

the burnett buzz...

Summer 2017

Action on the Ground is Almost Complete

Now that the sorghum harvest is complete, the Action on the Ground—Burnett Croppers project is nearing the end.

The project aimed to trial, measure and demonstrate farm technologies that reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions (in this case nitrous oxide or N_2O), while maintaining and hopefully improving cropping productivity and soil health.

After applying fertiliser to the sorghum, gas chambers were replaced in the field and gas sampling commenced. Gas samples were taken 1–3 times/week depending on how dry the soil was (emissions occur following irrigation or rain and are minimal when dry).

Soil was sampled to a depth of 30cm after each application of fertiliser at 2, 6 and 8 weeks. Resulting feedback from the Department of Science Information Technology & Innovation (DSITI) reveals there are still measurable levels of N in the samples. DSITI also found that the Entec (coated Urea) is remaining in the soil as NH_4 whereas the Urea is remaining in the soil as NO_3 . This form of N as NO_3 is less

desirable as it is more easily converted to gaseous N in favourable conditions such as waterlogging.

Following harvest a deep soil sample to 90cm was taken from around each chamber to determine what levels of N are left in the

“...coated Urea is remaining in the soil as NH_4 whereas the Urea is remaining as NO_3 ... N as NO_3 is less desirable...”

soil, what form the N is in and where the N is sitting in the profile. The analysis of these samples are not yet completed.

Very dry conditions has meant the trial was irrigated three times during the growing season. While this is not ideal due to the risk of irrigation overlap near the chambers, at least the sorghum was kept alive. The dry conditions also brought unprecedented levels of Rutherglen Bug (pictured) that attacked summer sorghum and mungbean crops in the district.

These sap-sucking insects cause damage to the seed while it's still green. Two knock-down sprays of



Dimethoate were applied to the trial sites during the critical phase before the seed hardened off.

A workshop delivered in November 2016 was very well received by growers. This event included trial updates and presentation of results from previous seasons by Professor Phil Brown (Central Qld University) and Jenny Voigt (BCCA), as well as a thorough discussion on fertiliser efficiencies led by Professor Mike Bell (University of Qld).

Copies of workshop Factsheets are available at the BCCA office or can be emailed on request. There are also extra copies of the Fertcare “Best Management Practices to reduce nitrous oxide emissions for irrigated broadacre cropping (excluding rice)” available at the office.

DSITI, in conjunction with Professor Phil Brown will be writing up the final technical report.

This project is an initiative of the Burnett Mary Regional Group and is supported by funding from the Australian Government. The project is coordinated locally by BCCA's Technical Officer, Jenny Voigt.



Professor Mike Bell discusses fertiliser efficiencies at the workshop

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Highlights

- The closing stages of the Action on the Ground Nitrous Oxide Trial in Monto
- Cropping workshops in the South Burnett for black soil farmers a big success
- Calling Lower Burnett graziers for Reef Alliance Project
- Heaps of great workshops coming up in the Burnett over the next few months

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Seeking graziers with Burnett River frontage

Under the **Reef Alliance Project – Burnett Grazing**, eligible graziers located within the Burnett priority area have the opportunity to receive free, one-on-one, tailored training and extension support. These activities will help improve grazing management practices that in turn, will reduce sediment runoff into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon while enhancing the productivity of your grazing business.

The priority area is the sub catchment that encompasses Paradise Dam to Walla Weir including the Degilbo and Biggenden areas. More details regarding the project, the priority area & eligibility criteria can be found on at: www.betterburnett.com/programs/reef-alliance-project/.

In recent weeks we have run an Expression of Interest (EOI) process asking eligible graziers in the priority

“The priority area is the sub catchment that encompasses Paradise Dam to Walla Weir, including Degilbo and Biggenden areas.”

area to apply to participate in the project. We had a good response to this EOI process and will be working with these graziers in coming months.

Ideally, we would like to hear from some additional commercial-scale graziers in the priority area who have Burnett river frontage that requires enhanced grazing management. If this sounds like you, then please give us a call.

