

Farm Biosecurity Manual released for sugarcane producers

A new manual has been produced to assist sugarcane growers and the entire industry to be aware of biosecurity risks that could cost the industry millions of dollars in lost production.



Sugarcane producers have a new guide to farm biosecurity measures to reduce the risks of weeds, pests, and diseases impacting production following the release of the *Biosecurity Manual for Sugarcane Producers*.

The manual shows simple measures to minimise the risk of introducing and spreading weeds, pests, and diseases onto properties.

The *Biosecurity Manual for Sugarcane Producers* was developed by Plant Health Australia (PHA), in conjunction with CANEGROWERS, SRA, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries. It was supported by funding from SRA.

PHA Program Manager, Dr Sharyn Taylor, said that the manual is new for the industry.

"PHA worked with experts in sugarcane production to provide information that will help growers prevent new pests from spreading onto a farm," Dr Taylor said.

"The guide gives specific advice on what producers need to be careful about, including choosing SRA-approved varieties of cane, cleaning equipment and vehicles and restricting movements of vehicles and people away from production areas.

Reporting new or unusual pest symptoms on your farm could minimise longer term impacts for your farm and the industry as a whole."

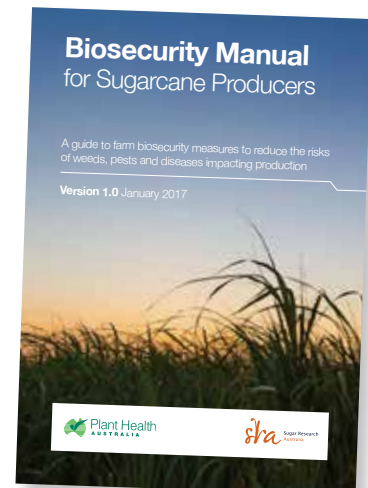
Cairns district sugarcane grower John Ferrando welcomed the new guide, saying biosecurity awareness is crucial for maintaining a productive crop, and for the long-term sustainability of the industry.

"Feral pigs do lots of damage to the cane here," Mr Ferrando said. "We also know that things can go horribly wrong when there is an incursion of an exotic pest or disease.

"It could take years for the industry get on top of the problem, or worse, there could be no chemical controls for a new pest – so it is far better that we be vigilant and keep things clean to begin with, which this manual can assist with."

SRA Key Focus Area Leader for Biosecurity, Dr Andrew Ward, said the guide also explained recent changes to biosecurity obligations in Queensland and NSW, which is important information for growers, millers and other industry stakeholders.

"The changes to the Biosecurity Acts in Queensland and NSW have increased the responsibility for everyone in reducing the risks posed by pests, diseases, and weeds," Dr Ward said.



"Further information on biosecurity obligations is available by contacting your respective State Government Department, productivity services office, or SRA."

The General Biosecurity Obligation in Queensland and the soon to be introduced General Biosecurity Duty in NSW both mandate precautions on farms and along supply chains.

An electronic copy is available on the Plant Health Australia website www.planthealthaustralia.com.au and SRA website www.sugarresearch.com.au.

Above: Cairns district sugarcane grower John Ferrando, who has been impacted by Yellow Canopy Syndrome in 2017, says that biosecurity vigilance is vital for the Australian sugarcane industry.