



New research to deliver outcomes for Australian sugarcane growers and millers

SRA has announced 12 new research projects that will begin from July 1, 2018, to drive productivity, profitability, and sustainability for Australian sugarcane growers and millers.

SRA's new investment will complement the existing portfolio of research investment and will address critical research gaps and requirements that have been identified in SRA's five-year Strategic Plan.

SRA CEO Mr Neil Fisher said the new research investment would see research providers from several leading research institutions undertake work to address critical issues for the Australian sugar industry.

"These projects have an emphasis on new and innovative research," Mr Fisher said. "For example, CSIRO will be looking closer into the genetics of sugarcane and molecular markers, which will help us to continue to modernise the SRA breeding program, leading to better varieties for growers and millers.

"We are also investing in a major project with QUT to improve pan design and how pans operate. The pan stage of milling is where syrup is converted to sugar, and there is an opportunity with this research to improve the efficiency of this critical component of the milling process, and to do so in a way that minimises the capital investment for our Milling Members.

"Our investments are also looking at other key topics including improved irrigation system selection, nitrogen use efficiency, and improved farming systems.

"We are also investing in a project led by SRA to ensure our industry is prepared for the possible biosecurity risk posed by moth borers, which exist in neighbouring sugarcane growing countries and would cause serious problems for our industry if we faced an incursion. This type of preparation is a vital insurance policy for the future of our industry."

Mr Fisher said these projects had been chosen based on a rigorous selection process over the last six months, overseen by the SRA Research Funding Panel (RFP).

"These projects have all been assessed based on the outcomes they will provide to the industry, leading to positive outcomes for our investors." ■

The full portfolio of SRA's research investment is available via the SRA website: www.sugarresearch.com.au/research-portfolio/

SRA's investment is funded by the statutory levy of 70 cents per tonne of cane, to which growers and millers each contribute 35c per tonne of cane each. This investment in research is supported by a co-contribution of about \$7.2M from the Federal Government and \$2.85 million from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

(Above) One of the new project investments is being led by Dr Barry Salter (SRA) and looking at a range of soil health issues facing the industry.