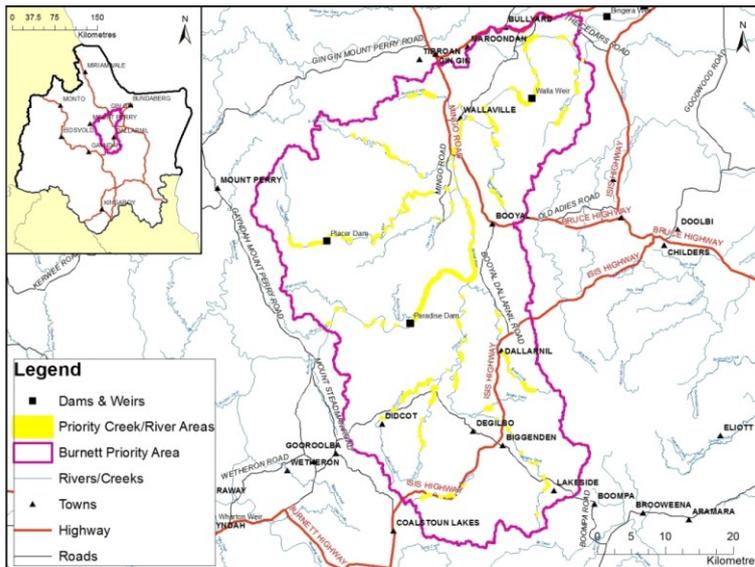
The Reef Alliance Program is a partnership between agricultural industry, regional NRM bodies and facilitated by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), with a common goal of securing the future health of the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef Alliance Program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered through the Reef Trust.

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Reef Alliance Project – Burnett Grazing (River & Creek) Priority Area.

The priority area is the subcatchment encompassing Paradise Dam to Walla Weir.

The priority rivers and creeks are outlined in yellow.



Fourth Emissions Reduction Fund auction...

The Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) is a voluntary scheme that aims to provide incentives for a range of organisations and individuals to adopt new practices and technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Adoption of these practices and technologies, together with participation in the ERF, contributes to the national greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

“One Australian carbon credit unit is earned for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e) stored...”

A number of activities are eligible under the scheme and participants can earn Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs). One ACCU is earned for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent

(tCO₂-e) stored or avoided by a project. ACCUs can be sold to generate income, either to the Federal Government through a carbon abatement contract, or in the secondary market.

Carbon abatement contracts with the Government are awarded through the ERF auction process. The fourth ERF auction was conducted in November 2016 with the fifth ERF auction to be held in April 2017. A summary of results from the November 2016 auction are as follows:

- 34 356 058 tonnes of abatement on behalf of the Commonwealth.
- The average price per tonne of abatement (or average price per ACCU) was \$10.69.
- 47 contracts awarded, covering 49 projects.
- total value of contracts awarded at this auction was \$367 392 993.

Results from each of the four auctions held to date plus combined results of

all the auctions are available on the Clean Energy Regulator website under the Emissions Reduction Fund tab at www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/About-the-Emissions-Reduction-Fund.

This website also provides information on eligible activities that can be implemented to earn ACCUs.

Following this fourth ERF auction, approximately \$440 million (of the original \$2.55 billion) remains in the ERF. With a large portion of the ERF now assigned, a carbon policy review will be conducted this year. Stay up-to-date with policy announcements by visiting the Clean Energy regulator website regularly.

The Carbon Farming Project is a joint initiative of Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG), Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) and Bundaberg Fruit & Vegetable Growers (BFVG), supported by funding from the Australian Government.

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Understanding black soils in the South Burnett

Black Soil farmers across the South Burnett gathered at workshops in Murgon and Kingaroy on December 15 to expand their knowledge of the regions black soils.

BGA Agriservices (BGA) agronomist Ian Crosthwaite presented a detailed overview of soil test results to the attending growers.

The results were from soil samples BGA had collected and analysed across the South Burnett region in the months leading up to the workshops. The soil samples were a collective of paired sites—where each pair included one sample from a historically cropped paddock and the other from the same soil type, however, not historically cropped.

“The results showed some interesting trends across the region and discussing them provided a great opportunity to look at comparative results from cropped and non-cropped paddocks.”

The results showed some interesting trends across the region and discussing them provided a great opportunity to look at comparative results from cropped and non cropped paddocks.

Ian discussed with the growers the soil chemistry and the importance of various elements in the soil and subsequently the optimum levels required to maintain nutrient balance. Furthermore, he took growers through the various crop nutrient removals,



Kingaroy workshop—all eyes on Ian while he presents some interesting soil test results.

such as, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium and Sulphur for a range of crops relevant to the growers.

