Herbert Cane Productivity Services Ltd. Bulletin 6, October 2025

TALKING CANE TRASH

BLANKETING THE HERBERT WITH THE LATEST INFORMATION

CONSIDERING TISSUE CULTURE IN 2026?

Growers considering tissue culture or new varieties in 2026 please note the following:

- **Growers seeking SRA48Φ** – Due to limited material SRA48◊ will only be available through tissue culture in 2026 (SRA48◊ will not be available from HCPSL plots until 2027).
- **Growers seeking SRA32Φ** - Due to poor germination from hot water treatment SRA32◊ will be on a limited release from HCPSL plots in 2026. Growers wishing to access more material should consider placing a tissue culture order to secure planting material for 2026.

Tissue Culture Orders Due: Monday 27th October

For further information, or to place an order, phone HCPSL on (07)47761808 and speak to Rhiannan Harragon.

Above: Tissue Culture Seedings

KEY DATES

HCPSL Director Information Evening
Tuesday 14th OCTOBER
Time: 5pm
Location: HSPSL/SRA Office, Fairford Road.
RSVP: Friday 10th October

HCPSL 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Tuesday 21st OCTOBER
Time: 8am
Location: HSPSL/SRA Office, Fairford Road. More info below.

NOVEMBER Tissue Culture Orders Due: Monday 27th October 2025

MICRONUTRIENTS: The BIG role they play in sugarcane growth and development

Crop nutrients can be divided into two main categories – Macronutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium, Sulfur, Calcium and Magnesium) and Micronutrients. Both groups of nutrients are essential for plant growth, however micronutrients are needed in significantly less quantities. All nutrients are required to ensure optimum sugarcane growth and yield. The below table outlines the roles micronutrients play in sugarcane growth and development.

Micronutrient	Role in Sugarcane Growth and Development
Zinc (Zn)	Regulation of the plant's growth rate, chlorophyll formation and the plant's ability to use water efficiently
Copper (Cu)	Chlorophyll formation & photosynthesis, protein & carbohydrate metabolism and plant chemical reactions
Iron (Fe)	Essential in the production of chlorophyll, plays a role in photosynthesis and chemical reactions in the plant
Manganese (Mn)	Accelerates germination & maturity, involved in photosynthesis & chlorophyll production, plant respiration, and N metabolism
Molybdenum (Mo)	Plays major role in N metabolism, involved in chemical reactions and enzyme systems
Boron (B)	Essential for new cell growth, important for the development of young roots & shoots, and regulates plant's use of other nutrients
Chlorine (Cl)	Involved in water holding capacity of plant tissue, maintains ionic balance

To learn more on micronutrients, read the **SRA Australian Sugarcane Nutrition Manual HERE**.

SRA CANEGRUB RESEARCH & HCPSL AGM

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) will present information related to their ongoing research into alternate canegrub control at this year's HCPSL AGM. As laboratory testing moves into the field-testing phase SRA research staff will be available to talk about the research and answer any questions growers may have. For catering purposes, RSVP by the 20th October.

Date: 21st October 2025 Time: 8am Location: HCPSL/SRA Building (downstairs meeting room)

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LEGUMES – GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FALLOW

Legume fallow crops offer numerous soil health benefits. Research conducted in the Herbert found legume fallows increase labile carbon, microbial biomass, fungal biomass, and microbial enzyme activity (Click here to read more).

Taking a soil test prior to planting a legume cover crop is essential. Nutrient requirements differ between cane and legumes (refer to table on the right). Legumes are also sensitive to soil pH. Applying Blend 3 Lime is recommended to increase pH levels and ensure magnesium is adequate.

CHECKLIST FOR GROWING A LEGUME FALLOW:

1. Take a soil test.
2. Plant on a mound to help prevent waterlogging).
3. Inoculate your legume seed.
4. Spray out volunteer cane and grasses
5. Terminate your legume crop before it affects soil moisture (3-4 months).
6. Manage legume stubble by using a crimp roll, slashing, or spraying out.

Interested in learning more? Read more on legume fallows here.

