

INDUSTRY LEADERS COLLABORATE TO PROMOTE SUGARCANE IMIDACLOPRID STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Public and private organisations have collaborated to develop and promote a new best-practice training program for sugarcane growers that targets the safe and sustainable use of liquid imidacloprid products such as Confidor® Guard Soil Insecticide and Nuprid® 350SC.

The program aims to encourage the correct placement of imidacloprid in the field to ensure maximum performance against cane grubs, and the strategic use of the product to ensure longevity of the product.

By getting these use aspects right, research trial data indicates that benefits may also flow to nearby waterways and the Great Barrier Reef.

With the support of SRA and the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Bayer and Nufarm have worked together to create an instructional video, training package and an application slot depth measurement gauge for use in ratoon cane applications. Initially, the group will train 750 growers in the Mackay Whitsunday and Wet Tropics regions

with the eventual aim of the materials reaching all Australian sugarcane growers.

The program is based on several years of research work conducted by SRA and DAF.

Emilie Fillols, Senior Researcher with SRA based at their Meringa Station said: "Growers should first consider if they need to treat their blocks for cane grubs, which is a decision based on a risk assessment. If treatment is necessary, achieving an application depth of 100 mm or more is essential to reduce imidacloprid loss via runoff. Three years of field trials in the Wet Tropics and the Burdekin have confirmed the critical importance of application depth in preventing loss of imidacloprid."

Nick Matthews, Market Development Agronomist with Bayer said that Confidor Guard and Nuprid 350SC liquid imidacloprid are critical tools to control cane grubs, however, they need to be used correctly.

"Bayer has worked hard to prepare a relevant and easily accessible training video and presentation. Our first goal is to train all retail agronomists, and then work with the relevant productivity

services organisations and other organisations to train their agronomists. While the minimum depth message is simple, achieving this in field in all areas poses many challenges. Our training video and materials cover a wide variety of machine types and situations."

For Dave Rumbold, Regulatory Lead ANZ with Nufarm, a practical contribution to the success of the program has been the Confidor Guard and Nuprid 350SC Depth Gauge. One thousand of these sturdy tools will be made available, free of charge, to growers, agronomists and contract applicators. "These tools will allow growers to easily measure slot depth across several locations in their blocks to ensure they are achieving the minimum depths for efficient treatment," he said. ■