



*Working with local cane growers to validate the water quality, productivity and profitability benefits of improved sugarcane production.*

The Paddock to Reef program monitors individual farm trial sites as well as agricultural catchments of differing scales to determine the effectiveness of various management practices for sugarcane, grazing and horticulture. Funded by the Federal and State Governments, the aim of Paddock to Reef is to enable measurement of progress towards the Government's Reef Plan targets of improved water quality gained through improved land management practices. Paddock to Reef is being run in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Fitzroy, Burnett Mary and Mackay Whitsunday regions.

Reef Catchments works with local cane farmers, Queensland Government (DNRM and DAFF), Mackay Area Productivity Services and CSIRO to validate the water quality, productivity and profitability benefits of a range of improved ways to grow sugarcane through the Paddock to Reef program.

We focus on sugarcane, testing runoff at farm and stream level. The water quality data is combined with productivity and economic information collected over the duration of the trial such as the costs of inputs and compared with the resulting yield. This helps to determine which management practices are most practical for farmers, more economically viable and environmentally beneficial.

## HOW CAN THIS INFORMATION BE USED?

The information collected through Paddock to Reef is available to growers and industry who can then make better informed choices about farm management considering the productivity and economic outcomes of the newer practices. This work demonstrates that best management practices can lead to long term savings with reduced inputs of nutrients and herbicides and true win-win situations.

## FARM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES BEING COMPARED AND VALIDATED

- 1.8m controlled traffic row spacing
- 1.5m row spacing
- 1.8m skip row farming
- N replacement nutrient management
- Six Easy Steps nutrient management
- Traditional nutritional management
- Knock down herbicide use
- Regulated and non regulated herbicide use
- Banded application of residual herbicide

At the farm level we are able to measure the water quality of runoff generated through different farming practices, comparing traditional farm management with best practice and aspirational farm management.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE IN MACKAY?

In the Mackay Region we have:

- 2 paddock scale monitoring sites (on 2 soil types)
- 1 multi-farm monitoring site
- 2 catchment monitoring sites (Dumbleton Weir and Sandy Creek)

PADDOCK TO REEF PARTNERS



mackay area productivity services

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