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SRA affirms science-based commitment to nitrogen research

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has affirmed its commitment to a proactive and science-based approach to researching nitrogen use in the Australian sugarcane industry and to seek collaborative opportunities to deliver economically viable improvements in productivity.

Confirming SRA's position today in Townsville, SRA CEO Neil Fisher said that SRA was committed to providing robust and independent research into nitrogen use in the Australian sugarcane industry.

"Our aim is to assist our industry investors to optimise productivity and profitability, while also moving towards meeting water quality targets," Mr Fisher said.

Mr Fisher said that a cornerstone of SRA's research investment and the industry's nitrogen use was the SIX EASY STEPS nutrient management guidelines.

"SIX EASY STEPS is based on extensive research. The principles guide nutrient management to enable the adoption of best practice nutrient management on-farm," Mr Fisher said. "It is recognised as industry best-practice for nutrient management to optimise productivity and profitability by maintaining soil fertility and minimising off-farm effects on water quality.

"A review of nitrogen use efficiency in sugarcane last year found that there is significant potential for the industry to refine nitrogen application rates through continued use and evolution of SIX EASY STEPS, to better match nitrogen application to crop requirements via precision agriculture farming techniques. There is also scope to evaluate the potential of enhanced efficiency fertilisers to better match N supply with crop demand, and minimise N losses to the environment."

Mr Fisher said there was still a need for ongoing research to further validate SIX EASY STEPS, particularly around a range of soil types, farming systems, and climatic conditions.

"SRA shares a strategic alliance with Queensland Government agencies Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP), Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), and Department of Science, Information Technology, and Innovation (DSITI), with many of our research investments in this area.

"This is a strategic alliance that SRA and the Queensland Government share and which continues to be highly valued by the SRA Board, our industry investors, and State and Commonwealth governments."

Mr Fisher said this research investment occurred both internally in SRA, and externally through other organisations.

"To deliver our research outcomes, SRA partners with a range of credible research agencies and co-investors, including USQ, CSIRO, UQ, JCU, Queensland Government Departments, as well as productivity services organisations, private sector companies, and others," he said.

"SRA participation in this research ensures logical, scientific research and we will continue to leverage our research investment to maximise impact."

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