



**SRDC Research Project  
Final Report**

**Farm Management Systems for the Sugarcane Industry,  
Sub-program 3: FMS training course**

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## Body of Report

### Executive summary

The Farm Management Systems suite of projects came about in response to an increasing need for grower resources and demonstrated capacity to manage the environmental pressures of profitable cane farming. In total 5 projects were raised through contracts with SRDC through funding from the National Heritage Trust (NHT) and a further 3 independently funded by SRDC. The focus for these projects was to develop online information resources and tools to assist growers to manage economic and environmental outcomes, as well as discussion papers and various specific applications.

The primary objective of the FMS003 project was to act as a delivery platform for the work completed in earlier FMS resource development projects. The focus was to raise awareness with cane farmers of the economic and environmental benefits of implementing and adopting industry initiatives from the previously completed FMS sub projects. The FMS003 project initially was aimed at “training” 600 growers in the use of the FMS tools developed under FMS001, FMS002 and FMS004. These tools include an online search engine for industry relevant legislation, Codes of Conduct, Regional Indicators, Best Management Practice Guidelines, Self Assessment Checklists, Questionnaires, other resources and sundry documentation.

Following the Independent Review delivered by Hassall and Associates in early 2006 the milestones for this phase of the projects were revised. This changed the focus of FMS003 away from grower training in the use of “tools” already developed and towards developing a culture to facilitate sponsorship by service providers and adoption by growers. This would be achieved by providing demonstrable grower value to encourage uptake, utilisation and broad industry support for the tools. The project objectives were not formally revised in concert with the milestones and thus stand as principally to raise awareness.

Ongoing communication through the specially established CEO group, a project steering committee and a separate advisory working group found that the sugar industry needed to address environmental and farm practice issues differently to other agricultural sectors. A single prescriptive approach to identifying and managing farm practice systems would not be appropriate given the significant level of difference between and diversity within separate production regions making up the Australian Sugar Industry. The design for the project that was conceived by collaboration between all three groups and consultation across the industry recognised the need for a homogeneous framework covering the entire sugar industry whilst identifying and encouraging regional diversity in farm management practices and modes of service delivery. In this way the sugar industry can communicate to governments, private industry and the community about farming practice as a single industry, while emphasising, supporting and developing regional diversity and individuality.

FMS003 addressed this need by restructuring the existing website, enhancing project specific tools and, in collaboration with the industry, developing a grower self-assessment resource that identifies management practices and directs users to relevant local services within each region. We believe that what has been achieved is a coherent industry wide framework or “skeleton” that facilitates communication, comparative analysis, performance benchmarking, measurement and standards of practice upon which existing regional services can be layered and new services identified for funding and/or commercial sponsorship. The Grower Self Assessment component, currently referred to as “FMS Check”, allows growers to quickly clarify, compare and measure their management practices, receive recommendations, and directs them towards participation in relevant regional and extension services to remedy any identified issues of concern.

Agrecon collaborated with the sugar industry extensively through the FMS003 project through CEO, steering committee and advisory group meetings, grower forums and organisational communications to most sugar industry regions. Agrecon also initiated a sub contract with BSES Ltd to restructure, revise and further develop the information resources to better reflect regionally relevant industry issues. These collaborations improved Agrecon’s capacity to apply the unique technology and specialist resources which the company has at its disposal to the project and improve overall project outcomes.

The final phase of FMS003 assembled and incorporated a series of case studies into a user-friendly but technically robust web-based resource involving 10 growers drawn from 3 main regions to identify the industry wide values, grower specific benefits, and service sector relevance.



A clear outcome of the industry FMS forum held by Canegrowers was that “grower value” must be the primary outcome. “Grower value” is generally equated with a tangible and measurable increase in productivity, farm profitability or reduction in operating costs. These outcomes are not directly achievable or demonstrable under an industry wide umbrella and therefore an alternative definition of “Grower Value “ is required. Such value will come through communication, measurement, comparison and resolution of broad farm management practice issues and the opportunity this creates to identify and fund new initiatives and support existing regional initiatives.

The key factor for the industry is to embrace and communicate to growers and the services sector that this is the desired outcome of the project and that specific local applications focused on productivity will be the primary benefactor without being directly incorporated into the project or developed by it. This could occur through additional government, industry specific or community based funding but could also include commercial sponsorship or various forms of loyalty based service programs.

The grower feedback that we have received even before the project has been completed indicates that with appropriate industry wide support, co-operation and resourcing the FMS Check and associated information resources will be warmly received, widely adopted and strongly advocated by grower users. With a reasonable level of adoption the industry would stand to benefit from a unique set of farm practice metrics which could be used to great effect to not only improve farm based practice and efficiency but communicate grower commitment to long term sustainability both within this and other commodity based industries and the communities on which they depend. .

### 1.0 Background:

The 8 FMS projects had a range of objectives and outcomes however the overall objective was to develop an improved opportunity for sugar growers to manage economic and environmental pressures.

FMS001	FULL	Farm Management Systems for the Sugar Cane Industry, Sub-program 1: Interactive web-based material to support FMS	1/11/2004	1/9/2005	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS002	FULL	Farm Management Systems for the Sugarcane Industry, Sub-program 2: Environmental and economic performance indicators	1/11/2004	1/3/2006	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS003	FULL	Farm Management Systems for the Sugarcane Industry, Sub-program 3: FMS training course	1/2/2005	1/3/2007	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS004	FULL	Farm Management Systems for the Sugarcane Industry, Subprogram 4 Options for auditing and certification of FMS	1/11/2004	1/3/2006	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS005	FULL	FMS program 5. Evaluation of FMS	1/11/2004	31/3/2007	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS006	TLOP	Travel to WWF Sugar Dialogue meeting and South African sugar industry for learning about other experiences of FMS	1/6/2005	1/8/2005	P	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS007	FULL	Land and Water Management Plan drafting tools for the FMS framework	1/7/2005	1/10/2005	N	<a href="#">View</a>
FMS008	FULL	Farm health and safety tools for the Sugar FMS framework	1/1/2006	1/3/2006	N	<a href="#">View</a>

Extracted from the SRDC website [www.srdc.gov.au](http://www.srdc.gov.au)

By the time FMS003 commenced the FMS projects as a whole had become a contentious issue within the industry due primarily it would appear from a lack of ability to clearly communicate the precise objectives, outcomes and benefits the projects would bring to the grower and the industry at the commencement of the project. In other words the industry had not debated, considered or agreed upon a process or framework for an industry wide approach to Farm Management Systems prior to launching the projects. Various stakeholders then became concerned for the protection of their regional independence, proprietary initiatives and concerned for a potential “top down” approach to managing FMS. Further to this, when Agrecon offered to provide access to additional technology as part of the project to facilitate spatial mapping and ongoing monitoring on a commercial basis this was seen as a threat to perceived interests and “territory” of some industry stakeholders even though no equivalent services or technology were currently available from these stakeholders. At this point the **Hassall Overview report** was commissioned to resolve the emerging conflicts surrounding the suite of FMS projects.

The aims of the FMS003 project were to build and provide a delivery vehicle for other project outcomes, through grower awareness of the resources and “tools” that had been developed in earlier sub projects and to facilitate adoption in the long term by the industry. While the milestones were adjusted in response to the Hassall Review. This made the specific tasks within the objectives statement obsolete, though primary focus of the objectives on achieving a platform for adoption remained constant.



The initial task related objective prior to the revision of the milestones was to train 600 growers in the use of the online tools that had been developed during previous projects, FMS001, FMS002 and FMS004. This was to be done via a series of grower and industry forums to be held in regional areas and a train the trainer program. Agrecon had intended to contract regional providers to deliver grower-training services using the FMS tools that were developed during this project.

