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Sweet and sour: Aussie cane growers set up for a solid year despite low global prices

Australian cane growers are setting up for a year of solid production, despite low global prices, according to ANZ's Autumn Commodity InFocus report.

Prices have been influenced by production powerhouses Brazil, India and Thailand, all of which recorded, or are expected to record large harvests.

ANZ Associate Director of Agribusiness Insights Alanna Barrett says Brazil continues to dominate global sugar markets.

"Brazil produced more than 44 million tonnes in 2025, 80% of which will be exported, with early signs pointing to another large crop again this year."

This increased global supply and a high Australian dollar are expected to keep Australian grower prices steady, with little upside anticipated in the near term.

ANZ Regional Executive for Northern and Central QLD, Jeff Schrale, said: "The past few years haven't been an easy time for growers in the sugar industry. At a time of stronger world prices, many faced into stand over cane as a wet harvest in 2024 led to many producers not having their final round cut. The 2025 crush was a better one, with an early finish for many, but yields were impacted by the stand over cane and the further impact this has on the rotation of blocks with plant cane."

Mr Schrale also explains that while yields look good this season for the major growing areas like the Burdekin, current spot prices could significantly impact profitability and cash flow.

"Negative cane pays late last year combined with a falling price will keep producers mindful as they come into the expensive time of year.

"The growers are resilient and focused on what they can control, such as yields, and are hopeful this pricing signal will reduce global supplies and planting areas."

Meanwhile, with global prices stagnant, opportunities for value creation in the Queensland sugar supply chain are topical, particularly through the expanded use of sugarcane as a feed source for bioenergy production.

A current inquiry into Sugarcane Bioenergy opportunities in Queensland, which has a final report due next month, explores opportunities and complexities along the supply chain.

Many submissions to the inquiry from industry participants note significant scope for the use of sugar-cane residues without compromising domestic food security or exportable raw sugar value.

The support from industry comes with clear caveats around agreeable policy settings that compensate the producer adequately.

Further insights are available in the 2026 Autumn edition of ANZ's *Agri InFocus Commodity Insights* report.

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