVE, March 20, Dr Bygrave will deliver a half hour presentation on the carbon pollution reduction scheme for the Australian sugar industry beginning at 8.30am.

Herbert Case Productivity Services Limited agreement and team event organiser for the expo, Lawrence Di Bella, said it was an impressive feat to have secured a speaker of Dr Bygrave’s calibre.

“The keynotes speakers are world recognised,” he said.

“Stephen (Bygrave) will talk about climate change, which is an important topic because we need to know what the Federal Government’s plans are for the sugar industry.

“We need to know how the sugar industry fits into the whole picture in terms of carbon trading and carbon emissions.”
BSES’s Vince Blanco and Glen Park will present the findings from their compaction study at GIVE.
Besides answering phones and counter enquires for the expo, BSES's Samantha Sellick and Kirrily Low are also accepting completed registrations like Ray Marbelli's.

A composting unit in NSW. This site and equipment is owned by YLAD, a sponsor of the expo.
It has been all hands on deck for Canegrowers administration staff who have been receiving and processing GIVE registrations.
BSES's Heidi Clements watches as her colleague Ashley Benson and HCPSL's Graeme Holzberger attend to a machinery modification.

Weed eradication trial in Herbert district

SYDENTA, the major sponsor of the 2009 Grower Innovation Virtual Expo, has rewarded farmers for their efforts in the formation of a wide-spread weed eradication project in Herbert district.

"This is the first year we have been involved in a GWIE Expo," she said.

"The only other trial was the Herbert two years ago, but it was a trial and we are happy to back the project that has been so successful," she explained.

Mr Benson said the project was a demonstration of the potential of the herbicide Spry Seed, as well as highlighting the services of the company.

"Sydenta supports the project by providing products and expertise," he said.

"We also have a backup system in place for farmers who have problems with their own weeds in the field," he said.

Mr Holzberger said Spry Seed was particularly suitable for the region's growers.

"What Spry Seed does is pull moisture from the soil, causing the roots to release the soil, so when growers come to work the soil for the next season, the soil is in much better condition," he said.

"What the tests show is that it is worth the extra cost to use Spry Seed, as it doesn’t leave the cane fields."
The people who attended last year’s GIVE conference at Mackay had the option of visiting a number of properties and this was one piece of equipment that created interest, a cane harvester with a wide front built to harvest removing dual row cane in 2m centres.

Sugar industry expo at Ingham

THE sugar industry has a long history of innovation.

From the mechanisation of the cane harvesting system through to various soil preparation implements, the ideas have continually advanced the industry.

In keeping with this tradition, the Tully and Ingham cane growing regions will host the 2009 Grower Innovation Virtual Expo, or GIVE, as it has become known.

The event will take place at Ingham on March 24 and 25, including a field trip to Tully for those who choose to.

Over the two days, the expo focuses on information sharing between growers through half hour presentations and field trips.

One of the most important aspects to GIVE is that it is a forum where growers can present their research to other growers.

The event is hosted and coordinated by grower groups, which means the event is relevant and practical.

The presentations and field displays are conducted by grower groups, and it is considered the only event in the entire sugar industry that allows innovative growers to share their knowledge and practices with other growers.

The GIVE 2009 is being jointly hosted by the Tully and Ingham grower groups and sugarcane industry service providers (HCPSI, BESN, QDPIAF and TCP).

There will be over 25 growers from throughout the Australian sugarcane presenting at GIVE 2009.

The grower groups will present information on all aspects of cane production and harvesting.

The opening speaker for the expo will be from the Federal Government Department of Climate Change.

He will speak on the carbon pollution reduction scheme and the Australian sugarcane industry.

As part of the expo, an industry dinner will be held on the last night with an international guest speaker talking on the topic ‘Value Adding – where is the rest of the world going?’

The GIVE format has received praise from growers who have attended previous events.

“The GIVE event is worth attending to gain a better understanding of what grassroots growers are doing on their farms. It gave me the confidence to make changes to my farming practices,” Errol Carrienna, a Hawkins Creek grower said of last year’s event.

Paul Mizzi, a Baramulrossa grower, also said the event was well worth attending.

“I gained new ideas to try on my farm. I won’t miss the next GIVE event,” he said.

Victor Romano, Ingham was of the same opinion.

“The last GIVE event was one of the best sugarcane expo’s I have ever attended. It was great to see growers get up and talk about their successes and failures,” he said.

Those intending to go to GIVE are urged to register to ensure for meals and buses.

The GIVE is being made possible through sponsorship from Syngenta, the Sugar Research and Development Corporation, Grower Group Services, YLAND Living Soils, CSR Sugar, IMS Laseraw, Katabank, the Tyro Wetlands Centre, Hinchinbrook Shire Council and member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps.