A CEO group meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 in Brisbane where the Hassall Review was tabled and considered. The agreed points are attached as *Appendix 1*, however the key outcomes were that project (FMS003) outcomes needed to be re-focused in light of the growing debate and emerging regional tensions surrounding the project. The review and subsequent CEO discussions determined that grower value needed to be the overriding emphasis and that the tools developed to that point needed to be more interactive and more regionally responsive. The meeting also concluded that the project milestones needed to be revised at some point to better reflect the agreed points.

Agrecon set about a consultation process in response to these outcomes which included meetings with the FMS steering committee and formation of a working group drawn from key industry stakeholders including SRDC, ASMC, Canegrowers, BSES and Agrecon. The outcomes of these consultations over a period of months following Hassall's Independent review led to a further CEO meeting in May 2006 where Agrecon presented a revised project plan that significantly increased collaboration with BSES to improve "coal face" relevance of material and connectivity between FMS and other relevant programs and initiatives across the industry. A formal review of the project milestones followed at a meeting of the CEO group, which included representation by Rod Carr from DAFF.

The revised milestones included distribution of remaining project funds in three directions

- 1) To Canegrowers for the organisation and management of an industry forum to discuss FMS direction
- 2) To BSES to collaborate with Agrecon in developing an industry interface to the existing tools
- 3) To Agrecon to further enhance the existing tools to achieve the objective of developing a user interface

Agrecon then formalised a contract with BSES to review the content and design a self-assessment questionnaire. The aim was to develop simplified outcomes based questionnaire aimed at assisting growers to identify issues relating to FMS and to resolve those issues through access to locally based service providers and compatible initiatives. This process would then encourage a self-fulfilling environment for adoption rather than a more passive but directed training approach as originally specified. This reinforced the strong message that emerged from industry wide consultation that the most successful mode of delivery for FMS in the Sugar Industry was via regional service providers and that adoption rates would increase to the extent that delivery was achieved via ongoing service providers rather than one off grower training.

A self-assessment tool for growers was developed in collaboration with BSES that covered all aspects of sugar farming as a business. It was recognised by all that FMS was about more than just productivity but related to all aspects of the farm operation from business and succession planning to environmental impacts. Eoin Walls the CEO of BSES contributed a diagram to the discussion on definitions of FMS that endorsed the concept of treating the whole farm business as part of an integrated farming system, including but not just focusing on productivity issues.

During subsequent presentations to the CEO group and Steering Committee a model for managing an industry wide framework for FMS evolved that suited the unique regional diversity and rich service delivery capacity that characterises the Australian Sugar Industry. This model was defined and endorsed by the CEO group and steering committee through presentations by Agrecon

Agrecon attended the sugar industry FMS forum in Brisbane and presented the model and proposed tools for industry feedback. At this forum the main topic of discussion was once again "grower value". While no one disputed that this should be the primary deliverable, however, few had any firm definition of what outcomes met those criteria. My perspective was that the forum wrapped up by concluding that if the sugar industry was to respond to FMS issues in a coherent manner rather than a fragmented collective of regional businesses then an Industry wide framework was required to deliver grower value across the industry by allowing individual regions to develop relevant services and infrastructure under a common industry-wide FMS umbrella. Outcomes from previous FMS projects and further enhanced under FMS003 was subsequently "road tested" to evaluate the potential for regionally relevant, service sector based responses to evolve.

During late 2006 and early 2007 Agrecon finalised the design and development of the online tools through ongoing collaboration with BSES. These developments were regularly presented to the CEO group and received a resounding



endorsement in terms of content and direction. After taking over the role of Principal Investigator mid-way through the project, I was delighted with the positive industry wide response, receptiveness and productive outcomes from the project after the report of the Hassall review was released. Industry stakeholders began to work more co-operatively rather than competitively to identify solutions to the main points of contention addressed in the review, the entire industry and its key representatives have demonstrated an admirable degree of commitment, passion, common sense and integrity in working together to achieve a successful outcome for the project.

The Smut outbreak in late 2006 impacted on the ability of BSES to conduct some of this work that was contracted to them by Agrecon. Their protracted involvement right up to the completion of the project facilitated rather than hindered ongoing consultation, improved the technical merit and design of individual as well as the quality and level of integration of the final FMS outcomes.

Even as this document is being written the final technical updates are being made to the tools prior to releasing them for industry wide access via the Agrecon website. Hosting of the FMS tools by Agrecon on an interim basis will ensure that the currency of content and functionality is maintained and that public access to the tools is maintained until a longer-term arrangement emerges from industry wide deliberation over the future direction of the FMS process.

## 2.0 Objectives:

*The objective of the FMS training program is to raise awareness in cane growers of the economic and environmental benefits of incorporating and integrating a range of previous industry initiatives within a management framework that concurrently facilitates increased productivity and better environmental outcomes. The FMS training program will increase the capacity of cane growers to implement FMS within their own cane farming businesses. The training program will be developed using the materials collated in FMS subprograms 1, 2 and 4 also managed by Agrecon.*

*Agrecon will conduct train-the-trainer courses for any suitable local industry representative, including appropriate BSES and CANEGROWERS staff. At least 600 growers from all regions of the industry will obtain face-to-face training during the project and all growers will be offered free access to online self-paced learning materials and tools to develop an FMS.*

*The rationale of the FMS training program is that environmental management should not be separated from business, economic, agronomic and logistical considerations. Cane growers will not be motivated to seek better environmental outcomes unless there are good economic reasons and business incentives for doing so.*

The primary objectives of this project were to affect delivery, raise awareness and encourage industry wide grower adoption of outcomes from earlier FMS projects.

### 2.1 The FMS project met the stated objectives through

- Identifying industry needs and drivers of FMS adoption
  - o The industry has clearly stated that it wants grower value and regional diversity to be the 2 key foundations of any industry wide initiative
- Initiating discussions which have concluded that an industry wide framework is needed to effectively deliver the above
  - o While many felt the FMS forum did not achieve any clear outcomes it proved an effective testing ground for individual thinking in the context of an industry model. The day was quickly drawn towards expressions of "Grower Value" being priority and the examples of what that meant were mainly specific local initiatives or technologies that had a commercial IP ownership. Most attendees recognised themselves by the end of the day that the industry needed a united umbrella framework to allow these Value based initiatives to be funded, resourced and developed if the industry was to operate as an efficient an cooperative system. It is only through this approach that the industry can combat the issues of communication to regulators and the community its management of natural resources while achieving as profitable and viable industry.
- Developing a resource which will encourage adoption through providing grower value
  - o The FMS Check resource has met with approval from growers who have been exposed to it in forums. The interactive format, which provides regionally based feedback and comparative performance metrics is being seen as a useful tool not only for growers but for service providers to utilise n



commercial delivery of services. This is a far more effective platform for adoption than a one off training program.

- Developing a series of case studies to explore grower response
  - o During the grower forums over 20 growers were exposed to FMS Check and the online tools and 10 of these were reviewed for feedback and outcomes.
- Attracting interest from industry service providers in using the tools as part of commercial service provision activities and thus creating a platform for grower exposure and adoption
  - o Some industry stakeholders have expressed interest in using the tools developed under the projects and enhanced under FMS003 for commercial delivery of services.
- The objective of training at least 600 cane growers was not met due to the agreed changes to the milestone criteria following the independent review.
  - o This specific task in the context of the objectives was not met due to the revision of milestones. This task, which was written at the outset of the project, was ultimately made redundant via the projects achievement of the revised milestones and the overall objective of developing a means to achieve awareness raising and adoption of the online tools to enhance regional outcomes.

### 3.0 Methodology:

(Include activities and project management to deliver outputs and outcomes. Where detailed methodology has been published elsewhere, it should be summarised here and the publications should be included as Appendices to the report.

