

CASE STUDY

QUICK FACTS

Landholder

Michael and Jo-Anne
Lewer

Project

Queensland
Government's Natural
Resource Investment
Program (2019-2020)

Location

Finch Hatton, 60km
west of Mackay

Area

51ha of grazing

Rainfall

1100mm to 1200mm
per year



Michael and Jo-Anne Lewer

BACKGROUND

In June 2005, Michael and Jo-Anne Lewer purchased their property at Finch Hatton as a lifestyle choice for their family. The property was originally a running cane farm which they continued with for two years until converting over to beef cattle. After harvest, cane paddocks were worked up and reseeded to pasture species and boundary fences were installed.

Neither Michael nor Jo-Anne had any previous experience in grazing and so in 2007, the couple completed a Grazing for Profit course. However, with the establishment of their other business venture in full swing, they put any further development of their grazing enterprise on the back burner.

Recently, the couple decided it was time to start putting what they learnt at the Grazing for Profit school into practice. They have selectively chosen Droughtmaster and Red Angus as their breeds of choice due to their low maintenance requirements, quiet nature and productivity. Their intention was to implement a time-controlled grazing system but in order to do this, they first needed to address a number of erosion issues that were impacting their carrying capacity potential.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Following Tropical Cyclone Ului in 2010, they discovered a number of areas of advancing erosion along the creek system that crosses their property. These areas were further impacted by the heavy rainfall experienced during Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017, with drainage water from neighbouring properties adding to the flood damage. In particular, erosion at a gully head was encroaching onto neighbouring cane paddocks.

Michael and Jo-Anne contacted Reef Catchments Limited and were able to access funding through the Queensland Government's Natural Resource Improvement Program water quality grazing project for gully remediation. With this funding, they were able to employ a contractor to undertake engineering works to repair the erosion at the gully head, batter and rock the repaired face and undertake drainage works at other erosion sites to reduce water velocity and consolidate banks.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

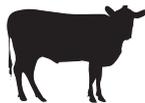
- Repairing the eroding gully head, including rocking and battering of the face
- Desilting and reshaping drains to reduce water velocity and improve drainage flow
- Installing whoa boys at three strategic points along the drainage system to slow water flow, allow for silt deposition and deflect flow away from actively-eroding areas

FUTURE GOALS

- Undertake fencing of gully system for stock exclusion
- Implement sustainable grazing practices learnt at the Grazing for Profit workshop
- Implement a time-controlled grazing system
- Ongoing vegetation management through weed control and pasture improvement activities

Michael said: “The erosion, especially in the big washout had the ability to reduce the number of cattle we could carry so we needed to fix it to be able to move forward.”

Jo-Anne added: “The funding has greatly reduced the financial burden that fixing the erosion problem would have had on our business, especially being a smaller producer.”



WHAT IS NRIP?

THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S NATURAL RESOURCE INVESTMENT PROGRAM COMMENCED IN 2018 AND HAS PROVIDED FUNDING TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REGION BODIES TO SUSTAIN NATURAL RESOURCES AND IMPROVE REEF WATER QUALITY ACROSS THE STATE. REEF CATCHMENTS WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR BID TO RECEIVE FUNDING TO UNDERTAKE TWO REGIONAL PROJECTS.

► IMPROVING THE RELATIVE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION OF FRESHWATER STREAMS AND WETLANDS IN THE MACKAY WHITSUNDAY REGION

► ADDRESSING PRIORITY SUB-CATCHMENT WATER QUALITY TARGETS THROUGH GRAZING MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

THE FUNDING REFLECTS THE ONGOING COMMITMENT OF BOTH THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BODIES TO ENSURE THE STATE'S NATURAL LAND AND WATER RESOURCES ARE SUSTAINABLY MANAGED.



Queensland
Government

This project is funded through the Queensland Government's Natural Resource Investment Program and Reef Catchments