

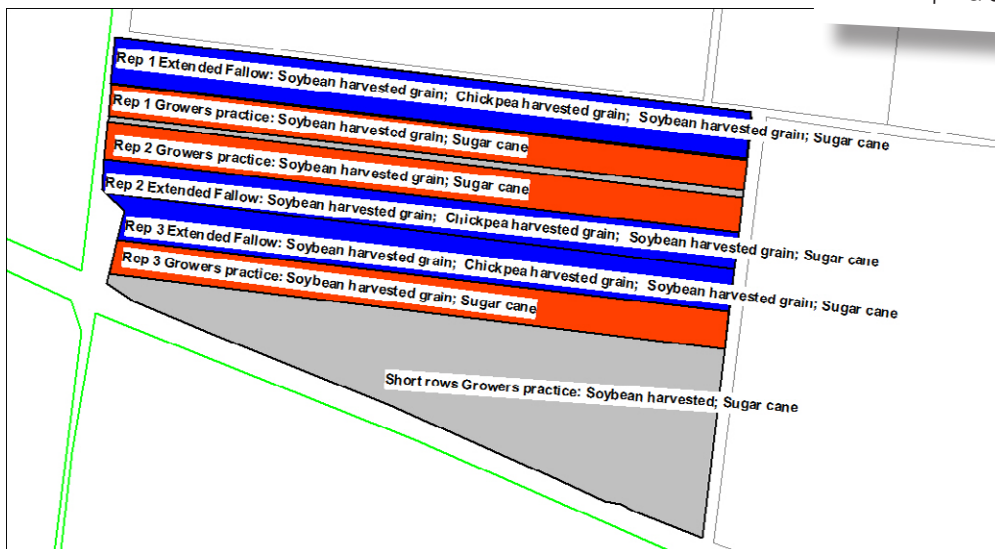
Case Study 4

Gerry Deguara - Exploring the Benefits of Extended Fallows

Gerry Deguara and family from Eton North, sandy creek catchment consider that extending the current fallow length in the sugar cane crop cycle may lead to benefits to soil health and subsequent cane yields. With results of improved plant cane yield of 30% and first ratoon of 8% attained in a previous extended fallow trial by Plane Creek Sustainable Farmers group, Gerry hopes to gain similar improvements. Results from the Sugar Yield Decline Joint Venture also highlighted that extending the fallow length to include a 5 year pasture phase gave improved soil health and cane yield benefits. However, a pasture phase is not suitable during a sugar cane crop cycle due to management and financial constraints. Gerry seeks to improve the economics of extending his fallow by growing cash grain crops.



Gerry Deguara and Natalie Fiocco (Farmacist) in chickpea strip planted 31/05/13



The trial site had soybean planted across the whole paddock in December 2012. That soybean crop was then harvested in May 2013, then a strip trial was setup and chickpea was planted in strips straight back into the soybean beds. Sugar cane was planted in the remaining strips in August 2013. The chickpeas were harvested in October 2013 and soybean replanted into the same beds in November 2013. In 2014 the soybean strips plan to be harvested and replanted to sugar cane.

Chickpea Harvest data

	yield (t)	t/ha
Replicate 1	0.826	1.05
Replicate 2	0.74	1.25
Replicate 3	1.12	1.42
Total	2.686	1.24

Results so far:

The soybean crop harvested May 2013 yielded 2.5t/ha for the whole 5.7 ha paddock. The chickpea crop averaged 1.24t/ha across the 3 replicates.

Soybean crop planted November 2013

