



# Case Study

## Reduced Fertiliser Rates on Old Ratoons



<b>LANDHOLDER</b>	Anthony D'Addona
<b>LOCATION</b>	Miallo
<b>CATCHMENT</b>	Mossman
<b>RAINFALL</b>	2000 - 3000mm (yearly average)
<b>PROPERTY SIZE</b>	134ha
<b>ON-GROUND PROVIDER</b>	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 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.



Fertiliser Box in action



Farm visit with Anthony prior to deciding which blocks to use



Great Barrier  
Reef Foundation



## ●●●● Goal

Improve cost efficiency of farming and target nutrient applications.

### Block Information

Farm No	Block No	Area (ha)	Crop Class	6ES Rate	80% 6ES Rate
5471	8.1	5.4	8R	Innisfail Ratooner @ 500kg/ha	Innisfail Ratooner @ 406kg/ha
5492	5.2	2.6	7R	CK50/50 @ 500kg/ha	CK50/50 @ 406kg/ha

\*Please note that the 80% 6ES rate was based off 80% of the averaged rate for block group according to the NMP.

## ●●●● Overview

Select old ratoon blocks which the grower will reduce fertilizer rates on to trial the effectiveness of this as a potential new farming practice to save money and target nutrient inputs.

Table - Block data with reduced rates

## ●●●● Action

Grower identified two old ratoon blocks to apply a reduced fertiliser rate on. Grower worked with MAS to create a Nutrient Management Plan which calculate rates based on soil tests and also worked with staff to calibrate equipment. Grower applied rates at 80% 6ES on identified blocks.

A description of the two blocks with rates are in the table above.

## ●●●● Outcome

Due to the project date finishing before harvest, there are no quantifiable outcomes at present.

Comments from the grower when asked about his thoughts so far;

"5.2 is hard to tell as it was stunted due to dry weather and was already gappy due to age."

"8.1 was cut later but had good weather and seems to be doing OK."

"Overall, the stool is all there but not necessarily the growth and it's too early to tell the difference- there are many contributing factors, a big one being the weather. We'll have to wait until closer to harvest to really know"



Anthony calibrating fertiliser box to correct rates