

REEF RESCUE

2010

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(07)4968 4200



Frank Clayton

FALLOW CROP & CONTROLLED TRAFFIC SYSTEM

Reef Rescue helped Frank Clayton convert his sugarcane farm to a 1.83 metre Controlled Traffic System and implement rotational legume fallow crops. With the funding, Frank was able to modify his equipment to match the new row-spacing and purchase a legume planter.

In 2009, Frank Clayton applied for Reef Rescue funding to help convert his sugarcane farm to a 1.83m Controlled Traffic System and the incorporation of rotational legume fallow crops. Frank was successful, and received funding to help modify his equipment to match the new row spacing and the purchase of a legume planter.

“The weather and conditions might not allow for a legume fallow crop each year, but I will try my best, because of how good a ground cover it provides over the wet season, how good the plant cane looks after and the fact that we don’t need to add any nitrogen,” Frank says.

Along with improving his soil management, Frank has been looking at ways of improving his nutrient and chemical management on-farm. He also received funding to put new discs on this three-row sub-surface stool splitter, to improve application through the trash. Frank says he also

does soil testing and uses the BSES Six Easy Steps to determine nutrient requirements across the farm. “We have also modified the stool splitter with an extra tank to put on our cane grub control at the same time.”

To improve his chemical management, Frank also applied for and was successful in receiving funding to help purchase a High Clearance Spray Rig and five shields. He still uses residual chemicals in plant cane for weed control, because some problems existed when he bought the farm.

In ratoons, he will use the High Clearance Spray Rig to apply knockdowns over the stool and the shields will allow for knockdowns in the inter-row at the same time. The rig allows this to be done up to out-of-hand stage, which is very useful for vine control.

Along with all of these improvements in the paddock, Frank has been busy improving his



About the farm...

Frank Clayton and his family own two sugarcane farms near Bloomsbury, 95km north-west of Mackay. The Claytons had been battling the drought in Armidale as sheep and cattle farmers and in 2007, headed north to try cane farming. Frank now has 300 hectares with 250 hectares under cane production. The O’Connell River passes between the two farms.



stormwater management across both of the farms.

“On one farm we have 85 per cent of run-off going through two dams. On the other, we received some funding through Reef Rescue to help with the construction

of three sediment/detention basins that take around 30 per cent of the farm’s run-off. We are looking to build two more small ones ourselves, to take it up to 50 percent.”

Frank says that Reef Rescue helped him to make changes on the farms sooner, rather than over a five or 10 year timeframe.

“We would have definitely delayed the work on our fertiliser box and most likely would have only done one of our activities we had funded by now.” Other activities, such as GPS, would also have been a long way down the track.

The benefits of the work Frank is doing for water quality through Reef

“On one farm we have 85 per cent of run-off going through two dams.”

Rescue include reducing the risk of sediment and particulate nutrient

losses with the Controlled Traffic Minimum Tillage System and rotational legume fallows increasing ground cover, reducing run-off and improving soil structure.

There is also a reduced risk from dissolved nutrient losses with accurate targeted sub-surface granular nutrient applications based on crop requirements. Frank is also minimising the risk from residual chemical losses with accurate targeted applications based on weed pressure and replacement of residuals with knockdowns where practical. Finally there is a reduced risk of sediment, particulate and dissolved nutrients and dissolved chemical losses off-farm with improved stormwater management including dams and a series of sediment/detention basins.



OUTCOMES



Improved soil, nutrient and chemical management



Improved stormwater management



Increased ground cover, reducing run-off and improving soil structure.



Reduced risk of sediment particulate, dissolved nutrients and dissolved chemical losses off-farm