#### 3.1 Project process

- 1) The initial project approach was based on a training-the-trainer concept and ultimately training of at least 600 growers through a train the trainer approach. A number of early project milestones were achieved and reported upon prior to the review of the project.
- 2) Respond to Independent review process and consider findings before consulting with the industry. Agrecon set about consulting with the industry post the Hassall report to determine what the industry was hoping to achieve in light of the work done so far.
- 3) Initiate consultation with CEO group and steering committee and form a working group of industry organization representatives for consultation and guidance to respond to the independent review. The working group was formed from representatives of key organizations to guide the revisions. Those involved were Les Robertson from SRDC, Joseph Evans from Canegrowers, Rob Cocco from BSES, Ian O'Hara from ASMC and Mark Pawsey from Agrecon. This group was instrumental in defining the review of direction and outcomes for the project at that time.
- 4) Develop plans for project review, which formed the basis of revised milestones. From the above consultation Agrecon prepared and presented a basis for a revision of the milestones, which were accepted, by SRDC and DAFF as well as the CEO group in May 2006.
- 5) Presented to CEO group models for framing the project revision for the Sugar industry. Beyond the specific new milestones the CEO group was used as a forum to discuss a conceptual model to act as a basis for the project. The diagram presented by Eoin Wallis as *Appendix 2* and the project diagram designed by Agrecon as *Appendix 3* were the basis of these discussions.
- 6) Meet and negotiate with BSES Ltd a sub contract to develop content as part of revised milestones. A sub contract was agreed to between BSES and Agrecon following approval within the revised milestones. BSES would under this agreement review the content developed so far and prepare a shortened version of the questionnaire already in the tools. This questionnaire would address broad management issues and identify areas potentially requiring attention.
- 7) Update the FMS website design and content to reflect new milestones. Agrecon updated the existing website to have a more user-friendly look and feel. The original project was designed to utilise [www.sugarcane.net](http://www.sugarcane.net) as a front page or home page for the tools. The uncertainty around the project made coordinating the development of the two resources difficult so Agrecon initiated a stand alone home page and navigation. The long term incorporation with sugarcane.net needs to now be considered.
- 8) Implement BSES Ltd content and recommendations. Agrecon developed the revised tools as the work by BSES became available. This process of review and implementation has been ongoing since mid 2006 although BSES were significantly sidetracked by the Smut outbreak.
- 9) Consult with Industry organizations for feedback. The work completed was reviewed by various sectors of the industry on an ongoing basis via the working group, CEO group, Mackay Canegrowers, Bundaberg Canegrowers, BSES and other industry stakeholders.





- 10) Present progress and revised objectives to the Industry FMS forum in Brisbane. The project revisions and work to date were presented at the industry forum for feedback. The overall response was positive when the tools were defined as an industry framework and not specific regional productivity tools.
- 11) Conduct grower forums in the use of the FMS tools and from those forums develop grower Case studies. Agrecon conducted a series of grower forums in 3 main areas of Bundaberg, Burdekin and Mackay in late 2006. From these 10 anonymous grower case studies were developed to review the grower outcomes. These are included in the appendix of this report.
- 12) Consult regularly with CEO group at Brisbane Meetings. Agrecon has attended most of the CEO meetings held in Brisbane during the period of the project and provided ongoing reviews and reports of project progress.

### 3.2 Project evaluation

- 1) Case studies of 10 growers – including feedback from case study growers; lessons, improvements
- 2) Consultation with CEO group
- 3) Feedback from industry service providers
- 4) Feedback from industry forums

### 4.0 Outputs:

(Including knowledge, skills, processes, practices, products and technology developed)

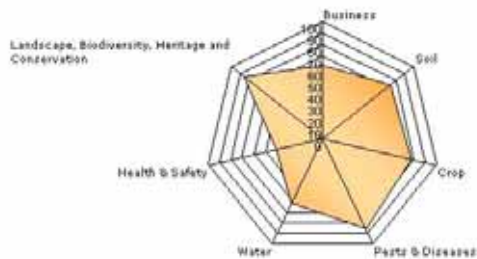
#### 4.1 Tangible outputs

##### Project website

- All the tools developed under the FMS projects and defined by FMS003 are available online at <http://137.92.111.105/qldsugarproject/sugarfms-main.aspx> . This site is currently hosted by Agrecon and accessed via the SRDC website under Resources / FMS.
- This website was initially intended to be nested within the [www.sugarcane.net.au](http://www.sugarcane.net.au) website and on that basis had a limited look and feel. This contributed to the dissatisfaction early in the project. In hindsight, consideration should have been given to making sure the sugarcane.net web was used as a front page and navigation from the beginning. Agrecon has subsequently given the FMS tools web a navigation of its own and treated it as an independent website.
- The website can be hosted by Agrecon in the interim during the release and evaluation phase where the tools become readily available to the industry. Once a clear idea of application and utilisation is achieved Agrecon can either continue to maintain technical functionality or develop a knowledge transfer document to support whomever might undertake that task.

##### Website functionality

- **FMS Check**
  - A voluntary Self Assessment questionnaire – 70 questions taking 20 minutes covering all aspects of farm business practice at a broad level of detail
  - Grower score - ranking of question responses against a 3 level scoring system

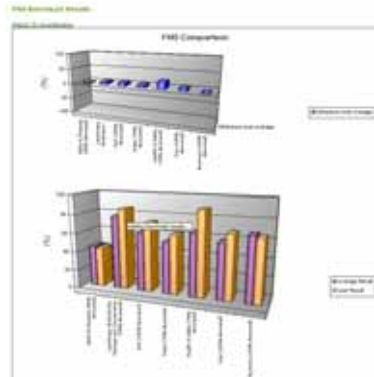


FMS Check Score Card Graphic example





- Regional Benchmarking - Benchmarking of scores against other registered users in the region



- Recommendation Report – A report containing all of the above plus a written response to each question or group of questions guiding the grower to relevant services and support within their specific region
- Regional Services database – A listing of services provided within each region with linkages to the recommendation report and the self assessment – *some content is still to be provided by BSES and collated by Agrecon to populate this database. This will need ongoing maintenance to maintain currency and value*
- **8 step guide**
  - A process by which growers can participate in the FMS activity to the degree they feel is relevant or advantageous to their business
  - Farm policy documents – Outlines the objectives of the business and the degree of commitment to environmental and best practice standards chosen by the enterprise.
  - Document Register – A template for managing documentation
  - Risk Assessments- Risk Assessment guides and document templates
  - Action plans – Example and template action plans for managing identified risks
  - Monitoring guides – Example guides for using regional indicators to monitor and maintain an individual farm FMS process
- **Search tools**
  - A database of legislation, codes of conduct, Best Management Practice and other content is available for search by management categories, eg soil. The resulting output provides information on relevant material and fact sheets to provide additional knowledge.
- **Forms**
  - A library of formatted documents are available for download as templates to assist growers in managing process and management issues
- **Certification**
  - A discussion paper on the opportunities for FMS Certification

#### 4.2 Knowledge Outcomes

The sugar industry has experienced a significant degree of agitation and conflict over FMS issues throughout the period of the project. Growing concern over the potential for funds and opportunities being wasted grew to a level where an independent review was commissioned. The quality of the resulting outcome and board acceptance is directly attributable to a concerted if latent industry response involving significant input, evaluation, discussion and consideration across all sectors of the industry over what FMS really means for the Sugar Industry and how an ongoing FMS program should be managed.

Exploration and evaluation of content, tools and the potential for ongoing opportunities has been fast tracked within the industry as each region has moved in a pro-active manner to assess relevant proprietary assets, concurrent initiatives, complementary programs, competitive opportunities, local advantages and personnel. Particular attention is focusing on regionally relevant appropriate responses to likely future constraints, regulations and compliance related issues. Awareness over the importance of availability and investment in proprietary and



commercially focused spatial mapping services for instance has increased markedly among industry stakeholders since the projects began and potential for third party providers to entering the market emerged. Many mills have re-evaluated potential commercial opportunities to service growers in this regard by harnessing existing assets, farm based yield records and technical personnel.

Industry wide solidarity and unity has been achieved, thanks in part to leadership provided by the in the CEO group that was formed to guide the project and address relevant issues. This forum has become a fertile platform for assessment of a wide range of industry issues and future opportunities. The FMS forum along with other channels of communication and consultation has transformed what had the potential for destructive conflict into a healthy recognition of regional diversity as a central ingredient of industry unity.