For more information, visit www.growergroupservices.com.au
Value-adding sugarcane given an Indian flavour

HARVESTING sugarcane has become so much more than simply producing sugar as the end result. Value-adding has become an important part of the diversification of the industry. Speaking on the topic of what the rest of the world is doing to value-add to sugar will be Deepak B Desai, chief consultant for Business Brains Consulting, based in Pune, India.

Business Brains is one of the largest consultancy organisations operating in the Indian sugarcane industry.

Mr Desai has extensive knowledge and experience in project management, design and construction of sugarcane factories and sugarcane value-adding projects (especially sugarcane-based ethanol and co-generation projects).

Deepak B Desai – Value-adding: Where is the rest of the world going?

Farming run-off results revealed

THERE has been a great deal of media focus in recent months about farming water run-off and how it is affecting the Great Barrier Reef.

Two gentleman that have been at the forefront of monitoring large storm run-off are Herbert Landcare Group members Keith Phillips and John Pavetto.

The two will be speaking on how they have been monitoring the water run-off and some of the findings to date so far.

Both men have been part of a three-year Sugar Research Development Corporation-funded program to chart farm run-offs.

The project has implemented the use of sophisticated monitoring gear, making the results very credible and accurate.

Keith Phillips and John Pavetto – Water quality from cane lands.

Producing more with less energy

THE world is looking to produce more with less energy. It’s become an increasingly common concept throughout many industries worldwide, and the sugar industry is no exception.

Renowned sugarcane harvesting innovator, Home Hill-based farmer Chris Cannavan, will be at GIVE to detail his progress on the double-row cane harvester and chopper system.

Mr Cannavan, with funding assistance from the Federal Government, has been working on a double-row harvester that is lightweight and shouldn’t cost any more than current single-row machines.

What’s more, the innovation should be able to cut a tonne of cane using only half as much fuel and energy as regular machines.

Mr Cannavan’s presentation is sure to be of interest to not just growers, but harvesting contractors as well.

Chris Cannavan – Double-row harvesting system.

Cane planter reaps higher profits

SIGNIFICANT results of up to a 15 percent increase in yield have prompted substantial interest in the Mizzi cane planter.

Designer and Braemeadows grower Paul Mizzi will be present to detail the features of the billet planter at the GIVE event.

Brahma-based Carta & Company has begun production of the billet planter that contractor, Paul saw the need for a one-pass machine that would overcome the problem that occurred during a heavy rainfall event in September 2006, when newly planted cane was drowned in the furrows into which it was planted and had been filled in.

A static display of one of the planters will be at the BSES in Ingham during the expo.

Paul Mizzi – The Carta Mizzi cane planter.
Sustainable ag GIVEs back to environment

Rhonda and Bill Daly, principals of YLAD Living Soils, Young, NSW, will travel to Ingham for the GIVE program to enlighten growers of the many benefits of humus soil fertility and humified compost production.

"The strong groundswell of growth and interest in sustainable agriculture is being driven by declining soil carbon, imbalanced soil minerals, decreasing plant health, escalating costs and nutrient leaching," Mrs Daly said.

YLAD Living Soils is passionate about educating and assisting growers to set up their own fertiliser production systems, producing humified compost and extracted compost tea, positively impacting soil fertility and plant nutrient levels.

There is a huge potential both for growers and mills involved in sugarcane production to convert waste residues into high-quality humified compost.

The compost can then be used by growers to lower fertiliser inputs, particularly nitrogen. Nutrients held in humus and microbial biomass are available for plant uptake but are less likely to leach or run off.

YLAD Living Soils is the Australian and New Zealand distributor for Aeromaster Composting Equipment, manufactured by Midwest Bio-Systems in Illinois, US.

Nineteen Aeromaster Turner owners throughout Australia and New Zealand now confidently convert waste residues into humified compost following the Advanced Composting System process provided by YLAD Living Soils.

Bill Daly, of YLAD Living Soils, believes that humified compost is one of the most cost-effective ways of improving soil health and fertility in an environmentally friendly manner.

YLAD is proud to be contributing to the healing of agricultural soils and the health of the environment.

YLAD Living Soil will be on hand over the GIVE program to assist growers with any inquiries on humus soil fertility or Aeromaster Compost Turners.

Carbon reduction scheme explained by top scientist

The issue of the carbon pollution reduction scheme can be a complex and confusing one. To help GIVE attendees get a better understanding of the topic, organisers have secured Dr. Stephen Bygrave, assistant secretary, coverage and market development branch, Department of Climate Change, Australian Federal Government. He has held senior management positions in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of the Environment, Water and Heritage, and the Australian Greenhouse Office.


Dr. Bygrave will be giving a presentation at 8.15am on March 25 at the GIVE event.
Climate change a hot topic at expo

By Heather O’Neill

CLIMATE change and environmental issues headlined presentations at the Growers Innovation Virtual Expo (GIVE) in Ingham yesterday.

Everything from carbon pollution reduction to reef rescue, value-adding, crop rotation and water conservation held the attention of delegates at the two-day forum.

