

Flexibility of liquid N aired

THE benefits of applying split applications of liquid nitrogen fertiliser in sugar cane were showcased at a field day near Ayr last month. Fifty cane growers and agronomists from as far afield as Mackay, Proserpine, the Far North and the Atherton Tablelands joined with local Burdekin growers to take a firsthand look at the flexibility of Easy N fertiliser, a liquid urea ammonium nitrate fertiliser, when used in cane.

Incitec Pivot Fertilisers invited four Burdekin district cane growers to share their experiences with the visitors and demonstrate how they were applying Easy N at planting, as well as later in the season using high clearance tractors.

For the past five years, Lenny Quagliata has been using Easy N on his 350 hectare cane farm near Clare. He also uses Easy N in the contract planting business that he operates with his sons, Lawrence and Leonard. During the demonstration at his farm, Mr Quagliata described safe handling and time savings as the two key benefits of using Easy N.

“With Easy N, there’s no need for cranes or bag lifters. This can help with safety as high heavy lifts of fertiliser bags are avoided, a particularly significant consideration when we are contract planting,” he said. “Easy N is pumped from a tank or IBC (intermediate bulk container)

so converting to using liquids from granular fertiliser is pretty easy and relatively inexpensive.

“We are no longer delayed by loading granular fertiliser or handling empty bags, so the time savings mean

we can generally plant an extra two to three hectares a day, which is important as a contract planter.

“Using Easy N over the top of the cane later in the season also means we can cover eight to nine rows at a time, making it a faster and more efficient operation.”

Mr Quagliata added that while the quality of granular fertilisers could potentially be affected by moisture, this was not a problem when storing and applying Easy N. “When an unexpected shower of rain comes through when fertilising, there’s no need to worry about Easy N compared with granular fertilisers, which need to be covered with tarpaulins,” he said. “This is a real benefit for cane growers in wetter areas like Tully and Ingham.”

After some on-farm trials last year, Mr Quagliata has switched to Easy NP this season, to supply readily available nitrogen and phosphorus in one pass and help promote root development in cane, right from planting. It is expected that the use of Easy N will grow as more cane growers adopt a split nitrogen application strategy, according to Calvin

Bowmaker, area sales manager with Incitec Pivot Fertilisers.

“Easy N is giving cane growers a new way of achieving greater flexibility and control with nitrogen management, because it can be applied at any growth stage,” Mr Bowmaker said. “Growers can choose to apply Easy N at any time from planting through to later in the season at the out-of-hand stage, when granular fertilisers applied through a box are no longer an option.”

“There’s no need for cranes or bag lifters...”



Ian Becke, Barry Braden from Ag N Vet, Calvin Bowmaker, Incitec Pivot Fertilisers, Chris Lyne and Michael Spyrou were among a big crowd of cane growers and advisers who attended the Easy N field day on three Burdekin district cane farms.



Key speakers who shared their experience of using Easy N liquid nitrogen fertiliser were Calvin Bowmaker, Incitec Pivot Fertilisers, and Ayr district canegrowers, Justin Luckel, Farm Agronomist with SISL Group, Mark Hatch and Lenny Quagliata.



Northern visitors who took part in the Easy N field day were George Bugeja from GF Rural Supplies, Innisfail, John Ferrando, who grows cane at Gordonvale, David Lauridsen from S&NI Marsh, Gordonvale, James Gowan from Incitec Pivot Fertilisers and Andrew Singh, who grows cane at Mareeba and Gordonvale.



Proserpine district cane growers Mark Orr, Peter Muller and Andrew Auld attended the field day with Paul Rogers from Farm HQ and Gerry De Speville from Incitec Pivot Fertilisers to see Easy N applied with a high clearance tractor and spray rig.



Enjoying the Burdekin Easy N field day were Mackay visitors George Williams, Gerry De Speville, Incitec Pivot Fertilisers, Andrew Kelly, Landmark, Doug Pedersen, Don McNicholl, Landmark, and Henry Everd.