

MEDIA RELEASE



CANEGROWERS

Thursday 14 March 2024

Agro Group's Modernising Mill Mud Application first project completed in Lower Herbert Water Quality Program

A recent trial on a farm in Abergowrie showed that using mill mud increased tonnes of cane harvested. Reducing fertiliser rates to account for mill mud application, did not impact CCS as much as when fertiliser was left at full rates and yet still produced an increase in yield.

Agro Group Director Kristen Kernke said that according to the study using mill mud in any fertiliser application increased overall tonnes of sugar harvested and the control also revealed that no use of mill mud resulted in the lowest tonnes of sugar harvested.

"The case study also shows that through this new technology of spreading mud at these lower and more accurate rates, it has become an economically viable product for more growers located in excess of 30 kilometres from the Herbert mills."

"New farmers that have never used mill mud before are now onboard with its benefits and trials and will continue in the Herbert to gain more data around the effects on CCS when reducing inorganic fertiliser that can be shared with the Herbert farming community," said Mrs Kernke.

Mill mud is a concentrated source of organic forms of macro and micronutrients and is sought after by many sugarcane growers. Mill mud, a by-product of the sugarcane milling process, is managed by returning it to surrounding agricultural land. Historically transport costs and distribution methods have limited mill mud distribution within close proximity to each mill.

Delivery Provider Agro Group's completion of the Modernising On-Farm Mill Mud Application project has enabled more Herbert growers to augment their inorganic fertiliser application rates with organic mill mud through the development of spinner applicator trucks.

This has seen a reduction in mill mud application rates per hectare (banded), resulting in consistent mill mud output, enabling growers to reliably modify their inorganic fertilising rates and variable rate placement of mill mud in a safe, efficient, and user-friendly manner.

Since 2020 the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program, funded by the partnership between the Australian Government Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, and its delivery providers, has engaged with over three hundred growers in the Lower Herbert district to better manage their farm nutrient inputs to best suit their crop needs and reduce nitrogen losses as runoff to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

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Great Barrier
Reef Foundation