

Harvesting efficiency: dollars in your pocket, not in the paddock

Sugarcane growers, millers and harvester operators will hear how they can harvest the maximum amount of sugar and cane from the paddock at a series of upcoming regional forums across the Australian industry.

Harvesting efficiency and optimisation is a major focus area of Sugar Research Australia's investment on behalf of the Australian sugarcane industry, and will be the topic of the regional forums being held in 12 locations over the coming weeks leading up to the 2018 harvest.

SRA Adoption Officer for Harvesting, Mr Phil Patane, said improving harvesting efficiency is a complex problem that involves multiple stakeholders and considerations, but is also a major opportunity for the Australian industry to extract more from value chain.

"SRA has trial results building to show cane and sugar loss as a result of a range of economic drivers across the harvesting, transport, and milling value chain," Mr Patane said.

"In some cases, practice change may come with additional costs, but SRA is working with growers, millers, and harvesting groups across the industry to provide them with precise information to help inform their decisions.

"In order to make practice change, the industry needs detailed information on what losses are occurring and what they stand to gain if they change practice to further optimise the harvest.

"This has been the focus of on-farm demonstration trials in 2017, where we have worked with local harvesting groups, in their own conditions, to define what sugar and cane loss they may be incurring.

"The 2018 forums will report extensively on the results of these demonstration trials. The forums will also be an opportunity for harvesting groups to take part in a new round of demonstration trials for the coming harvest. This will allow them to assess harvesting efficiency in their own local region, and local conditions.

"The forums will also present information from a range of innovative research activities.

“We will hear about research that is looking at the design and function of harvesters to see if improvements can be made to ensure we are harvesting more sugar. We will also hear about a new online tool, called SCHLOT, which provides advice for harvester operators to optimise the harvest.”

SRA’s work in harvesting efficiency is being driven by a project called *Enhancing the sugar industry value chain by addressing mechanical harvest losses through research, technology and adoption*, which is funded by SRA and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources as part of the Rural R&D for Profit program.

To view all SRA events visit www.sugarresearch.com.au

A high resolution image of Phil Patane in the field is available upon request.

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