MEDIA RELEASE

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*Caption: The Case IH International Sugarcane Forum brought together industry leaders and cane growers from around the globe.*

**Collaboration key to sugar’s future**

The Case IH International Sugarcane Forum took place at Sanctuary Cove, Queensland from 14-16 December, bringing over 100 growers and key industry representatives together to discuss the health and sustainable future of the industry.

‘For Life’ was the theme of the conference and key speakers discussed what could be done to improve the environmental and commercial sustainability of the industry, and ultimately help farmers get more out of their investments.

The word ‘collaboration’ came up repeatedly, with most agreeing that despite the disparate challenges presented to sugarcane growers all over the world, collaboration from all those involved in the industry will be the key to its future.

International speakers, including Gaurav Sood from India, Richard Bennett from South East Asia, and Australian John Pearce who has been working in the sugarcane industry in Brazil, shared details on what is happening in their markets, identifying opportunities and challenges that could have applications in the Australian market.

Local speakers such as Paul Deane, Senior Agricultural Economist for ANZ Research, provided insights into developments in the Asian markets and shared predictions for the months and years ahead while Robert Quirk discussed the benefits of Bonsucro’s sustainability standards.

Project Catalyst, a pioneering partnership aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of sugar production on the Great Barrier Reef, was widely discussed and celebrated at the conference.

A group presentation included Belinda Billing from Reef Catchments, Ian McConnel from WWF, Rob Cairns from Syngenta and growers involved in Project Catalyst: Lou Raiteri, Joe Muscat, Gerry Deguara and Robert Bonassi.  
  
“Now in its fifth year, Project Catalyst is reducing the negative impacts on the Reef by showcasing the benefits of more efficient farming practices,” says Rob Cairns, Syngenta Head of Corporate Affairs, Australasia. “Not only does this result in better water quality, which we’ve been able to prove, it’s also generating higher economic returns for farmers.”

Continuing Case IH’s commitment to supporting rural mental health, Alison Fairleigh, Mental Illness Fellowship NQ, addressed the conference on the importance of mental health in the sugarcane industry.

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“A sustainable rural industry requires a sustainable rural workforce and this includes all areas of mental health,” Alison says. “If you don’t have a healthy and sustainable workforce you can’t have sustainable rural industries.”

“Suicide in Queensland is 2.2 times higher in the agricultuaral industry than any other industry – only with collaboration will we start to see real change in these statistics.”

The event was also an opportunity to reflect on the innovations made by Case IH in the area of sugarcane mechanisation.

Focusing on 50 years of product research and development, the conference highlighted the importance of research into more efficient farming practices, and the importance of matching mechanisation with agronomy.

Sugar Research Australia’s Cam Whiteing presented on the topic of harvesting best practice.

John Pearce talked about the history of Austoft and Case IH in the global sugarcane industry while Michele Monzio Compagnoni from Case IH Asia Pacific Product Marketing provided a preview of upcoming sugar harvesting machinery developments.

Australian Case IH representatives took delegates on product walkarounds, pointing out key features of the brand’s current Austoft cane harvesters and various tractor models.

The conference ended with an engaging panel session on the future of the industry featuring Paul Deane, Rob Cairns, Cam Whiteing and award-winning cane grower, Gerard Puglisi. The panel was hosted by prominent rural woman, Robbie Sefton.

Key points from the event can be found on Twitter using the hashtag #sugarforum, while photos and videos from the event can be found on Case IH Australia’s Facebook page.

For more information about Case IH products, see your local Case IH dealer or visit [www.caseih.com](http://www.caseih.com) for more details.

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