

06/01/2015

Seasonal forecasting workshops on offer for Mackay Whitsunday sugarcane growers and land managers

Our region's climate is highly variable – what do climate and seasonal forecasts mean for our farmers and how can they start planning ahead?

This month Reef Catchments, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the University of Southern Queensland will come together to host a free half-day workshop for farmers in the Mackay, Proserpine and Whitsunday region.

The workshop **Seasonal Forecasting Tools for the Sugar Industry** will be held in Walkerston on Tuesday the 20th January and Proserpine on Wednesday the 21st January.

RSVPs close next Thursday the 15th January with growers encouraged to book their spot, as places are limited.

Reef Catchments Climate & Landscapes Systems Coordinator, Dr Robyn Bell, said the local climate impacts everyone, with farmers and land managers particularly exposed to forecast changes in weather, rainfall and climatic events.

"For example, we know regionally that high natural variability in rainfall and temperature occurs throughout the region from year to year yet there are now a number of forecasting tools available to predict the likelihood of rain in the short to medium term. These tools are of great assistance in making future decisions about fertilising, spraying or making infrastructure changes," she said.

"We are now working to try and equip our growers with the tools and knowledge they need to bring together forecast changes in climate and weather patterns with future farm planning and property management."

The workshop has been designed to improve understanding of the region's climate drivers, providing tools that can be used to access and interpret climate forecast information. The workshop will cover the following elements linked to weather and climate:

- Current climate outlook for the region
- El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) including SOI Phases
- Recent developments in international forecast systems (ECMWF)
- The Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) (40 day wave)
- Discussion of farm management decisions linked to seasonal forecasts
- Links to climate information sources

"We are strongly encouraging local growers to come along as this kind of information specific to our region has been thin on the ground to date or difficult to access to date," Dr Bell said.

Presenters include Neil Cliffe (Senior Industry Development Officer, QDAFF) and climatologist Professor Roger Stone (University of Southern Queensland). Lunch will be provided.

To RSVP contact Reef Catchments:

Mackay – 07 4968 4200 or reception@reefcatchments.com

Proserpine - 07 4945 2321 or debbie.legge@reefcatchments.com

EVENT DETAILS

Visit www.reefcatchments.com

MACKAY

WHEN: Tuesday, 20 January 2015, 9am-1pm

WHERE: Wests Leagues Club, 2 Branscombe Road, Walkerston

RSVP: By Thursday 15th January on (07) 4968 4200 or reception@reefcatchments.com

PROSERPINE

WHEN: Wednesday 21st January 2015 9:00am – 1:00pm

WHERE: Proserpine Community Centre, 36 Gardenia St

RSVP: By Thursday 15th January on (07) 4945 2321 or debbie.legge@reefcatchments.com

ENDS



Seasonal Forecasting workshops proved popular with local farmers, providing an understanding of the climate drivers that impact on our weather.