

IAN HAIGH



Ian Haigh, a Project Catalyst farmer in the Burdekin.

2012

## IAN HAIGH

### Project: VARIABLE RATE FERTILISER

Ian Haigh is a first generation farmer and has 240 hectares of land under sugarcane production at Brandon, near Ayr. The property is part of the Sheep Station Creek catchment area.

The land was originally timbered, before being turned into sugarcane in 1964. Ian is very interested in the improved application of nutrients, such as with variable rate technology, now that there is the capability to match specific inputs to crop-yield potential within blocks.

Ian is always interested in looking at new technology that is practicable and affordable; however this must be based on good record-keeping, as this leads to improved planning.



A sub-surface fertilizer box places nutrient in the crop's root zone

# IAN HAIGH

## Project: VARIABLE RATE FERTILISER

Ian began implementing a Controlled Traffic System with 1.8m dual rows and a single row system with minimum tillage since 2005.

He would like to incorporate rotational fallow crops, such as legumes, however this is very weather-dependent.

### Issue being addressed:

Now that Ian has upgraded to a GPS controlled traffic farming system he can now move towards using different fertiliser rate within farm block. It is likely that this practice will be more profitable than blanket rate application of fertilisers.

### Solution being tested:

Ian will implement a Variable Rate Nutrient Management (Granular) system, based on yield maps, EM Mapping soil maps, elevation, block history and precision planning.

He will also implement variable rate application equipment including a fertiliser box, which has had Reef Rescue funding support.

### Results:

Ian has had a great result with his trial and in his own words “variable rate works like a beauty.”

Since adopting this technology Ian has been able to expand it to variable rate gypsum.

Ian is looking to the future and plans on improving his farm by setting up a trickle irrigation trial.



Ian examines his farm mapping



A GPS unit and fertilizer flow rate controller inside the tractor

## What is Project Catalyst?

Project Catalyst is a pioneering partnership which reduces the environmental impact that sugar cane production has on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The project is ‘grower led’ – and involves a group of innovative farmers (termed A-Class growers) that are developing and testing management practices that improve the water quality of the water leaving sugar cane crops.