



Rural Weekly - Central Queensland

Friday 17/10/2014

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GOING TO WATER



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LAND CARE: Proserpine farmer Warren Watts, from Thoopara, is one of more than 280 landholders involved in a program designed to improve the quality of water leaving agricultural land. Read more about the project on page 6.

PAGE 15: AUSTRALIAN FIRST – NINE HOMOZYGOUS BULLS ON OFFER AT SINGLE SALE.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

ENVIRONMENT

FARMERS DO THEIR BIT

Sugarcane growers and graziers taking steps to reduce chemical runoff

Envirochat with Reef Catchments...

THE numbers are in – across the Mackay Whitsunday region, 282 sugarcane farmers and graziers have

taken a step forward to further improve water quality in the first year of Reef Programme.

Landholders have been working with Reef Catchments, the Plane Creek and Mackay Productivity

Boards, Canegrowers and Farmacist in the past 12 months to access support and benefits available



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through the Reef Program, which is the successor to the Australian Government's

highly successful Reef Rescue program.

The Reef Program is designed to improve the quality of water leaving agricultural lands in the Great Barrier Reef catchment and is facilitated in Mackay and the Whitsundays by Reef Catchments.

In our region, funding is provided to sugarcane producers and graziers to improve nutrient and chemical management.

While regional funding is smaller than what was received through Reef Rescue, Reef Catchments has worked with the sugarcane industry to design a program that delivers much more than a simple grants process.

Participating landholders are provided with a three-year property planning service that aims to improve nutrient and chemical efficiency on-farm, resulting in economic and environmental savings.

Precision planning consultants from Plane Creek Productivity Services, Mackay Area Productivity Services, Canegrowers Proserpine, Sugar Services Proserpine and Farmacist are working with landholders to develop plans that are suitable for the individual farmer, providing agronomic advice and support.

Reef Program additionally

provides funds for EC Mapping, soil testing (surplus to regulation) and \$500 per grower for initial precision agriculture planning improvements, such as nozzles, new tanks and equipment.

Landholders who meet criteria will also be supported to apply for a second round of grants to fund equipment and on-ground activities to improve water quality and reduce runoff.

For more information on how to be involved in the next stage (year two) of Reef Program, head online to www.reefcatchments.com or phone Reef Catchments on 4945 2321



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■ GREAT START: The first year of Reef Program has resulted in 282 producers in the region accessing support to improve water quality.

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