PROJECT CATALYST

Case Study

Grower Support

LANDHOLDER	Brett Coulthard
LOCATION	Mossman
CATCHMENT	Mossman
RAINFALL	2000 - 3000mm
PROPERTY SIZE	455ha
ON-GROUND PROVIDER	Mossman Ag Services

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 bene its 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.

Brett Coulthard

Mixed species fallow seed mix

Australian Government | Reef Trust | Great Barrier Reef Foundation | The Coca-Cola Foundation | WWF

2021 Grower Support

Goal

To continue to support Brett as a Project Catalyst grower, he has had multiple previous trials including, an EEF fertiliser trial, drainage trial and most recently a reduced fertiliser on late cut ratoon trial.

Previous EEF trial site

Overview

Brett Coulthard has previously conducted a number of Project Catalyst Trials on his farm including Enhanced Efficiency Fertiliser trial, GPS Land levelling trials, and also most recently a reduced rate on older and late cut ratoon trial.

Brett is interested in trying new ideas that may suit his farming operations, while also looking to reduce costs and maintain productivity.

Planting fallow block using direct drill planter

Action

Continue to provide support to Brett and assist where necessary with extension advice, particularly relating to his previous trialled practices. Nutrient Management plan produced, taking into account reducing rates for late cut and older ratoons where higher yields may not be possible to achieve.

The previously trialled Enhance Efficiency Fertilisers in this case did not show results that encouraged further use across the farm. With further information or research there could be a place for them, but without further information it is difficult to determine where they can be used.

Outcome

Advice provided by MAS on reduced rates on plant cane, following a legume crop.

Brett has continued trials through other programs, with some Nitrogen rate reduction trials, which are currently being monitored and will be harvested in 2021.

He also routinely GPS levels blocks, with the help of MAS to take levels across blocks, and provide the mapping plans and hire of the GPS controlled scoop.

Brett has also taken up mixed species fallowing, where he can see potential soil health benefits to his fallow blocks.