These workshops were held under the Better Catchments Cropping program which involves working with cropping landholders on projects which will result in an improved practice change in line with industry standard and long term sustainability. These projects are supported by BMRG and coordinated locally by BCCA, through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme.

The Better Catchments Program will continue working with black soil farmers to implement improved practice changes. Expressions of Interests were offered to growers attending the workshops, to be part of the program.

Small grants will be provided to eligible growers to kick start the projects with one on one property visits, follow up technical advice and workshops over

the two years, to continue the ongoing support to growers.

This project is supported by BMRG and coordinated locally by BCCA’s Field Officer, Marisa Young, through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme.



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What's on 'round the Burnett...

27 Feb	<u>BeefConnect Webinar: Spelling Strategies for Recovery of Pasture Condition</u>	15-16 Mar	<u>Grazing BMP workshop, Biggenden</u>
2 Mar	<u>Using Manures, Composted Materials & Soil Ameliorants in Farming Systems workshop, Childers</u>	22 Mar	Property Fire Management Plan Workshop, Kingaroy
7 Mar	<u>Indian Couch and Pasture Dieback Forum, Biloela</u>	28 Mar	<u>Soil Health & Conservation Workshop, Goomeri</u>
7 Mar	<u>How to Improve Pasture Using Manure & Compost, Kingaroy</u>	30 Mar	<u>Soil Health & Conservation Workshop, Mundubbera</u>
12-14 Mar	<u>“Against the Grain” Bus trip to Darling Downs</u>	29 Apr	South Burnett Women in Ag Day, Mondure
15 Mar	<u>Achieving Fair Work Compliance, Kingaroy</u>	May (TBA)	North Burnett Women in Ag Day, Eidsvold

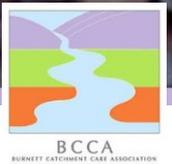


Burnett Catchment Care Association

BCCA is a member-based, not-for-profit organisation, employing professional staff to develop and implement natural resource management projects across the Burnett Catchment.

We work directly with landholders to support sustainable land management practices.

We partner with associated, like-minded organisations such as the Burnett Mary Regional Group and landcare groups where much of our funding is derived from State and Federal Government funding programs.



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Last word...

I hope the first month of 2017 has been kind to you. January has sped past us here at BCCA with intense heat and only sporadic storms. I hope you have been lucky enough to be under one or two.

A couple of storms have helped carry our newly planted trees through on our 20 Million Trees project site at Gayndah. Over 2500 trees have been planted on land adjacent to the Burnett River and thanks to good alluvial soils and a work crew watering we are looking at a 90% survival rate so far, although this hot February weather may have reduced this some what.

Our Grazing Officer, Veronica is busy encouraging graziers in the lower Burnett catchment to participate in the new Reef Alliance Project – Burnett Grazing. The project provides graziers with the opportunity to receive free, one

-on-one, tailored training and extension support to help improve grazing management practices. This project will run until June 2019 however joining the project early will ensure the greatest benefit of support for graziers.

Our Action on the Ground cropping trial has almost come to an end with the last crop of sorghum being harvested. A dry summer made irrigation essential and yields were average thanks to some heavy insect pressure. The final technical report will be completed by May 2017.

The Better Catchments project is working with graziers and grain growers in the inland Burnett. Keep your ear out for workshops and training events happening in the next couple of months, including the Soil Health and Conservation workshops are Goomeri and Mundubbera in March.

We are calling for landholders in the Baffle catchment keen to undertake revegetation, pest control and riparian fencing to be part of the Baffle Reef System Repair project. Please contact the office if you are keen to be involved.

I encourage landholders to benefit from our bargain \$5 for 5 year membership option with BCCA and be the first to hear about any projects, funding or training opportunities we have across this great catchment of ours. The greater our membership base, the greater our reach to the catchment. Also remember to like us on facebook.

Katie Muller



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2016/17 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renew your membership for only \$1 and keep up to date with BCCA activities

- \$1 cash stamps **NEW \$5 for 5 year membership**

CONTACT OFFICE FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT DETAILS!!!

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Property Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Mobile: _____ Email: _____



Please return with payment (postage stamps acceptable) to: BCCA PO Box 8, Monto Q 4630