SOIL NUTRIENT LEVELS IN THE HERBERT DISTRICT 2024.			TARGET / DEFICIENCY THRESHOLD		
SOIL NUTRIENT	AVERAGE VALUE 2024		CANE	SOYBEANS	COWPEAS
pH (1:5 water)		5.62	>5.5	>6.0	>6.0
pH (1:5 CaCl2)		4.56	N/A	>5.2	>5.2
Organic carbon (Walkley & Black) (%)		0.87	>1.0	>1.0	>1.0
Phosphorus (H2SO4, BSES)	(mg/kg)	33.8	>40	>50	>50
Sulphate-S (MCP) (mg/kg)		9.15	>15	>15	>8.0
Potassium (HNO3) (cmolc/kg)		1.7		N/A	N/A
Exchangeable potassium	(cmolc/kg)	0.17	>0.45	>0.4	>0.4
Exchangeable calcium	(cmolc/kg)	2.45	>2.0	>10	>10
	%	50		>55	>55
Exchangeable magnesium	(cmolc/kg)	0.99	>0.25	>3.0	>3.0
	%	17		<25	<25
Exchangeable sodium	(cmolc/kg)			N/A	N/A
	%	3.0	<5.0	<6.0	<6.0
Exchangeable aluminium	%	29	<10	<5.0	<5.0
Zinc (HCl, BSES) (mg/kg)	CEC <3	1.13	>0.6	N/A	N/A
	CEC 3-6	1.73	>0.6	N/A	N/A
	CEC >6	2.37	>0.6	N/A	N/A
Zinc (DTPA) (mg/kg)	CEC <3	0.83	>0.3	>0.5	>0.5
	CEC 3-6	1.3	>0.3	>0.5	>0.5
	CEC >6	1.38	>0.3	>0.5	>0.5
Copper (DTPA) (mg/kg)	CEC <3	0.6	>0.2	>1.0	>1.0
	CEC 3-6	0.93	>0.2	>1.0	>1.0
	CEC >6	1.31	>0.2	>1	>1

Sartor J, (2025) Trends in soil chemical fertility with the Herbert district. *Proceedings of the Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists 46, 330-335*

SOIL TESTING 101: Sample Collection

The September edition of Talking Trash discussed '*Where in the block to take a soil sample*'. This month, we highlight how to collect an appropriate soil sample.

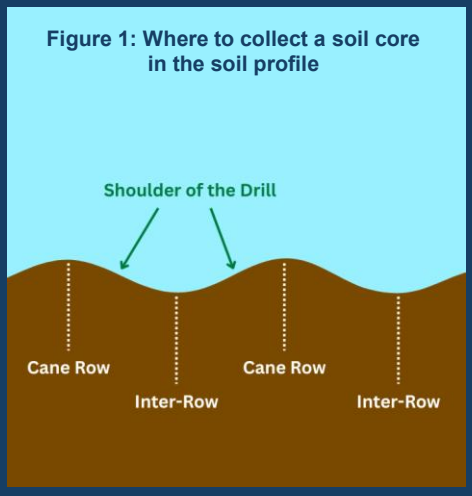
Annual soil sampling is crucial in effectively managing soil nutrition and fertiliser requirements. Soil testing allows us to apply nutrients at rates that meet the sugarcane crops' requirements, while also monitoring changes to soil properties over time.

So, how do I collect a sample?

Once you have determined an area of the block to sample, it's important to correctly collect numerous sub-samples. To read more on where in the block to sample, view the September Talking Trash edition HERE.

- Soil sample prior to working ground and incorporating the trash blanket.
- Remove trash and organic matter from the soil surface (trash in the soil sample will lead to an inaccurate Organic Carbon reading).
- Using a soil auger sample to a depth of 20cm (borrow an auger from HCPSL).
- Take a sample from the shoulder of the drill/cane row. Midway between the cane row & the center of the inter-row (avoid sampling coulter lines where fertliser was previously applied).
- Using a clean plastic bucket collect multiple cores to form a composite sample.
- Break up any large soil clods (use clean hands).
- Place approx. 500g of soil into a clean bag and label with Name, Farm No. & Block No.
- Bring your sample to the HCPSL Office to be sent to the lab for testing.

Figure 1: Where to collect a soil core in the soil profile



For further information or advice on any of the above topics, contact HCPSL.
Phone: (07) 4776 1808 or www.hcpsl.com

HCPSL
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