#### 4.3 Survey and intelligence outcomes

- **FMS Check-** If adopted by growers FMS Check will provide the industry with an unprecedented degree of industry metrics and knowledge. The questionnaire will provide the industry with a central and regional database of industry practices while maintaining grower privacy and confidentiality. For the first time the industry will have at its disposal a set of resources which can be applied to
  - o BMP assessment
  - o Regional services requirements
  - o Individual grower monitoring
  - o Regional metrics of BMP
  - o Industry Metrics of BMP
  - o Basis for investment in regional services
  - o An audit of available regional services
  - o A needs assessment of required regional services

This data can potentially be managed by an industry administrator to produce reports and communications relevant to a multitude of industry issues

Individual growers will have a resource that can be maintained and edited at which will track farm practice over time relative to the region and in an absolute form to themselves.

- **FMS survey by Lisa McDonald** – this survey has evaluated grower’s attitudes and expectations of FMS. This is not directly associated with FMS003 but should be considered in the same context. Contact Lisa McDonald at CSR
- **Case Studies**
  - o The 10 Case studies of growers responses and outcomes using the FMS check resource and associated tools are attached in *Appendix 9*

#### 5.0 Intellectual Property:

(Detail any commercial considerations or discoveries made, and means of protection (eg patents) undertaken or planned)

- All intellectual property developed under the project is owned by SRDC and is to be made available to industry stakeholders and community based users.
- Agrecon initially introduced a set of resources and tools under the name of AgrePrecise to the industry to add potential value to IP arising out of this project and owned by SRDC.. AgrePrecise was subsequently unlinked from material and functionality developed during the project when the potential for friction over competition with comparable IP and commercial aspirations of key industry stakeholders became apparent. AgrePrecise remains the property of AGRECON PTY LTD along with a suite of other web based mapping, monitoring and natural resource management functionality and was in no way developed using funding designated for this project.
- Agrecon proposes to introduce a range of information systems and risk management services to the Sugar industry in the future that may integrate well with FMS tools developed during this project. . Any integrated offerings will be on a commercial basis and the IP of these services will remain the property of AGRECON PTY LTD. A similar opportunity exists for any other industry stakeholder.



## 6.0 Environmental and Social Impacts:

### 6.1 Environmental Outcomes

Best Management Practices are those that achieve the greatest efficiency of natural resource usage for the greatest economic return. They are practices, which respect the long-term future of the environment while allowing sensible and efficient farming practices. The irony of the debate over farming and the environment is that generally the most effective economic practices in the long term are usually the most environmentally friendly also. The downside is that in some cases there is a capital barrier to entry into some practices in the form of infrastructure development or plant and equipment investment.

For this reason sound industry knowledge and metrics are required to implement programs that support investment in sound farming practices as well as research into which practices are most effective in achieving a Best practice rating.

The FMS003 Project has achieved a grower self assessment resource which if adopted will provide the industry with a dataset which will allow assessment of regional Best management standards, Farm infrastructure investment, as well as individual grower support. The industry then has an opportunity to consider the needs of each region for

- Grower investment in BMP
- Regional requirements for grower support
- Available services
- Development of effective grower support services to achieve good environmental outcomes

### 6.2 Social Outcomes

The potential for social benefits to emerge from the program are significant if the FMS tools achieve a reasonable level of adoption across the industry. The extents of any social benefits are directly related to the degree of adoption of the tools by the sugar industry and are therefore the outcomes are an assumption.

**Improved employment opportunities** – If the farm services industry can utilise the resources to improve services delivery and attract funding and investment in commercial services delivery the opportunities for job security and increased employment opportunities may emerge

**Farm viability** – If growers can better identify their current Farm management practice standards, access relevant services and potentially source investment capital to improve farming practices the probability of viable farming operations and more stable rural communities must emerge.

**Knowledge** – Knowledge is power. In the current technology environment the potential for data overload is significant for farmers. It is common to hear of farmers using a multitude of Internet sites to stitch together an information base to make decisions. The more industry relevant resources, which can filter out irrelevant, noise and provide clear concise relevant information to the farming sector the better the social outcomes, will be.

## 7.0 Expected Outcomes:

(Including assessment of the likely impact for the sugar industry in Australia and elsewhere and where possible the cost and potential benefit to the Australian sugar industry and/or the community. Qualitative and/or quantitative baseline data collected in the early stages of the project and compared with data collected towards the end of the project should be analysed and presented to demonstrate impact, learnings and additional outcomes of the project.)

Feedback from growers to date has been that with an appropriate level of ongoing commitment from industry bodies to maintain and further develop the FMS resources and services arising from this project they will utilise these, particularly the FMS Check resource as an annual farm assessment tool. With a reasonable level of adoption the resulting database will provide the industry with an unprecedented opportunity to aggregate enterprise specific information into community and regional performance profiles that in turn could be used to promote the Australian Sugar Industry to the community and government regulators as an environmentally responsible, productive, profitable and efficient user of natural resources to generate desperately needed export income to the benefit of the Australian economy. Even unflattering statistics of grower practice will provide a basis for individual enterprises to measure, monitor, track and improve their performance under the guidance of a clear set of recommendations comprising a management plan customised to the circumstances of each grower and the resources of regional service providers to remedy poor practice..

FMS project outcomes will lead to:

- Improved industry practices



- Clear opportunities to fund, invest in and provide improved regional technical and advisory services. These could take the form of a range of commercial sponsorship, reward and yield guarantee programs by input providers
- Improvement of existing regional services programs
- Identification of gaps and instances where duplication or inefficiencies exist and can be remedied through provision of new regional technical and advisory services
- Opportunities for industry led programs to bypass or obviate the need for statutory compliance
- An objective profile of industry performance through aggregation of enterprise based information and statistics to counter negative media coverage and address community based environmental concerns
- A demonstration of an industry wide determination to raise productivity, lift profitability, improve farm practice
- Opportunities for increased regional employment of staff to manage improved advisory and service delivery programs
- Increased confidence in the general community that sugarcane farming is conducted in a responsible manner using best practices.

Despite these positive sentiments, Agrecon is a little disappointed that the FMS project represents a lost opportunity for the industry to draw together innovative but isolated efforts to capture spatial and temporal information about the industry within individual regions as part of a fully integrated industry wide information system aimed at efficiently mapping, monitoring and management of farms as productive units, farm-to-mill transportation and processing systems to provide access across the value chain to participants and stakeholders from the supply to demand through to consumptive stages. Such a system needs to deliver value to individual canegrowers, mills, government and a wide range of other potential users. It will require ongoing maintenance, development of improved functionality and a continuing flow of biophysical and production data to facilitate ongoing mapping of canegrower activities, monitoring of seasonal conditions, production forecasting, risk assessment and forms of predictive intelligence.

We sincerely hope that the excellent resources and innovative personnel that distinguish individual regions, mills and communities can be brought together into a more efficient and better managed industry. Strong leadership is needed to encourage vested interests elevate industry interests above individual and personal aspirations.

#### **8.0 Future Research Needs and recommendations:**

(Including activities or other steps to further develop, disseminate or exploit the Project Outputs, and/or to achieve benefits)

##### **8.1 Communication and definition**

In communicating the potential benefits of FMS within and beyond the industry and implementing programs aimed at increased adoption, it is particularly important to address definitional issues, terminology and to distinguish between perception and reality.

Farm Management Systems or FMS is a term that has still not been satisfactorily defined by the industry. A diverse range of perceptions and opinions prevail across the industry in relation to definition, objectives, programs, outcomes and benefits. Perceptions set up expectations that culminate in disappointment and disillusionment if expected outcomes are not realistic, conditioned, accommodated and closely matched to project outcomes.

