



OUTCOMES TO DATE

- ▶ Economic sustainability and water quality are priorities and can work together.
- ▶ Growers need to use chemicals correctly so as to prevent exceedances measured in waterways which could lead to critical products being withdrawn from the market.

“ We appreciate Government assistance but we as an industry need to be ahead ”

Joseph is working towards BMP accreditation and plans to be accredited in early 2018. He is currently using best practice for herbicide applications using a high clearance spray unit and minimising his use of residual herbicides.

Joseph is using soil tests and 6 Easy Steps to determine fertiliser rates and working alongside Farmacist to examine varying the rates according to other factors such as crop age, time of harvest and paddock history. Reduction in fertiliser rates especially N rates are for most farmers challenging mainly due to concerns with possible negative impacts on productivity. Joseph is presently working through the information and recommendation on nutrition rates.

Apart from investigating changes in nutrition rates, Joseph has realised that his future nutrient farming practices will involve more variations in applied rates rather than one or two rates across the whole farm. To allow for such variations he will need to move away from contractor applied fertiliser to applying the fertiliser himself, where he will have more control. Joseph will apply for a RT3 major grant to assist with his purchase of a stool splitter, granular fertiliser applicator.

CASE STUDY

Joseph Borg grows an average crop of 11 000 tonnes per year in the Pleystowe area, 17 km west of Mackay. Joseph's farm is situated on the northern bank of the Pioneer River. It has good soils and ample water for irrigation, with both high and low pressure irrigators used on the property. Joseph has only been on the farm since 2015, prior to that he grew cane and raised cattle on his property in the Blue Mountains, located just over the Eton Range. Several farmers in the Blue Mountains area combined resources to grow cane. Together the group funded the road transport operation to get the harvested cane from the Blue Mountains to North Eton Mill site, including negotiating the Eton Range section of the Peak Downs Highway. Joseph sold the cane component allowing him to purchase the Pleystowe cane farm.

As well as cattle and cane duties Joseph also commits time to industry representation work being Deputy Chairman of Canegrowers Mackay Area Committee. As such Joseph is very aware of the environmental scrutiny which is placed on the sugar industry and all agricultural industries, and is therefore keen to maintain his knowledge on developments in management practices which can reduce adverse effects on the environment.

Joseph joined Reef Trust III to be part of the industry initiatives to improve water quality, he is pleased that he has the opportunity to consider nutrition rates and make decisions accordingly rather than have regulations, imposed on his farming business.

FOCUS ON



- ▶ Ways to minimise nutrients, herbicides and sediments leaving the property.

KEY POINTS



- ▶ Water quality is a priority.
- ▶ Farming practices play a key part in water quality outcomes. Farmer needs data, information and evidence to give confidence to adopt any different management techniques.



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