

## BSI Stakeholder Outreach Meeting: Brisbane 8 October 2009 - 1pm Meeting Report

The BSI outreach meeting took place in Brisbane at the offices of the Sugar Research Development Corporation where 8 stakeholders from different sectors of the sugar industry attended.

Robert Quirk (Founding member of BSI and first Chair) opened the meeting with an introduction of the BSI and Standard 2, Peter Turner (BSI Consultant - Agronomy Team Leader) then addressed issues relating to the Technical Work Groups, calculations, metrics and implementation.

Dr Karen Vella NRM Plan Manager for Terrain gave a presentation on the recent Australian BSI Pilot Audits, finding it a positive experience with the BSI being easy, frank and open to deal with. The Pilot Audits took place in NSW and Mossman wet tropics area where a key issue is impact on the reef, it was suggested that linking current BMP's would be beneficial (ABCD rating system). Some calculations may need a combination or range instead of a metric calculation; however emphasis should be placed on the practice and application rather than rate. Presentation included pictures of indigenous grave sites being preserved within sugar cane field. In summary Karen views the Standard as a "Global expression of a minimum Standard".

Augusto Freire (currently conducting BSI pilot studies) was on hand during the meeting to answer questions in relation to Audits trials, implementation and progress.

**General discussion followed, below are the comments and questions received from participants:**

### **General Comments:**

**Standard documentation** - too technical, its readability needs to be improved for growers to have confidence and understanding, standard numbers should be made available where possible. The use of copy writers and translators strongly suggested.

**Beet** - Frikkie Botha (SRDC) said BSI needs to expand the Standard to include beet to avoid discrimination. Piet Filet (WWF) stated the footprint from sugar cane was of greater concern at present than that of beet. ***RGQ replied that this had been discussed at length on numerous occasions at BSI meetings and it was decided that focus be on sugar cane.***

**Certification** – Book and Claim system was discussed, questions arose on how to set the price to be fair to all, large and small. Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of money going directly back to the grower/producer. It was not common knowledge in the meeting that Certification would not be attached to the sugar price.

**Audits** - How will the audits be conducted? Annually or randomly set, growers need to be able to self audit online, training program required for Auditors addressing regional areas and issues. Rob Coco (Reef Catchments) said the Audit value should be set relative to efforts from growers. in relation to Principle 4.1 “Percent of sugarcane farmland conserved in a natural state or returned to a natural state and largely free from alien invader plants”.

### **Australian Issues:**

Discussion suggests that some areas of the Standard are set too low for Australia, as existing standards are already higher. If growers are already exceeding the standard, how will growers be encouraged to make continuous improvement? ***RGQ replied with BMP's, increased productivity and long term sustainability and should be enough incentive for continuous improvement.***

**Principle 4.1** – “Percent of sugarcane farmland conserved in a natural state or returned to a natural state and largely free from alien invader plants” – needs to be defined more clearly, with the view to amend or expand given Australia’s large percentage of Riparian, wetland, indigenous and natural areas . This should be either a tick or an N/A initially - then a percentage. Grower could negotiate higher price in his book and claim.

Suggestions for a separate Technical Work Group for Principle 4 in Australia would be of enormous value in implementation and management of this criterion. All agreed this is a major issue.

**Pilot Audits** - Reports should be made publically available and when. *AF replied that they will be published on the website anonymously.*

## **Global Issues:**

**Principle 1** - Concerns were raised that some countries may change their law to simply comply with the standard. *AF said that a first world country had changed the laws to comply with discharge of chemicals in aquifer.*

**Marketing** - How will BSI market the Standard globally? What mechanisms will be in place to show the benefits to growers? When will a delivery plan be available? *RGQ - Marketing through outreach meetings the standard v2 will be approved at the BSI AGM in November for the second public consultation of 30 days, followed thereafter by the final Standard hopefully being available by March, after further consideration by the members. We hope to be certifying against the standard as from September/October, 2010.*

**GHG Gas calculation** – How will this be set? *RGQ – There will only be one standard recognized by the world, 0 - 30 cm for soil carbon which will be set at the Copenhagen Meeting this year. AF - At this stage data collection was the most important issue not calculations.*

**Implementation** – Regional implementation was the most discussed topic, How will BSI manage regional issues in countries with language, economic and social barriers? How will these countries and regions not be disadvantaged? *RGQ - BSI member countries across a broad spectrum of growers and producers do not see this as a problem.*

**Continuous Improvement** - How will BSI encourage farmers who already meet the standard to continuously improve? *RGQ – Through BMP's.*

## **Individual Comments:**

**Frikkie Botha (SRDC)** – Said he came into the meeting negative and was now more confused, the smaller scale will get nothing out of it, they do not have the infrastructure, social or otherwise to allow it to work. How will the BSI deal with the social and regional aspects of poorer countries?

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People there do not own the land, what will be their incentive to do what is best for the land when they simply move on. Poor suckers, will they ever get to the hanging apple? NO.

A certification system should encourage you to join and continue to improve; some Countries may be left out. The challenge for BSI is feasibility, is it possible? *RGQ - Dr Gopinathan Mambully has said at the outreach in India that they can engage 25,000.00 growers, the mill being the point of entry. AF commented that 1 railea = 4 meals in India, so \$400.00 US will be incentive enough. (Over 6 month's wages)*

**Bruce Campbell** – Said he is strongly supportive and sees the Standard as a win - win situation all round, however globally, regional issues will need to be streamlined.