In other words

**Success or Satisfaction = Expectations/Outcomes.**

Establishing an appropriate definition of and community consensus regarding FMS values and outcomes to be pursued is critical to ultimate success. The grower forums confirmed this as a critical and continuing issue. By comparison, grower response to the materials, resources and tools developed during the FMS project was invariably positive. Agreement and satisfaction levels were distinctly lower in relation to Expected outcomes. Many growers and organizations voiced a variety of expectations including better mapping tools, improved paddock journals and record keeping databases, improved land and water management plans, better occupational health and safety outcomes, improved monitoring and better benchmarking capability. These competing and conflicting objectives or expectations need to be resolved otherwise disappointment over ongoing FMS initiatives is inevitable.

The overarching objective for the project was defined as an attempt to develop an industry framework for communication, comparison and measurement of farming practices and an initiative to identify the need for regional support services to ensure appropriate responses. We detected an overwhelmingly positive response to these aspirations. The cotton industry has achieved some success in developing an expectation that growers who



are serious about their industry and consider themselves leaders are also assumed to be participating in the industry BMP program. This is seen as a sign of industry commitment and support which in itself creates “grower value” by assisting the industry to better manage government and community communications, improve marketing outcomes and achieve a foundation for soliciting support, funding and commercial investment. The Australian Cotton Industry has been outstandingly successful in securing these outcomes through a united industry commitment to establishing, supporting and promoting the BMP branded program.

The sugar FMS project encountered, indeed may have even been responsible for a high level of controversy during the initial stages. We are confident that persistence, patience and co-operation during the second half of the project made the investment worthwhile. But the task is not finished. The industry needs an ongoing tremendous investment in effort to challenge conventional thinking, to formulate audacious objectives and to develop a program that is distinctive to the industry that can be “branded” and actively promoted at home and abroad.. The CEO group is currently circulating a discussion paper addressing these issues. Agrecon wholeheartedly endorses this as an appropriate next initiative.

### 8.2 Further development

The framework the project has developed should be the basis of ongoing funded content development to continue to make the resource more relevant to the realities on farm management. Organisations such as BSES and Cane growers are ideal entities to carry out further content development in the form of fact sheets, regional database management, and service provision resources

Suggestions for Further Development:

- 1) Database administration website. This would provide selected and authorised users the opportunity to access the regional benchmark and grower response data to generate regional reports and services. Grower privacy would need to be carefully managed.
- 2) Fact Sheet management – An industry organization such as BSES would be ideal to undertake a updating and management of a fact sheet database or content library. Fact sheets are irrelevant to a user if they do not contain the most up to date information, science and contact data.
- 3) Regional services database management – A nominated organization and or individual in each region should be tasked to maintain via authorised access to the hosted website the regional services portfolio. In this way the politics, initiatives and local issues can be considered in the recommendations to growers for access to local services and service providers. A web page would need to be developed similar recommendation 1) to provide access to the hosted database.
- 4) Regional best management practice and risk information. Dynamic systems to assess individual farm climatic and natural resource conditions for assessment of prescribed industry practice standards to individual circumstances.
- 5) Linkage to regional initiatives of FMS Check data with record keeping and mapping systems to spatially reference data. These would logically include data transfer to milling systems and other regionally approved systems based on authorisation by the grower.

### 8.3 Website Hosting.

The issues around technology maintenance and knowledge transfer have not been specifically addressed in the project guidelines. Agrecon is willing to host the website for an interim period or on a more long-term basis to provide technical maintenance and development services.

It is important to ensure to avoid a rushed transfer to an as yet unspecified industry host for an application whose breadth, usage volumes, traffic load, further development and proprietary linkage requirements. This would cause the resource to become unstable and unreliable for the industry users and an expensive burden on Agrecon to provide training and support. Careful consideration is required before finalising a decision over the identity of a long term industry provider charged with responsibility to maintain, technically support and develop the system to achieve its potential.

If the industry decides that Agrecon should continue to host and manage this resource a labour and cost related budget will need to be agreed. If not, we will need time and a modest level of funding to prepare a knowledge transfer plan that will ensure the system is properly maintained by another stakeholder.. Agrecon is preparing a written quotation to provide a hosting and maintenance service on an interim basis on behalf of SRDC.



## **Appendices**

### **Appendices contents**

**Appendix 1 - Notes from the CEO FMS Steering group March 2006**

**Appendix 2 – Eoin Wallis diagram for FMS**

**Appendix 3 – Agrecon FMS Model Diagram**

**Appendix 4- CEO group meeting notes 18 May 2006**

**Appendix 5 – CEO Group meeting notes August 2006**

**Appendix 6 – CEO Meeting Notes 2nd September 2006**

**Appendix 7 - FMS industry Forum notes**

**Appendix 8 – FMS Check Recommendation Report**

**Appendix 9 – Grower Case studies**

**Appendix 10 – Financial reporting**



## Appendix 1

### Summary of Agreements from CEOs FMS Steering Group 17 March 2006.

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- There is absolute acceptance that activities associated with the Farm Management Systems program in the sugarcane industry must be adaptable to focus on benefits to the grower.
- In the current Sugarcane FMS project, far more focus is needed on the development of materials and tools to make them relevant to growers, more interactive, and to enable the tools to be adaptable in each region.
- In the longer term after the completion of the Sugarcane FMS Project, this increased grower and regional involvement and focus will continue. This longer term planning and development will occur separate from the Sugarcane FMS Project, but is intended to operate in parallel to and draw input from the Sugarcane FMS Project and its' outputs.

#### Immediate changes – the Sugarcane FMS Project:

- The materials and support tools from the Sugarcane FMS Project are to be further developed to be more useful for growers and their advisors. This will include providing a hard-copy of the FMS manual and forms to people in each region, as well as increasing the interactivity of the freely-available tools on the [www.sugarcane.net.au](http://www.sugarcane.net.au) web site (including more appropriate performance indicators and recognition/ accreditation options for each region).
- Funds will be redirected from the training subproject to further develop the FMS tools and other materials. This will be the subject of renegotiation of contracts between SRDC and Agrecon, agreement by each of BSES, CANEGROWERS and ASMC and subject to approval by DAFF. It is intended that a modified Sugarcane FMS Project outline will be submitted to DAFF by **18 April 2006**.
- Some training will continue in a small number of regions that have already indicated interest, and the people involved will provide feedback and input to Agrecon on the further development of the materials and tools from the Project.
- The current Sugarcane FMS Consultative Committee as well as trainers and participants in the current training activities will be involved in providing feedback on the development of the materials and tools as this occurs.
- The original targets and milestones for the training program (for example the 100 growers by March 2006, 600 growers by March 2007) will be modified to reflect the need for changes to include greater input by regional people in developing the FMS materials to better suit grower and local needs.
- Agrecon will consult with the industry groups (BSES, CANEGROWERS, ASMC etc) and regional stakeholders to determine the required improvements to the materials and tools including regional requirements.

