



Joint release.

11/05/2023

Variety update

Outcomes from the Herbert Variety Committee (RVC) meeting

The Herbert Variety Committee meeting was held on the 5th of April 2023. The outcomes from the meeting are as follows:

- The industry delegates approved the *RELEASE of SRA40* (seedling number- QS07-7049) for Herbert growers. This variety will now be propagated by HCPSL for distribution through their Approved Seed plots in 2025. Growers who wish to order tissue culture cane for delivery in 2024, please contact Rhiannan Harragan (HCPSL Field Officer)- 47761808 or 0400 558 766.
- The meeting reviewed the smut data on SRA31, and it was decided to distribute SRA31 from HCPSL Approved Seed plots in 2023.
- The industry delegates voted against the release of QN08-2274 based upon smut concerns. Growers who have this seedling planted in HCPSL strip trials and growers who have obtained from other sources are *not permitted* to plant this clone any further.
- The industry delegates voted to put SRA37 on hold based on sugar quality concerns. SRA will continue to undertake research on this variety.
- The industry delegates voted to put on hold QS10-8459, QS10-7130 and SRA21 pending more data on smut and mill characteristics.

Governance of the RVC:

The Herbert RVC have established governance procedures in which the meetings are run and managed. Governance procedures that need to be followed:

- SRA and HCPSL present variety data to the committee and they do not have a vote on the progression or release of any variety.
- Currently, the voting delegates consist of representatives from the following groups- 3 miller representatives and 3 grower representatives (currently 2 delegates from CANEGROWERS Herbert River collective and 1 delegate from the combined ACFA, AgForce and HCQR collectives).
- Clones and varieties being considered for HOLDING or MAX PROPAGATION are voted upon by the delegates. The decision from the delegates will be by majority rules.
- Clones and varieties being considered for RELEASE to industry will be voted upon by the delegates also. In this situation for a variety to proceed to RELEASE the vote must be unanimous, with all delegates voting in favour.

SRA31- Distribution through HCPSL Approved Seed plots

During 2022, it was decided to hold off on the distribution of SRA31 based upon some observations of smut. Critical review of the situation indicated the unusual smut infection was likely due to the interaction between very high temperatures and herbicide application. During the 2023 Herbert RVC meeting it was decided to proceed with the distribution of the variety to growers from HCPSL Approved Seed plots.



Growers who are wishing to purchase SRA31 from the HCPSL Approved Seed plots are requested to contact the HCPSL office- 47761808, immediately to order planting material.

Rogue clone found in SRA28

HCPSL and SRA staff identified a rogue clone in some HCPSL Approved Seed plots during their routine inspections of the plots for diseases and variety correctness. QN05-1380 has been found to be mixed with SRA28 with some cane supplied to growers in the past 2 years.

QN05-1380 was discarded by the SRA plant breeding program because its poor yield performance.

Variety tracing activities have been undertaken by both HCPSL and SRA staff to identify how the mix up occurred, however there are no clear leads on how QN05-1380 became mixed with SRA28 in the first place.

The HCPSL Approved Seed plots of concern are as follows:

- HCPSL Central plot
- HCPSL Abergowrie Erkkila plot
- HCPSL Fairford Farming plot (Hamleigh)

The impacted growers have been recently contacted. These growers have been asked to obtain new stocks of SRA28 from HCPSL, if they wish to continue growing the variety to ensure variety correctness.

Growers can be reassured that cane purchased from HCPSL Approved Seed plots is RSD free.

HCPSL is requesting all growers to be on the lookout for the rogue clone and report it to HCPSL immediately. Photographs on the next 2 pages will highlight the visual differences between SRA28 and QN05-1380. QN05-1380 has a similar stalk colour appearance to MQ239.

HCPSL and SRA apologise for any inconvenience caused. HCPSL will ensure that growers who wish to obtain new SRA28 planting material in 2023, will be able to do so.

The visual differences between SRA28 and QN05-1380.



Photos above: Stalk colour differences- SRA28 on left and QN05-1380 on right.

Photos below: Leaf sheath colour differences- SRA28 on left (note the purple colouration) and QN05-1380 on right (note the green colouration).



Other identifying features:



Photo above: SRA28 has a very noticeable large auricle at the base of the leaf on one side only.

Photo below: QN05-1380 has very noticeable hairy mary on the leaf sheath.

