The BMP program has contracted Sugar Research Australia (SRA) to design and deliver training that supports growers in their pursuit of BMP accreditation. **Belinda Billing** leads this project for SRA.

Belinda initially consulted with BMP facilitators and other extension providers to identify the gaps in available training that would make the most difference for growers. As a result, training has been organised on the following topics:

- **Irrigation Essentials**, provided by *Steve Attard*
- **Improving Soil Health**, provided by *Peter McGuire*
- **Cane Grub and Weed Management**, provided by *Trevor Willcox* and *Allan Blair* with support from Nu Farm and Bayer
- **Practical Drainage Management**, provided by *Allan Rudd*
- **SIX EASY STEPS training**, provided by *John Panitz*

Chemical accreditation courses will be run where there is a need.

All training is supported locally by BMP and extension staff.

These local staff are able to ensure the training is relevant to the growers and that follow up is provided where it is needed.

Delivery of the workshop began in February and participation and feedback to date have been very good with many participants commenting that they intend to make changes to farming practice following the training.

Training sessions are run with groups of 15 to 20 people, with numbers capped at 20 to ensure good interaction and plenty of opportunities for discussion.

So far Peter McGuire has run 15 Improving Soil Health courses, in Bundaberg, Childers, Maryborough, Mackay, Koumala, Home Hill, Clare, Innisfail, Tully and Ingham (where he has run three grower workshops and with demand for more). Industry reviews have been run for the Practical Drainage training and Cane Grub and Weed training and dates are currently being finalised for the grower training.

Chemical accreditation training has been run in Mackay.

An industry review of the irrigation training has been run with the course kicking off for growers in the Burdekin this April.

If you are interested in attending any training contact Belinda on 07 4783 8602 or 0475 954 437. Or you can email bbilling@sugarresearch.com.au.
WHS self-assessment workshops underway

The Smartcane BMP Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) module has been revised to make it more concise and relevant, with input from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHS Qld).

WHS Qld also offered to help run workshops in each district to help growers assess their current practices and get a better appreciation of their obligations under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011.

Forty-five growers have attended the first five workshops (Tablelands, Mossman, Mulgrave, Burdekin) and feedback has been consistently positive.

Growers indicated they would be taking actions as a result of their improved understanding of WHS obligations.

These actions include documenting procedures (e.g. visitor induction; risk assessment), hazard maps, and conversations with contractors, better signage, and additional training.

New facilitator for Tully

Nick Stipis has recently started as the new BMP facilitator in Tully. Nick was a school teacher who went farming in Tully for a number of years.

Nick has served on the CANEGROWERS board and the board of Tully Sugar.

Nick had long been interested in production and environmental issues, and was one of the earliest to gain COMPASS accreditation.

Frank Hughes has done a great job in the Tully Smartcane BMP role over the past two years, but is keen to spend more time on his farming activities.

While Frank will continue to provide assistance and support to the program, Nick will be the primary contact.

Two of the workshops noted the lack of industry-organised meetings with harvester and haul-out drivers, to cover WHS, before the start of each season.

Pictured: At the Mackay workshop, Clifford Pratt (grower), Adam Spinelli, Helen Pastega (grower) and Jill Fox (grower). Back: John Turner, John Eden and Ann Jansen (grower).

Farm chemical records books a best-seller!

The Farm Chemicals Record Book produced by Smartcane BMP is designed to record the relevant facts each time pesticides are used on a farm. It meets the record-keeping requirements for BMP, and also meets the requirements of various State Government regulations.

This book has been very popular – with almost 1,000 copies being distributed to growers during 2016. Another print run has just been completed so your local BMP facilitator will now have plenty of copies available. Happy recording!