

MEDIA RELEASE



CANEGROWERS

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Win for growers in face of costly regulations

CANEGROWERS has secured valuable recognition for Smartcane BMP accredited growers through persistent representations to the Queensland Government over its regulation of farm practices.

“In its latest bureaucratic addition to reef regulations, the Government planned to make every cane farmer engage an ‘appropriate person’ to develop and sign off on their fertiliser plans,” CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said. “This would completely disregard the decades of experience of thousands of sugarcane growers in Queensland!”

As the peak sugarcane growers’ organisation, CANEGROWERS lobbied against the new regulation asking, at the very least, for an exemption for growers who are accredited under the Smartcane BMP program along with clear guidelines of how it would work for other growers.

“We appreciate that the Environment Minister Meaghan Scanlon has listened to our perspectives on this issue and the Government has now accepted our argument that Smartcane BMP accredited growers do not need to engage an appropriate person,” Mr Galligan said.

“These growers, managing 650 accredited cane farming businesses covering 35% of Queensland’s cane area, have already been independently audited as operating at or above industry best practice. This standard is above what is required by regulation.

“Making them seek extra approval from an external person for their normal farming operations was condescending and unnecessary.”

This change is consistent with the State Government's recognition of Smartcane BMP accreditation as meeting the swag of reef regulations in place, which ensures accredited growers will not be a target for inspections by compliance officers.

"Adoption of Smartcane BMP is voluntary and while it provides valuable validation of sustainable practices, we know that many hundreds of growers not in the program are also operating very sustainable businesses," Mr Galligan said.

"CANEGROWERS still has concerns about how this additional regulation will impact on the many growers on the pathway to accreditation.

"It will add costs and processes to their business for no benefit for the environment or farm productivity and CANEGROWERS will continue to ensure Government understands the impact these regulations have on all sugarcane growers."

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