

REEF RESCUE

2011

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IMPROVED FARMING SYSTEM USING CONTROLLED TRAFFIC

REEF RESCUE HELPED WAYNE VICKERS MAKE BIG CHANGES ON HIS FARM INCLUDING THE ADOPTION OF GPS GUIDANCE ON CONTROLLED TRAFFIC, VARIABLE RATE NUTRIENT APPLICATION AND THE USE OF KNOCKDOWN CHEMICALS WHERE PRACTICAL. WITH THE FUNDING, WAYNE WAS ABLE TO MODIFY EXISTING EQUIPMENT AND PURCHASE SOME NEW EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THE CONVERSION POSSIBLE.

With the support of Reef Rescue in 2009, Wayne started to convert to a 1.83m wide single row controlled traffic system. He planted 45 ha in the first year without GPS and then in 2010 through Reef Rescue installed GPS guidance as well. After the 2011 planting, Wayne estimates he will have 30% left to convert. “@ reduce compaction and improve my soil st u re’ a e infiltration

Wayne has also purchased a legume planter and says, “I will try and plant legumes each year if the season suits and may harvest or use as a green manure crop. When it comes to replanting into his controlled traffic beds, Wayne hopes to be able to direct drill his legumes, spray out the cane, rip and bed renovate and then hopefully be able to plant.

Wayne has also been looking at ways to improve other management practices on farm as well. This includes fitting shields to his existing spray rig so that he can utilise knockdown chemicals in the inter-row for weed control and using GPS guidance for fallow spraying to remove any overlap in application. “We have also modified our fertiliser box to be a 3-row stool splitter and fitted Variable Rate technology to be able to tailor what is needed in each block based on soil tests, the BSES easy steps recommendations and some local knowledge” Wayne added.

As well as making these changes, Wayne also invested in purchasing a second Centre Pivot for the farm with some support through Reef Rescue. This means that with his lateral booms, he will have around 190 ha under some



About the farm... Wayne is a fifthth generation farmer and has 209 ha of cane near the township of Marian, which is around 25 kms West of Mackay as you head up the Pioneer Valley. It is the site of the original home farm that in the 1890's was the first to be turned into sugarcane in the area and the bridge that crosses the river is named after the Vickers family. The farm is bordered on the southern side by the Pioneer River and also drains into Reeves Creek, which is part of the Pioneer River Main Channel Sub-Catchment. The river here is still fast flowing with many rocky outcrops and narrow channels formed.



This project is supported by Reef Catchments through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

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form of low pressure overhead irrigation.

Wayne said "My aim is to harvest about a ¼ of the area under the pivot and then fertilise and irrigate in within 24 hours. This will get it down into the soil so that the plant can use it " Wayne added "I use the trash blanket for the initial weed control and then will come in later and spray any herbicides that are required based on the weed pressure and irrigate in within 48 hours "

Wayne says "that if it wasn't for the incentives from Reef Rescue, I would never have been able to make the change to a controlled traffic farming system and would have had to weigh up the options of what I should invest

in " He adds "Reef Rescue made it viable to make many changes in a short time, it was easy to get involved and if you did find it difficult there were people there to help you along the way "

"REEF RESCUE MADE IT VIABLE TO MAKE MANY CHANGES IN A SHORT TIME."

Outcomes

- Reduced risk of sediment losses with a Controlled Traffic minimum tillage system reducing erosion and run-off.
- Reduced risk from nutrient losses with accurate site specific sub-surface granular application with variable rate technology
- Reduced risk of losses from irrigating in all nutrient and chemical applications while increasing its effectiveness.



OUTCOMES



Reduced risk of sediment losses



Reduced risk from nutrient losses



Reduced risk of losses from irrigating

Reef Catchments

Reef Catchments is the regional NRM body who oversees the Reef Rescue program in the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region for the federal government.

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