#### Longer-term delivery of FMS and its future in the sugar industry – after the Sugarcane FMS Project

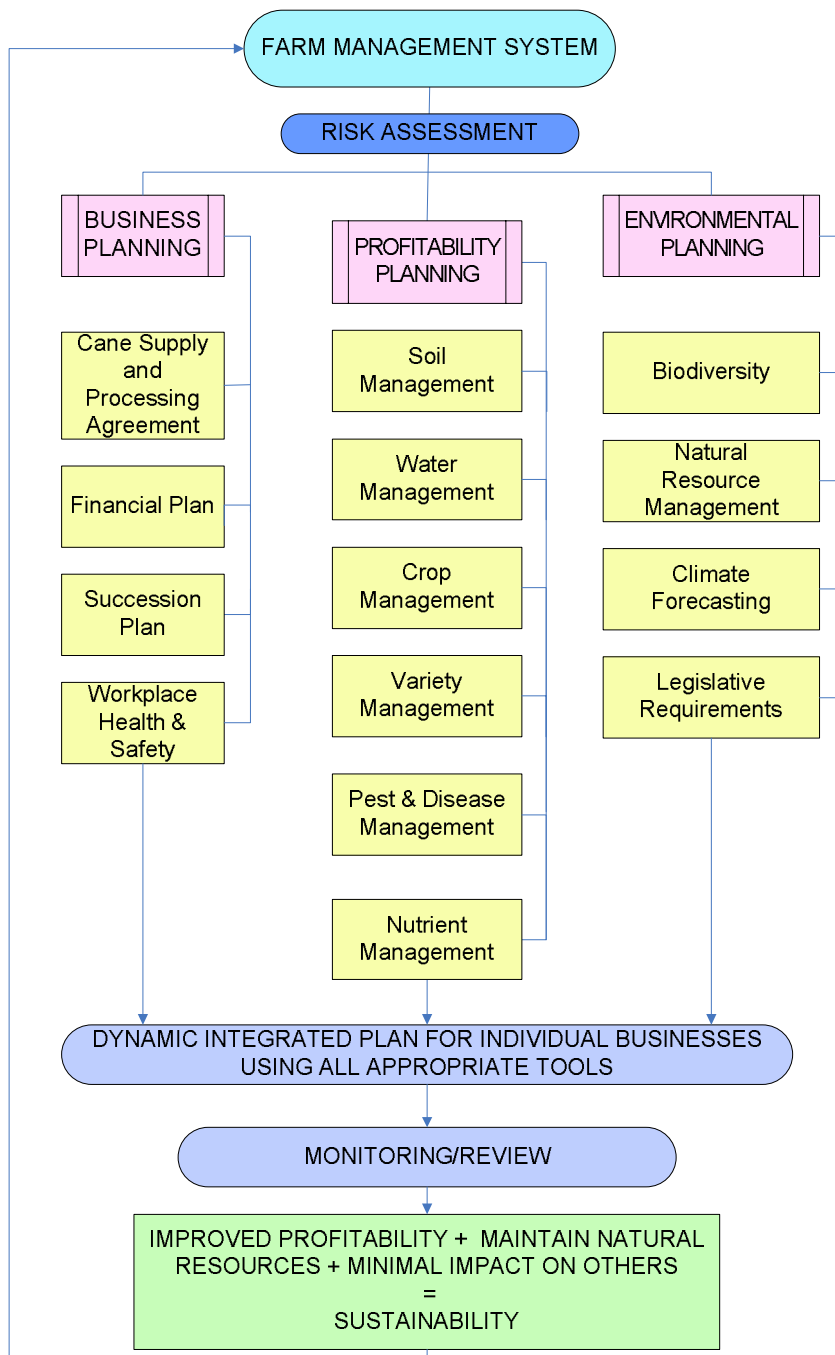
- There will be either an industry forum or a series of regional forums between July 2006 and September 2006 to increase relevance for growers and regions of the FMS concept and to develop a broader framework for a regionally focussed FMS program in the sugar industry.
- The CEOs of CANEGROWERS, BSES, ASMC, SRDC and Agrecon will develop the content and structure for regional forums by 18 May 2006 – this is the date of the next CEO's FMS Steering Committee meeting. The CEOs will submit to SRDC their intended outlines for the forums by **18 April 2006**.
- It is intended that the regional forums will aim to:
  - Identify current industry programs that are related to the similar aims of farm management systems –for example those current programs related to profitability, productivity, sustainability and recognition initiatives and compliance requirements.
  - Contribute to the development of a broad framework for the sugarcane industry (i.e., there may be a generic industry framework, eg., for certification, as well as regional variations)



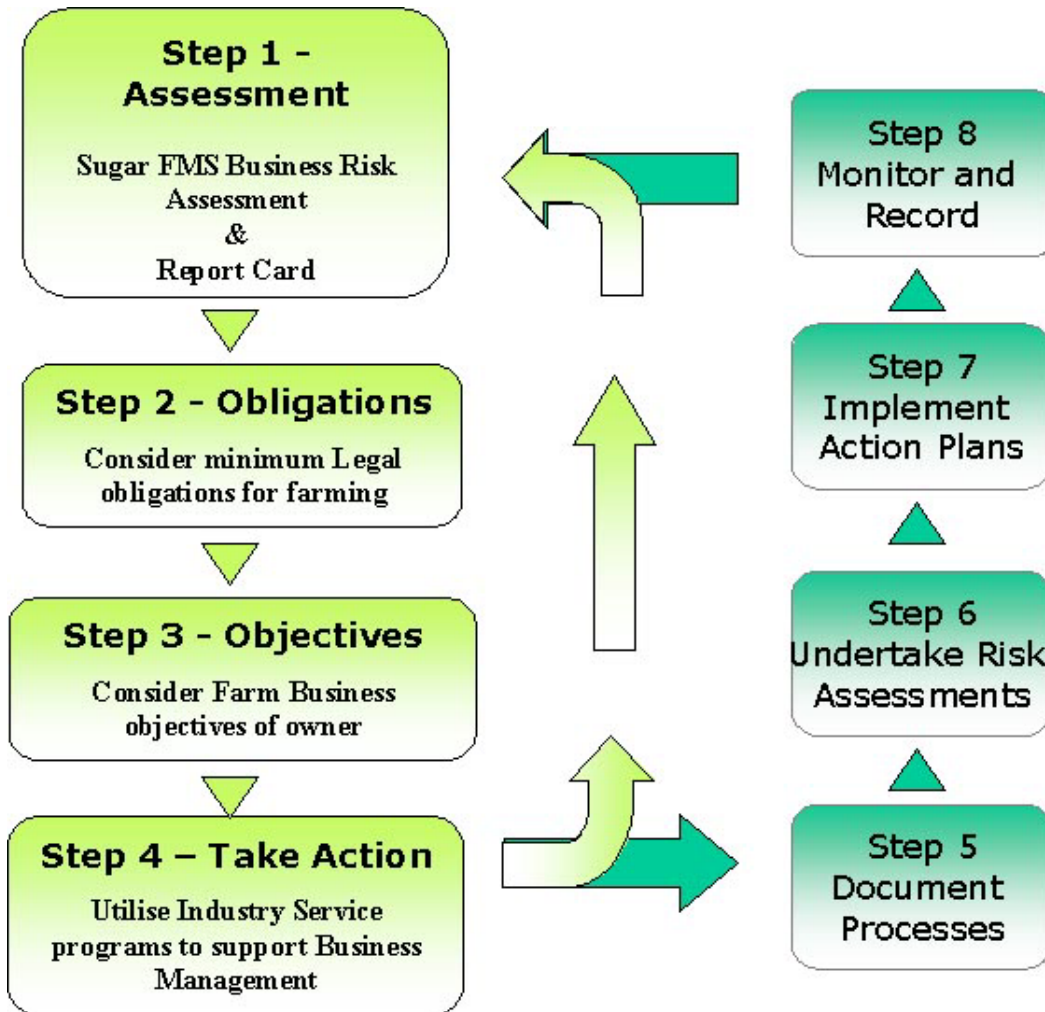


Contribute ideas to the ongoing operation of components of FMS and the broader concept of FMS

## Appendix 2 - Eoin Wallis Diagram



**Appendix 3 - Agrecon FMS Diagram**



**Appendix 4**

CEO's FMS Steering Committee – Meeting 18 May 2006 – Draft Notes from Meeting

Participants:



Dr Russell Muchow (chair), Max Craigie, Eoin Wallis, Ian Ballantyne, Brian Button, Mark Pawsey, Les Robertson, Ian O'Hara, Joseph Evans

**Invited Guest:** Mr Rod Carr from Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

#### **New directions for Sugarcane FMS Project**

- Ian Ballantyne developed a diagram (attached) explaining a process that shows how the Sugarcane FMS Project is being developed, as well as how the bigger picture of the concept of farm management systems is being progressed. Max Craigie indicated he supported the process as outlined in the diagram. Eoin Wallis also indicated he supported that process as long as the emphasis was on individual benefit for growers. Eoin added that while the theory and concept of farm management systems was good, it is a difficult process to have individual components and even the complete system adopted. Brian Button indicated he supported the process.
  - It was agreed to support the process outlined in the diagram, including the continuation of the Small Working Group (involving CANEGROWERS, BSES, ASMC, Agrecon).
  - Russell Muchow mentioned that the revised SRDC-DAFF contract is intending to make available funding of \$25,000 for the industry/regional workshop process, plus \$55,000 for a potential sub-contract between Agrecon and BSES to improve content in the tools.
  - Eoin Wallis added that the discussions in relation to a potential sub-contract were in early stages and nothing was yet finalised.
- ⇒ A demonstration of the updated support tools being developed by Agrecon as part of the Sugarcane FMS Project to occur at the next meeting of the CEOs FMS Committee in August (Mark, Les, Joseph to progress this).

