PROJECT CATALYST

Case Study

Mixed Legume Fallow

LANDHOLDER	Chris Butler
LOCATION	Stone River
CATCHMENT	Lower Herbert
RAINFALL	Upper Stone River annual rainfall 2020 - 1460.4mm
PROPERTY SIZE	205 total ha
ON-GROUND PROVIDER	HCPSL

Project Catalyst is a grower led, sugar cane innovation and adoption project that explores, develops and validates farm management practice change to improve the enduring water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

BROADER ADOPTION VALIDATION & GROWER SUPPORT

Founded in 2009, the project operates in the Mackay Whitsunday, Burdekin and Wet Tropic regions to deliver valued practice change outcomes and develop methods for industry adoption. Under the Broader Adoption and Grower Support program, professional on-ground service providers assist selected growers to adopt and validate appropriate change practices. Service providers continue to monitor implementation benefits and derived environmental performance improvements. Through targeted extension activities, the program seeks to accelerate the uptake and broader adoption of improved farming practices at local, regional and industry levels.

Australian Government | REEF TRUST | Great Barrier Reef Foundation | THE Coca-Cola FOUNDATION | WWF

2020 Mixed Legume Fallow

Goal

To grow mixed legumes on all fallow blocks when possible

Overview

Chris wants to improve soil health across his farms by growing mixed legumes on his fallow block when possible.
By growing mixed legumes Chris will be able to reduce his nitrogen rates in plant cane, improve weed pressure during fallow periods and reduce erosion after serious rain events.

Action

- Lime and prepare blocks for planting legumes.
-This season 2019/2020 Chris has planted most of his fallow blocks to mixed legume crops.
-Season 2020/2021 Chris once again has planted most of his fallow blocks to mixed legume crops

Outcome

-Chris really noticed a difference to his weed pressure after trying a mixed legume crop, compared to a straight soybean crop and straight cow-pea crop on his farms in Stoneriver. He used the traditional mix of Ebony cow-pea and Rongai Lablab.
He said the different species dominated in the different soil types across his blocks and significantly reduced his weed pressure. He also had some form of legume growing across the whole block instead of exposed patches of soil that where vulnerable to erosion.