Celebrating our Slice of Heaven on National Agriculture Day

Thursday, 21 November 2019

CANEGROWERS Mackay is today proud to announce the winners of our farm photographic competition, Slice of Heaven, on National Agriculture Day, 21 November 2019.

“The aim of the competition was to encourage our member growers to share photos of the beauty that surrounds them on their farms in the Mackay and Plane Creek regions,” said Chairman Kevin Borg. “I thank every grower who took the time to send in their shots during the busy crushing season.

“Many growers have been through a tough year this year with low world sugar prices, uncertainty regarding crushing capacity and increased regulations. So, this was a prompt to them to stop for a minute and remember what it is they love about their farms and their farming lives,” he said.

“It was also an opportunity for us to celebrate our members - the families working on the cane farms in our districts - in the run-up to National Agriculture Day, by sharing the images on social media with the wider Australian community and asking them to vote for their favourite image.”

Mr Borg said that in the Mackay/Whitsunday/Isaac local government area there are 1148 cane farming enterprises employing 1354 people. The local sugar industry provides a total Gross Value Add (GVA) of $1500 million or 21 per cent of Gross Regional Product and a total employment of 17 per cent (2016/17) (including off farm work in the mill supply, farm inputs and the retail sector).

“Cane growers are the powerhouse behind the whole industry and we take time on National Agriculture Day to say ‘thanks’ to them and their families for their hard work and industry. They supply Queensland and Australia with a valuable domestic and export product that puts money in all our pockets and a little sweetness in our lives.

“Our thanks to our sponsors – Vanderfield, Sunsuper and Crop Wise – for supporting the competition.”

The winner is ....
First prize was awarded to Ellie Boyd (above) who farms with her partner, Matthew, on her parents’ cane farm, Moon Farming at Carmila.

Ellie’s evocative image of a shower of rain approaching young cane was described by the judge as:

“Well composed with the cane leading the eye to the dark hills and the welcome clouds. There are no distracting elements – it all ties together. The lighting is muted and effective. The cane is well lit and sharp and the shower of rain gives an interesting blur to the background.”

In her entry Ellie said that “the farm is my slice of heaven because, every single day, no matter what happens, we are given something beautiful and unique to be grateful for.”
Ellie wins a $300 gift voucher of her own choice, sponsored by Vanderfield.

**Victoria Plains grower picks up second prize**

Second prize was presented to Dylan Wedel, a Mackay Sugar grower at Victoria Plains whose family originally farmed at Plane Creek.

About Dylan’s photograph of flood irrigation, the judge had this to say:

“[Here is] flood irrigation taken from an interesting perspective, with a good choice of lighting and an active subject. The diagonals draw the eye into the photo and the sun’s rays add additional interest, although the top corner is a little blown out. The cane in the foreground is well lit and sharp - and probably waiting for its turn at the water. The progress of the water down the furrows is striking and makes this an interesting image.”

In his entry, Dylan commented that the image caught a ... “Fluming nice sunset. These sunset scenes are one of the perks of the long days we work on the farm, which typically finish with a check on the irrigation progress. Nothing is more satisfying than watching the irrigation flume give the cane a drink.”

Dylan wins a $200 gift voucher of his own choosing, sponsored by Sunsuper.

**Third prize awarded to Homebush grower**
Third prize in the Slice of Heaven competition went to Kim Takagaki, the partner of Peter Takagaki farming with Peter’s brother, David, at Homebush.

Kim’s photo of a harvester working in the field was described by the judge as “well composed and captures the action well, the low angle provides interest and the dark hills, a context. The cane falling into the bin is sharp as a pin, obviously taken at a fast shutter speed. And the detail of the herons is interesting; we know the one in front of the haulout is going to move away just in time.”

Kim said the photo represented her Slice of Heaven because “we love what we do and we do what we love”: “The highlights through our crushing season are when the Deguara Brothers (harvesting contractors) come to our farm. These men work and operate very professionally and we are grateful that they cut our cane,” Kim said.
Kim wins a $100 gift voucher of her own choice, sponsored by local agronomy company, Crop Wise at Paget.