#### **SRDC-DAFF Contract – Revised Milestones**

- Reference to previously distributed (by SRDC) document on Revised Milestones
  - Ian O'Hara suggested that a more specific functional specification was required to clearly identify outputs and deliverables from the Sugarcane FMS Project. Russell Muchow suggested this would become clearer through the participative and regional consultation process.
- ⇒ Les Robertson to distribute the “new milestones” document that includes DAFF alternations eg refers to 1 June 2006 milestone rather than 1 May 2006.
- ⇒ Any reference to the broader concept of farm management systems to be removed from the SRDC-DAFF document and included in the CANEGROWERS-DAFF document (Les, Joseph, Rod to progress this).
- ⇒ Any reference to the proposed Industry/ Regional forums to be moved from the SRDC-DAFF contract to the CANEGROWERS-DAFF contract (Les, Joseph, Rod to progress this).
- ⇒ Funding provision of \$25,000 to be moved from the SRDC-DAFF contract to the CANEGROWERS-DAFF contract (Les, Joseph, Rod to progress this).
- ⇒ Mention of the Case Studies approach to be included in the FMS Communications Plan (Joseph to progress this).
- Joseph Evans questioned the “on-line tools” reference given the many concerns voiced from growers and other industry representatives about data privacy and information accessibility/ technical issues. Mark Pawsey advised that Agrecon has decided to make the tools available “on-line” as well as “off-line”.
  - There was general agreement to the amendments proposed to the new milestones.

#### **Industry and Regional Forums/ Workshops**

- Reference to previously distributed document (by Joseph Evans) summarising one page outlines on the proposed Industry/ Regional Forums in relation to farm management systems.
  - There was agreement to hold the Industry/ Regional Forums (or Workshops) during the October 2006 and November 2006 time period. This would provide an opportunity for more industry participants compared to the previously suggested July to August time frame in light of the sugarcane harvest and milling season. In addition, this would provide more opportunity for the support tools being developed by Agrecon to be developed and trialled, including through a Case Studies process.
  - Rod Carr suggested there may be benefits from including the Regional NRM Groups in the Sugarcane Regional FMS Forums/ Workshops.
  - There was agreement to engage the services of a professional facilitator who would provide advice on the process (eg one large industry forum followed by several regional forums, or a smaller industry forum followed by larger regional forums).
- ⇒ CANEGROWERS to engage a facilitator. Suggestions proposed were David Hanlon, Mike Williams or Ingrid Christiansen or a previous DAFF employee (Eoin Wallis to advise).



### Communication Issues

- Reference to document with Recommendations (distributed by Joseph Evans at the CEOs FMS Committee).
  - Role of Consultative Committee – It was agreed for the Sugarcane FMS Project communication and consultation process to move into a new phase involving Case Studies, the Industry/ Regional Forums and follow up activities. This is likely to result in the CEOs FMS Committee being the major decision making group for the Sugarcane FMS Project. The planned Consultative Committee meeting on Friday 2 June will occur with that meeting intended to be the final meeting, with many Consultative Committee participants to be involved in other roles in the Sugarcane FMS Project following that meeting (eg case studies, industry/ regional forums).
  - Les Robertson asked about the consultation with NSW and WA and the involvement of government groups. It was agreed that the NSW and WA consultation would be through the Industry/ Regional Forums. Ian Ballantyne explained that CANEGROWERS has been working with Queensland Farmers' Federation in a FMS Framework development, and this has involved consultation and involvement of government. Ian added that the next steps would involve CANEGROWERS dealing direct with government, and this complements the Industry/ Regional Forums process.
  - Rod Carr mentioned that broad consultation was important.
  - Joseph explained that the suggested recommendation in relation to communications was suggested in light of the previously developed (by SRDC) article titled *Sugarcane FMS – What is all the fuss about*. Joseph said that CANEGROWERS did not want this article publicly distributed (and it was not published in the SRDC update section in the *Australian Cane Grower* magazine) because a major concern was the article suggested growers should examine a support tool (website) that was not complete and was going to change.
  - It was determined that the recommendation in relation to public communications about Farm Management Systems referring to completed activities or being agreed to by CEOs of BSES, CANEGROWERS and ASMC was not practical.
  - Ian O'Hara suggested that at this point in time public communications should refer to process rather than specifics. This was agreed.
- ⇒ It was agreed to develop a communication to the sugar industry (including to growers) explaining the process for new directions for the Sugarcane FMS Project and for the integration of farm management systems into regional sugar industry strategies. The previously developed SRDC article *Sugarcane FMS What is all the fuss about* to be used as a basis for this (Joseph, Les and Suzi Moore from CANEGROWERS to progress this). The possibilities of including a public media release of this nature to be examined. Distribution in June 2006.

### Next Meeting

- **Thursday 3 August at 9:00 am to 11:00 am at SRDC.**
- Agenda Items:
  - ⇒ Update of Sugarcane FMS Project, including a demonstration of outputs (eg support tools)
  - ⇒ Update of Industry/ Regional Forums intended progress.

## Appendix 5

### Draft Notes from CEOs FMS Meeting Held on 03 August 2006

#### Participants



Ian Ballantyne, Eoin Wallis, Russell Muchow, Ian O'Hara, Mark Pawsey, Joseph Evans

## Apologies

Max Craigie, Brian Button.

## Agenda

Russell Muchow outlined the main purpose of meeting was for information update as follows:

- 1) Sugarcane FMS Project
  - tools (demonstration), case studies
  - an update of the Agrecon-BSES subcontract
  - an update of contract details between SRDC-DAFF and CANEGROWERS-DAFF
- 2) Sugar industry farm management systems program
  - industry and regional forums
  - communication about farm management systems

## Sugarcane FMS Project

Les Robertson provided an update on the SRDC-DAFF contract. He mentioned that the contract changes were almost finalised, with details similar to previous advised.

Joseph Evans provided an update on the CANEGROWERS-DAFF contract. He mentioned that the changes have now been agreed. This includes an additional milestone report for middle of August 2006 and some specific reporting details in relation to the industry and regional workshops. A further change suggested by DAFF was to include in the CANEGROWERS-DAFF contract some reference to the case studies being progressed by Agrecon and SRDC. Ian Ballantyne highlighted that CANEGROWERS needs to ensure that the case studies were beneficial for growers and of a suitable quality for communication.

Russell Muchow also mentioned that variations to the SRDC-Agrecon contract had been finalised.

Mark provided an update on the Agrecon-BSES subcontract. Eoin Wallis added to this explaining:

- A workshop was held with BSES regional managers
- The focus of the subcontract was for:
  - FMS tools
  - Specific fact sheets
  - "Farm check" questionnaire

Mark Pawsey provided an update in the format of a powerpoint presentation which included some screen shots of the web site and a draft output.

Joseph Evans emphasised that Agrecon's focus should be, and was previously agreed to be on developing tools. The Industry and Regional Forums would develop the broader industry farm management systems program.

There was general agreement on the process as outlined in one of the diagrams included in Agrecon's presentation.

