



Case Study

Direct Drill Legume Fallow



LANDHOLDER	Ray Rinaudo
LOCATION	Cowley Beach
CATCHMENT	Johnstone
RAINFALL	3283mm
PROPERTY SIZE	77.1ha
ON-GROUND PROVIDER	CANEGROWERS Innisfail

Project Catalyst is a grower led, sugar cane innovation and adoption project that explores, develops and validates farm management practice change to improve the enduring water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

BROADER ADOPTION VALIDATION & GROWER SUPPORT

Founded in 2009, the project operates in the Mackay Whitsunday, Burdekin and Wet Tropic regions to deliver valued practice change outcomes and develop methods for industry adoption. Under the Broader Adoption and Grower Support program, professional on-ground service providers assist selected growers to adopt and validate appropriate change practices. Service providers continue to monitor implementation benefits and derived environmental performance improvements. Through targeted extension activities, the program seeks to accelerate the uptake and broader adoption of improved farming practices at local, regional and industry levels.



2020/21 Fallow block



2019/20 cultivated and drilled legume fallow



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation



●●●● Goal

Support growers who are already planting legumes to take the next step to direct drilled crops. With the aim of reducing cultivation prior to the wet season therefore reducing the risk of erosion.

●●●● Overview

This project aims to assist Ray to assess direct drill legume cover crops. Ray's standard practice for fallow management is to plant a legume fallow crop when the weather allows. To plant the cover crop the fallow block is disced out and then the legume seeds are planted using a seed planter.

Ray was interested to see how a legume cover crop would perform on his farm when direct drilled into the old cane bed and if his seed planter would be able to plant through the trash blanket without modification.



Ray's seed planter

●●●● Action

Following discussions with the local Project Catalyst extension officer, Ray decided to try direct drill planting legumes into his fallow block.

Ray owns his own legume planter and has previously used it to plant legume cover crops into cultivated fallow blocks and is unsure how the planter will handle planting through the trash blanket.

Due to poor weather (too dry and then a heavy onset of the wet season), Ray has not had suitable conditions to plant his cover crop. Ray has purchased the cover crop seed and the ratooning cane has been sprayed out using a broad spectrum herbicide leaving the fallow block ready to plant if conditions come right.

●●●● Outcome

As yet there are no results due to unfavorable weather for planting the legumes.

However Ray is still interested in trying direct drilling legumes into his fallow blocks when the opportunity arises.