

Growers with YCS affected cane are noticing an impact on CCS levels in the crop.

CCS considerations for harvesting YCS cane

*Many growers who are experiencing or have experienced Yellow Canopy Syndrome (YCS) in their sugarcane may have noticed the syndrome appears to impact sugar levels. **By Belinda Billing***

Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) and Sugar Services Proserpine are monitoring YCS and sharing their findings with SRA. Information indicates that we are starting this year in much the same way as last year, and that is with low CCS early on.

There are many reasons for low CCS, particularly early in the harvest. Monitoring last year showed that CCS continued to improve as the season progressed and by the end of the season the issue of YCS and low CCS was no longer an issue.

Peter Sutherland of Sugar Services Proserpine is testing plots of cane every two weeks to gauge CCS.

In the worst affected plot the cane registered a CCS of 4 on Proserpine show weekend (June 16). Another two sites tested showed CCS of 12. Non-affected show cane tested at the same time had CCS of between 14 and 16.

Peter says the YCS impacted cane had improved by two points when tested two weeks later.

"The YCS cane appears to be gaining sugar at the same rate as non-affected cane, whether it is very low or only a few points lower," said Peter.

This work will continue throughout the harvest and will be important in developing a full understanding of the relationship between YCS and sugar.

Lawrence Di Bella, HCPSL manager, began recording the CCS of YCS impacted sugarcane in the Herbert last harvest season and is continuing the work in 2015.

He said the Herbert was experiencing historically low CCS for the start of the season, some of which was due to YCS and some of which was due to other factors including late rain that has put the crop back into a vegetative phase.

The lowest CCS was 3.2 in a block of Q200th and the region was still getting blocks under 9 at the end of July.

There have been allowances made to pay growers for CCS down to 5 due to these factors (normally growers are not paid if the crop is under 7).

"The CCS is starting to climb but we are starting from a low base. We have noticed that the CCS will increase as the season progresses."

Productivity services staff are able to assist growers in making decisions on when to harvest YCS cane blocks. Mackay Area Productivity Services has been providing refractometers to growers to purchase to enable them to make this decision.

For more information contact Belinda Billing at SRA on 0475 954 437 or bbilling@sugarresearch.com.au or call your local productivity service.