### Actions:

**(1) The draft new website to be made live next week to replace the no longer relevant but currently live website. Mark Pawsey to work with Les Robertson action this.**

(2) Mark Pawsey to amend one of the diagrams in the powerpoint presentation to include relevant steps involved in a grower's farm management system. This may include another slide. Mark to distribute the presentation to the CEOs FMS Group as soon as possible.

## Industry Farm Management Systems Forum



Joseph Evans provided an update on progress with the Industry forum. He mentioned that some dates were identified and a potential facilitator identified and contacted but not yet engaged.

It was agreed that the preferred date for the Industry Forum to be 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

**Intended participants would be from regional sugar industry organisations – Productivity Service Companies, Milling Companies, BSES Ltd, CANEGROWERS companies and SRDC. It was agreed that invitations would be extended to potential participants.**

Included in the content of the forum would be:

- A demonstration of the tools developed by Agrecon
- Demonstration of current support services, support tools and other similar systems in the sugar industry

The progress of regional workshops, including dates, would be at the discretion of participants in the regions, with some suggestions to be identified by the organisers.

Mark Pawsey mentioned that part of the BSES-Agrecon subcontract involved a portfolio of industry services being identified. Ian Ballantyne mentioned that CANEGROWERS may be able to assist with this.

**Actions:**

**(3) Joseph Evans to draft up and circulated to the CEO FMS Committee:**

- a list of possible invitees
- suggested outcomes from the forum
- a draft of program content (if possible prior to discussions with the facilitator)

**Communication**

Joseph Evans provided an update of communication. He mentioned that Cyclone Larry and the Smut crises had delayed significant progress in relation to communication, such as the communication to industry as suggested at the May 2006 CEOs FMS Committee. He added that it was hoped that the industry communication would be distributed by mid August, and that this was also conditional on the FMS website being updated. Further, the concept of farm management systems would also be mentioned in the second Sugar Industry Public Environment Report, and it was also mentioned in the first Public Environment Report.

**Actions:**

(4) Joseph Evans to draft and circulate an industry update communication by mid August, conditional on the new website being live by that time. Joseph to speak with Eve McDonald at BSES to obtain some information about the BSES-Agrecon arrangements.

Next meeting– 2:00pm Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September at SRDC.

Agenda:

- (1) Update on progress of Agrecon-BSES subcontract
- (2) Finalise details of industry forum to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> October.

Meeting closed at 10:20 am.

**Appendix 6**

**DRAFT Notes from CEOs FMS Committee**  
**Meeting of 2 September 2006.**

**Attendance:**

Russell Muchow (Chairman), Eoin Wallis, Ian Ballantyne, Ian O'Hara, Joseph Evans





**Apologies:**

Mark Pawsey, Max Craigie, Les Robertson, Brian Button

**1. Notes from Previous Meeting**

Accepted as correct.

**2. Progress of Agrecon-BSES Subcontract**

Russell Muchow referred to an email circulated by Mark Pawsey earlier in the week, and Mark's apology for his unavailability was acknowledged. Joseph Evans mentioned that had spoken with Mark and Robert Cocco from BSES and it appears that the Agrecon-BSES subcontract was progressing well with the majority of progress likely to be complete in time for the Industry FMS Workshop scheduled for 18 October 2006.

The Case Studies component to road test the new products are likely to be held after the 18 October Workshop but before end 2006.

Eoin Wallis mentioned that Graham Kingston, David Calcino and Allan Hurney from BSES were also involved in assisting with developments associated with the Agrecon-BSES subcontract.

It was resolved to ask Mark Pawsey to provide a further update for the next CEOs FMS Committee.

**3. Progress of Industry FMS Workshop**

Ian Ballantyne mentioned that Mr Denis Loaney has been appointed as the facilitator for the Industry FMS Workshop. He added that Mr Loaney has previous experience in the sugar industry and is also involved in some other sugar industry activity. Two meetings have already been held with Mr Loaney. Joseph Evans added that the Hilton Hotel has been booked as the venue for 18 October 2006.

There was discussions about the draft suggested outcomes for the Industry FMS Workshop. It was agreed that the Desired Outcomes from the Industry FMS Workshop be:

1. To obtain a common understanding and support for a FMS program that is:
  - a. Agreed by the majority of sugar industry organisations (milling companies, productivity service companies, BSES, ASMC, CANEGROWERS companies)
  - b. Delivered regionally
  - c. Coordinated throughout the industry
  - d. Focussing on good farm practices
2. To agree to develop a plan to progress the implementation of farm management systems in the sugar industry.

The flyer about the workshop, letter to invitees and article from the Australian Cane Grower magazine were all reviewed.

It was suggested and agreed to include on the flyer a section outlining "Why we are doing it".

**Next Meeting**

Thursday 5 October from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm at SRDC.

Discussion items to be:

1. Finalise Workshop, including discussions with the facilitator Mr Denis Loaney,
2. Update of tools from Mark Pawsey, perhaps with some of the presentation to the FMS workshop.

Meeting closed at 2:45 pm.

**Appendix 7**

**FMS Workshop 18 October 2006.**

**Suggested Outcomes**



1. To get support for the concept of a program that is:
  - Agreed by the major sugar industry organisations (milling companies, productivity service companies, BSES, ASMC, CANEGROWERS companies)
  - Delivered regionally
  - Coordinated throughout the industry
  - Focussing on improvement of good farm practices
2. To improve awareness and understanding about the concept of farm management systems, and more information on this, including examples from other industries.
3. To get support from the regional sugar industry groups for the concept of farm management systems as an agreed industry program that covers the three broad categories of:
  - a. farm business,
  - b. agronomic issues and
  - c. environment.
4. To provide the opportunity for involvement from all major sugar industry organisations – this includes milling companies, Productivity Service Companies, regional BSES stations, regional CANEGROWERS companies.
5. To obtain an improved awareness amongst all participants of other activities and initiatives within the sugar industry, including:
  - a. BSES Farm Productivity Assessment
  - b. Land and Water Management Planning
  - c. SRDC Agreecon developments
6. Distinguish between the concept of a farm management systems "program", and the specific Sugarcane FMS "Project"
7. To explore opportunities for the fit of the concept of farm management systems in regional strategies and regional activities  
⇒ Develop a diagram
8. Develop an action plan for progress of a "program" for farm management systems in the sugarcane industry
  - a. Identify implementation strategies
  - b. Establish a working group
  - c. Explore opportunities for additional funding



**Potential Participants to be invited:**

- Regional milling companies – 2 from each
- Productivity Services companies (Productivity Boards) – 1 from each
- NSW Canegrowers Organisation - 3
- Ord River growers organisation - 1
- All district CANEGROWERS – 1 from each
- CANEGROWERS state office - 4
- Selected CANEGROWERS elected members - 5
- BSES regional stations – Area Managers – 5 (includes NSW)
- BSES state office - 4
- Rural Water Use Efficiency Project Officers - 5
- Herbert Resource Information Centre – 1
- Agrecon – 3
- SRDC – 3
- SRDC Board - 3
- ASMC – 3
- DAFF - 2

**Draft of Content**

**Agenda**

- Presentations:
  - Two of Dairy, Growcom, Cotton, and Agforce – how and why they are handling the FMS issue. Similar presentations to that presented at the QFF Conference. This would just be at the first workshop and those people only need to be there for their sessions.
  - BSES – the Farm Productivity Assessment (FPA) Process
  - Agrecon – new direction for FMS tools
  - Regional industry strategies and activities – what they are doing
- The main collective big group then attempts to:
  - Agree on a the need for an “industry program”
  - Develop a draft diagram which fits the current regional activities into it (includes exploring a number of already developed suggestions)
  - Agreed to develop an Action Plan
  - Agree on a Working Group to:
    - Progress the Action Plan
    - Keep the participants informed
    - Explore additional funding sources

Duration and Timing: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm



**Appendix 8 - Example FMS Check Recommendation Report**



**Appendix 9 – Grower Case Studies**