

# SUGAR CANE FARMING

Past farming activities such as clearing, drainage, the movement of sediments, nutrients and agricultural chemicals has impacted on water quality in the Richmond River.

Sustainable farming practices promoted by the industry can ensure there is minimal impact on water quality in waterways and wetlands.

## How you can assist to improve water quality

Stock pile and spread mill mud away from drains and water ways. Mill mud is high in organic material which can take oxygen from the water resulting in fish kills .

Plant drains with suitable local riparian species on the northern side of the drain to shade out aquatic weeds, filter run off, increase habitat value and water quality. This also reduces the need to regularly 'clean out drains' of aquatic weeds.

Carefully manage the application of fertilisers and chemicals when working close to drains and waterways.

Consider weather predictions prior to applications of mill mud, fertiliser or chemicals, as heavy or high levels of rainfall will contaminate runoff into drains and waterways.



**Riparian** areas are places where land adjoins rivers and streams. They support a wide range of plants and animals that contribute to water quality in the Richmond River.

# Best Management Practice for Sugar Cane Farming

Checklist	Yes	No	Solution
Stabilise and revegetate drains.	✓		Assess condition of drains regularly. Contact Landcare for advice on local plant species & funding for revegetation.
Remove any exotic aquatic weeds growing in drains that reduce oxygen levels.	✓		Chemical application close to any waterway requires care. Read MSDS sheets before applying as some chemicals can be harmful to aquatic life. Contact Far North Coast Weeds, for further advice
Construct detention dams to collect sediment from runoff and use artificial wetlands to capture sediment and nutrients before discharge.	✓		Contact Landcare for advice on funding to assist with work. Refer to "Smartcane—Riparian and wetland areas on cane farms" for info.
Look at better management of mill mud application, timing and techniques to minimise runoff or dust.	✓		Refer to "Mill mud user method statement 2010". For
Don't rely entirely on drains and their banks to manage nutrient and sediments. Look at adjusting other farm practices.	✓		Refer to the publication—"Smartcane—Riparian and wetland areas on cane farms" on the <a href="http://www.canegrowers.com.au">www.canegrowers.com.au</a> website for information and ideas.
Control weeds.	✓		Contact Far North Coast Weeds for advice and control methods.

## Where to find help.

### Local Contacts:

**Richmond River County Council**  
Floodplain Project Officer  
P: 0266 218 314 E: [floodplain@rrcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:floodplain@rrcc.nsw.gov.au)

**Lismore City Council**  
Environmental Strategies Team  
P: 1300 878 387

**Office of Environment and Heritage**  
Coast and Estuaries Officer  
P: 0266 270 200

**North Coast Local Land Services**  
P: 1300 795 299 E: [admin.northcoast@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin.northcoast@lls.nsw.gov.au)

### For advice on weed management:

**Far North Coast Weeds**  
P: 0266 233 833 E: [fncw@fncw.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fncw@fncw.nsw.gov.au)

### For advice on funding options:

**Richmond Landcare inc.**  
P: 0266 191 582 E: [info@richmondlandcare.org](mailto:info@richmondlandcare.org)

**Northern Landcare Support Services**  
P: 02 6632 3722 E: [info@nlss.com.au](mailto:info@nlss.com.au)

### Further reading:

"Smartcane, Riparian and Wetland areas on cane farms"  
[www.canegrowers.com.au  
icms\\_docs/70447\\_BMP\\_Riparian\\_\\_wetland\\_management.pdf](http://www.canegrowers.com.au/icms_docs/70447_BMP_Riparian__wetland_management.pdf)

**Note: The information and best practice approaches provided in the enclosed publications are current, however some of the contact details may have changed.**

**For further information refer to the contact list provided**