

Press Release, from HCPSL and MAPS.

Collaborative partnership helps create solution for rat control.

Herbert and Mackay cane farmers will now be permitted to rat bait (using Rattoff®) in lodged cane crops using helicopters or UAV's.

CANEGROWERS, Mackay Area Productivity Services (MAPS), Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited (HCPSL) and Animal Control Technologies Australia (ACTA) worked together to obtain this permit for the management of ground rats in lodged crops.

CANEGROWERS Environment & Sustainability Manager, Matt Kealley said he was pleased that the permit was approved quickly by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) because both districts have considerable amounts of standover cane in the field, which is exposed to high pressure from rats.

Standover cane is mature sugarcane that was unable to be harvested last season.

MAPS Manager, John Agnew said: "The permit now gives growers another tool in their integrated pest management tool box to manage ground rats within a cane farming operation."

HCPSL Manager, Lawrence Di Bella said: "It has been many years since the industry has had the opportunity to apply a rat bait through an aerial application method. To ensure that we manage any potential risks, a stewardship program has been put in place to mitigate any potential hazards or risks. The APVMA permit also has specific terms and conditions which the industry will need to follow when rat baiting is undertaken."

"The approval to apply this rat bait will help industry claw back some of the \$2.5M losses of income experienced by rat damage in the Herbert in 2016," Mr Di Bella said.

Herbert growers will be invited to an information workshop on Monday the 27th of March. The Herbert meeting will be held at the HCPSL / SRA Herbert offices, in Ingham between 6-8pm. Mackay growers are invited to grower shed meetings over the next few weeks, organized by MAPS. All growers interested in being involved with this program are required to attend the information sessions.