**Stephen Ryan** – (ACFA) feels positive about Version 2 but is concerned with cane farmer confidence, more information is need for farmers to implement, how will farmers benefit? At what cost to the farmer? Sees mill and supplier as an organic unit - which is a positive factor. Also Principle 4.1 concerns.

**Rob Coco (Reef Catchments)** – supportive but would like a clear picture on marketing, delivery, Audit training program and proving compliance on Book and Claim. Branding and creditability of BSI will be closely monitored.

**Bianca Cairns (SRDC)** – issues in the lead up with the Book and claim, sees the need for a matrix for Principle 4.1 “Percent of sugarcane farmland conserved in a natural state or returned to a natural state and largely free from alien invader plants”. Global implementation, if Australia easily achieves an A for example and another country can only possible achieve a D – how is the other Country no discriminated against.

What work has been done here in Australia to ensure that price premiums are passed on to the actual grower? If the standard is about practice improvement then we need to make sure that the grower sees the premium reach his pocket.

I don't think that different price premiums should be paid, I think it should be a set amount paid irrespective of if you go above and beyond the practice required by the standard. I think that it will be difficult enough in the initial years to deal with a premium without complicating it with different levels of premium.

**Michael Pitt (Northern Rivers NSW Catchment Management Authority)** – Standards great globally, however we expect higher standards in some instances automatically in Australia. A

clearer progression is needed for the next level. Sees a problem with Principle 4.1 “Percent of sugarcane farmland conserved in a natural state or returned to a natural state and largely free from alien invader plants” with auditing and continuous improvement in Australia.

**Piet Filet (WWF)** – said he cannot see the farmer and miller relationship, document structure: - Principles 1 and 2 are OK no problems, however Principles 3, 4 and 5 are mishmash and clumsy. The test for BSI will be drawing Standard 2 into a physical picture. **RGQ explained that WWF has had input into the principles for the life of BSI.**

*The following report was written by Piet on the BSI Standard.*

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Std</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4.1	Aquatic oxygen demand per unit mass product	What is the reference to justify the values?	This is a good requirement for point source impacts from mill wastes and generally will be part of their Environmental licence requirement. For diffuse source impacts from sugar cane fields is a lesser problem than other agricultural losses in Australian crops. Based on water quality experiences in Australia, other water quality parameters are more critical than a BOD measure. Essentially if there is a major fish kill event from a loss of oxygen then the polluter is breaking the law and is covered by criteria 1.1. Recommend to not include as a water quality measure as other farm losses offer a much greater risk.
4.1	Soil and leaf nutrient status	Initially ok <80%, but over time we need to this to be ramped up to 100%	Missing is any qualification on how the optimum and sustainable amount is calculated
4.1	Eutrophication per unit mass product	What is the reference to justify the values? The value seems to very high	Missing is any guide to the determination of phosphorus equivalency for other products - there needs to be an addition in the Appendices. The role of P in freshwater system is ell recognised, and alternatively it is N for marine systems. I would rather recommend both an N and P measure to recognise there are two types of environments being protected.
4.1	Ecotoxicity to wildlife and aquatic life per unit mass product	Clarity is required if this is the value for single product all the sum of all applied products - I trust it is the latter	
4.1	Soil loss	What is the reference to justify the values?	I am concerned that is a far too onerous request given all the companion data required

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Missing from the framework is any justification of why an indicator may have been chosen, so to help me better see where they fit in I have nominated indicators in terms of where they fit into the flow of activity that occurs in a crop - hence the input, crop production and output separation

Also I have also separated out the energy related activities and the habitat conservation activities to let us see what the actual sustainable crop growing indicators are

Energy and habitat are good additional accreditation measures, but the agronomy of the crop and its impacts is I sense a more central focus for this accreditation scheme

So using this approach I see a gaps around issues to do with nitrogen and sediment, I question how some measures such as aquatic oxygen demand and eutrophication are meaningfully calculated and why they do not correspond to other critical GBR water quality indicators and lots more question also follows:

	<b>Input Indicator</b>	<b>Crop Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Output impact indicator</b>
Sustainable crop	Soil nutrient status	Sugarcane yield	Aquatic oxygen demand
	Net water consumed	Biomass yield	Eutrophication
	Soil organic carbon	Net water consumed	Exotoxicity
	Soil acidification	Recoverable sugar	Atmospheric acidification
		\$ value added	Non-hazardous solid residues
		Soil organic carbon	
		Soil acidification	
Habitat protection	High conservation value		
	Recognised ESIA		
	HCV areas		
Energy	Global warming burden	Global warming burden	Global warming burden
	Total net primary energy	Total net primary energy	
	Net primary energy use	Net primary energy use	

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## **Meeting Outcome**

It was generally agreed that whilst there were concerns in some metrics and implementation in some regional areas and countries, the standard itself should be accepted as a starting point; however continuous improvement would certainly be needed to see its success.

## **Participants**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Company</b>
Michael Pitt	Northern Rivers NSW Catchment Management Authority
Stephen Ryan	ACFA
Rob Coco	Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday NRM)
Piet Filet	WWF
Dr Karen Vella	Terrain
Bianca Cairns	SRDC
Bruce Campbell	
Frikkie Botha	SRDC
Peter Turner	BSI
Robert Quirk	BSI
Augusto Freire	BSI
Trudy Smith	BSI

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