Starting in Tully on Tuesday, delegates were exposed to sugar and banana industry practices, which not only have the facility to increase bottom-line productivity but also provide a good chance for the industries to be future collaborations with governments on environmental policies and regulations.

In Ingham yesterday, delegates packed the Kelly Theatre to hear a range of presentations by government and non-government officials.

Headlining the morning agenda, the director of the Federal Government’s Department of Climate Change’s coverage sector, Neil Hughes outlined the government’s proposed approach to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

At pains to point out that no agricultural sector will be included in the scheme’s anticipated roll-out in 2010, Mr Hughes said the government’s mission for attending forums like GIVE was to canvass opinion.

“ ‘There hasn’t been an opportunity yet to talk to the industry and others about the best ways of approaching it,’ he said.

“There are some measurement issues and also some discussion about points of obligation and how, if you are going to include the agriculture sector as a sector, the best point in the production chain that you can get involvement.”

“ ‘So there’s a considerable process which is actually going on at the moment.’

However, Mr Hughes said the government have indicated they will make a decision about the inclusion of the agricultural sector in the scheme by 2013.

In the meantime, industry operators “will pay for carbon emissions through fuel prices and electricity’ once the Bill is passed in Federal Parliament later this year, he said.

Continuing with the environmental theme, Terrain NRM CEO Allan Dale spoke about the reef rescue package, which he said was incentive-based to help producers reduce the amount of nutrient, sediment and pesticide spilling into the reef.

Against a blanket regulatory approach on the sugar industry, Mr Dale said there was good argument for a combination approach.

“Broadly, I think the vast amount of industries are doing the right thing already, but in any sector there’s always a few people who drag the chain a little bit, but I think it’s pretty important to get the right management systems in place to really give those people a chance to work through those issues,” he said.

* Continued page 3
Hot topics on agenda at sugar expo

Mr Dale said regulatory solutions should be a last resort for governments.

"I think you always need a mix between regulatory systems and incentive systems," he said.

"We have a huge amount of progress that we can make from more incentive based approaches." Mr Dale said current regulations already include a set of codes relevant to agriculture including the River Improvement Trust Act and planning legislation and these should be refined before any new regulations were enforced.

"The existing system is pretty fragmented — there are bits and pieces of it in different pieces of legislation and it doesn’t bring a very cohesive approach to regulation."

"So there’s a need to bring a bit more cohesion to some of the regulatory legislation," he said.

Kicking off in Tully on Tuesday, the tours had to be closed off when delegate numbers reached 130.

Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited co-organiser Lawrence Di Bella said the highlight of the Tully tours was the large-scale harvester operations not yet seen in the Herbert region.

"They are running two harvesters in tandem together on farms," he said.

"They have the capability of harvesting a lot more cane in one day — up to 400 bins in less than 12 hours."

Farm management systems officer for the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries and Burdekin Pro-
ductivity Group, Avril Robinson said the tour of Australia’s largest banana farm gave delegates the opportunity to see successful environmental accreditation at work.

"We went to Mackay’s banana farm and had a look at their ISO 14001 environmental standard applications for the banana industry," she said.

"We saw some environmental projects for water quality and how that benefits water run-off from banana farms and different filtration systems.

"Seeing how the growers meet best practice for environmental standards was really interesting."

Ms Robinson said the two-day event was an important vehicle for all groups and individuals in the sugar industry.

"As the organiser of the Tropical City Group meeting in Tully, which was done in collaboration with Tully Sugar, Tully Productivity Board, BSES, Future Cane and Rabobank, the meetings allow sugar innovators to get together every year to develop, trial and implement new industry technology and practice," she said.

Ms Robinson said soil health and nitrogen fixation were also canvassed, both of which could offer the industry promising bargaining power with state and federal governments in terms of boosting the industry’s environmental credentials.
Strong support for sugar expo

STARTING today, the Grower Innovation Virtual Expo being held in the Tully and Herbert regions has exceeded all expectations.

Organisers said registrations hit the 200 mark yesterday afternoon.

Originally aiming for 150 delegates for the two-day expo, organisers were forced to close off registrations for all events, including the dinner at the shire hall where 170 are registered to attend.

Due to depart from the Tully Sugar Mill Recreation Hall at 1pm, conference delegates will tour farms and experimental sites to see first hand environmental accreditation at work, controlled traffic and other new farming systems, including composting.

Delegates are expected to arrive in Ingham for a public barbecue at 5.30pm, then spend Wednesday in the Herbert region attending presentations and tours.

A line-up of internationally renowned speakers has been secured for the event including India’s Business Brains Consulting chief consultant Deepak Desai.

At late notice, Queensland University of Technology chemical engineer Tom Rainey was also secured as a dinner speaker and will present the latest research on making paper from bagasse.

Unable to make the forum, keynote speaker Stephen Bygrave has been replaced by Nick Hughes, also from the Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change, to provide growers with an insight into the federal government’s attitude to climate science.
Appendix 4.