



# Case Study

## Implementation of a Cane and Meat Chicken Rotation Farming Business



<b>LANDHOLDER</b>	Daniel and Leanne Cordner
<b>LOCATION</b>	Sunnybank
<b>CATCHMENT</b>	Lower Herbert
<b>RAINFALL</b>	2920mm
<b>PROPERTY SIZE</b>	55ha
<b>ON-GROUND PROVIDER</b>	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.



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●●●● Goal

To operate a successful meat chicken business with sugarcane, by using fallow ground with mixed species cover to free range meat chickens. Older ratoon cane blocks are also being considered for chicken grazing areas.



●●●● Overview

- The Cordner family farm will center around regenerative practices, focusing on the health of everything in the farming system – from financial aspects to soil, plant and animals
- The chickens should provide organic nutrients to soil profile. Chicken manure is an excellent source of phosphorus and this will reduce the need for in-organic sources.
- Chickens will scratch and forage through the cover crop incorporating plant biomass into the soil profile creating organic matter and improving soil health.
- Chickens are a profitable income when meat is sold to market.



●●●● Action

- Built own slaughterhouse so all work can be processed on farm with out-going associated costs.
- Fallow ground planted with a number of legumes and other species that are good forage for chickens as well as soil health and nutrient input aspects for sugarcane.
- Longer fallows to keep chicken grazing ground for longer as well as providing a longer resting period being cane plantation.
- Chicken manure is a great source of phosphorus so chicken coops are designed to be portable and easily moved to help spread organic manure sources across all of fallow blocks. Thus reducing the need for in-organic sources of P.
- Chicken breed is specialized to target upper class markets and restaurants so as to not have to compete with big chicken supply industries.
- Chicken offal and waste is captured and utilized to use as bio-fertilisers and organic forms of fertilizer, reducing the need for as much in-organic fertilizers for the following cane crops.

●●●● Outcome

- Chicken meat business is doing very well within the local regions of the wet tropics.
- Sugarcane profits are helping with extra income inputs
- Mixed fallow cropping is providing forage source for the birds as well as having soil health aspects
- A hard year was had by the Cordner family during the extreme weather conditions and extreme rainfall of 2019 period, business is back up and running again, with learning experiences taken into considerations
- Cordner family has specialized their meat chicken breed further so the animals can better adapt and flourish to the regional conditions.
- A more organic approach is being achieved by the Cordner's every year reducing they need for chemical fertilizers.



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