

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 20

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## Recent Events

The BBIFMAC Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2021 was hosted on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March at the Burdekin PCYC.

Tieneke Trotter of CQU gave a presentation on the results of the “Spicing up the North” trials with Black Sesame, Fennel and Kalonji. The three-year spice project is due to finish in July, with hopes of future funding to continue farmer-led trials across Northern Australia.



Tieneke Trotter from CQU spoke about the “Spicing up the North” project.

Jamie Zapp, Netafim Agronomist gave a crash course in the dos and don'ts of fertiliser mixing for fertigation, as well as insights into the required infrastructure.



Jamie Zapp from Netafim spoke in detail about fertigation.

The meeting was followed by a field visit to Rapisarda's fertiliser mixing plant to demonstrate the set-up and practicalities of fertigation in horticulture crops.



The BBIFMAC AGM was followed by a field visit to Rapisarda's fertiliser mixing plant.



## BBIFMAC

*Managing Natural Resources to ensure Social Wellbeing, Primary Production and Ecological Sustainability.*

We welcome Lisa Parker of Pioneer Cane Growers who was voted on to the BBIFMAC Management Committee as an Ordinary member at the AGM.

We also congratulate Steve Attard (Chair), Brock Dembowski (Ordinary member), and Merv Mohr (Treasurer) on their re-election to the committee, and Frank Mugica who has transitioned from an Ordinary Member to the Vice Chair.

We say goodbye and a huge thanks to Don Salter, former Vice Chair on the BBIFMAC Committee, whose nomination for an ordinary member position at this year's AGM was unsuccessful, after being involved for many years.

### Peanut Biomass Harvest:

The new 'Grain and Graze' project led by Central Queensland University (CQU), with funding from the CRC for Northern Australia (CRCNA) is assessing dual purpose peanuts for kernel yield in combination with different fodder production options.

On 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February, CQU and BBIFMAC staff conducted a biomass harvest of the peanut crop in Home Hill.

Half of the trial plots were cut, and the remainder were left uncut, to determine the effect of this practice on the peanut development. The cut biomass was weighed, dried, and sent down to the team at CQU for detailed nutrient analysis and to determine its suitability as fodder.



CQU and BBIFMAC staff conducted a biomass harvest of the peanut crop in Home Hill.

### Burdekin Irrigation Project:

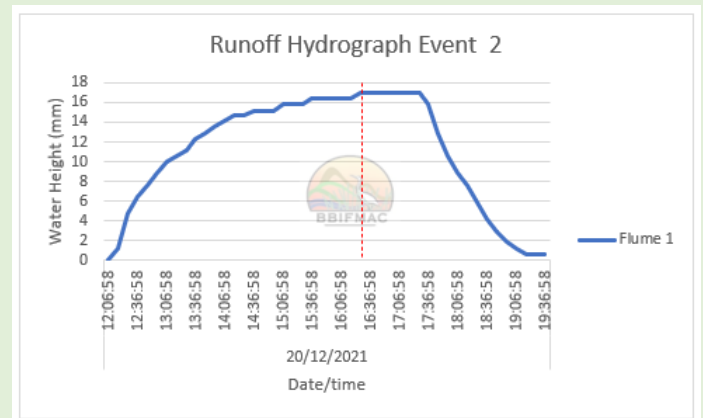
The Burdekin Irrigation Project (BIP) is led by Sugar Research Australia (SRA), and delivered by a consortium of cross-disciplinary stakeholders. The project aims to transition growers to scalable, sustainable, and technologically assisted practices in irrigation management, using a whole-of-systems approach that includes water quality validation by BBIFMAC.

BBIFMAC staff have recently issued progress reports for the growers participating in low input trial sites. At these

sites, multiple flumes and water depth loggers have been installed to determine the proportion of water lost to runoff in irrigations, as well as better understand the paddock's variability.

The results collected from five locations in the Burdekin to date show that runoff is occurring for hours after irrigation has been shut off, and up to 26% of applied volume is being lost to runoff (noting there are many external influences such as soil type and gradient).

The graph below compares the water height (in millimetres) through the flume at one of the trial locations. The irrigation was started at 8am, and water reached the flumes at the end of the paddock four hours later, at mid-day. The irrigation was stopped at 4:24pm, but the water continued to run off until 7:36pm that night.



\*Dotted line indicates irrigation stop time.

Irrigation start	Irrigation stop	Irrigation duration	Runoff start	Runoff stop	Runoff duration
20/12/2021 8am	20/12/2021 4:24pm	8 hours 24 min	20/12/2021 12:06pm	20/12/2021 7:36pm	7 hrs 30 min

From the data, the impact of turning the irrigation off earlier than the grower's current practice can be assessed. The BIP Delivery Team assist the grower with determining the financial benefits and costs, and practical implications of changing their practice. Implications to labour management are also considered, with the BIP identifying a range of technology options best suited to the farmer.

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