



## New SRA varieties approved this year

*During April, the cane industry's Variety Approval Committees (VACs) in all regions of Queensland and NSW met to consider the release of new varieties in 2015 and to identify varieties that should be targeted for maximum propagation for possible release in 2016. By Roderick Fletcher*

At all the meetings there was a degree of excitement among the growers and millers for the new varieties and advanced clones coming through the SRA breeding program for possible release over the next few years. Following this consultation with industry, SRA is releasing the three new varieties in 2015 as well as seven current commercial varieties to be released in new regions.

The release of these new varieties also coincided with a new way of SRA naming its varieties. They are the first varieties to be released since SRA was formed and are named using the "SRA" prefix replacing the previously used "Q". The last variety released in 2013 under the old "Q" number was Q256<sup>®</sup>.

The three new varieties released this year are SRA1 (QS05-2595) and SRA2 (QS03-2717), which are to be released for the southern region, which includes Bundaberg, Isis (SRA 1 only),

Maryborough and Rocky Point, and the NSW growing regions.

The third variety is SRA3 (QN02-777) to be released in the Herbert region. For this year, the varieties will still need to be approved by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) before they are available for industry, and that this process is expected to be complete within the next few months.

In addition to the three new varieties, seven current Blanket Approved Q canes have been endorsed by other regional VACs for commercial planting and ratooning.

These releases have already been approved by DAF. The varieties involved are Q242<sup>®</sup>, Q245<sup>®</sup>, Q247<sup>®</sup>, Q249<sup>®</sup>, Q252<sup>®</sup> and Q253<sup>®</sup> in the northern coastal region and Q252<sup>®</sup> in the central region.

VACs also approved the maximum propagation of 13 advanced clones for possible release in 2016. These include three varieties in the Northern region, two in the Herbert region, two in the Burdekin region, one in the Central region, one in the Southern region and four in New South Wales (one for 1-year production and three for 2-year production).

The two maximum propagation clones in the Burdekin region and one in the Central region may be considered for release as SRA varieties later this year when more data becomes available. VACs will reconsider these varieties when that information becomes available later in 2015.

### Above images (left to right)

SRA 1, SRA 2, Richard Cervellin with SRA Bundaberg in the field with the varieties.

*There has been considerable enthusiasm across the industry as it looks forward to the new varieties. Bundaberg Sugar Ltd CEO, Ray Hatt, said that new and more productive varieties would benefit the mills and the growers alike.*

"A 5 percent yield improvement coupled with higher CCS could easily produce an extra 100,000 tonnes from the current land area," Mr Hatt said.

"This would greatly assist Bundaberg growers and mills as they strive to increase cane production to their current target of 2 million tonnes. Improved variety development and subsequent higher volumes are essential for the future viability of the cane industry. Disease resistance, CCS, yield and fibre content are important criteria in new varieties and SRA is striving to improve all of these characteristics."

Herbert region grower and CANEGROWERS Herbert River director Vince Russo said that growers in the region were always keen to hear more about new varieties.

"The entire local cane growing community, including growers, millers, and the general community, continue to look for improvements from our new varieties to help us to be productive and sustainable," Mr Russo said.

"SRA3 is being released after consultation with the local cane community and we hope that it can deliver positive outcomes for us."

General Manager of the NSW Milling Cooperative, Ian McBean, said that the local industry was looking forward to the beginning of the new SRA line of varieties and that they had heard positive messages about SRA1 in particular.

"The local industry continues to need new and improving varieties to underpin our viability, to target greater production," Mr McBean said.



**Above image**

Dr Mike Cox (SRA) discussing the new varieties with Ray Hatt, Bundaberg Sugar, and Allan Dingle, CANEGROWERS.