

MEDIA RELEASE



CANEGROWERS

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Grower grants help improve nutrient runoff and water quality in the Herbert catchment

Grower Incentive Grants made it possible for Herbert growers to invest in new machinery by receiving financial support to better improve water quality associated with on-farm nitrogen management practice changes and the results in Nitrogen run-off are evident.

Results from a trial in the Abergowrie area conducted by the Queensland Government, HCPSL, James Cook University and Terrain NRM in 2013 revealed sub-surface fertiliser application reduced runoff losses of Nitrogen, phosphorus and Sulphate-S from recent applications when compared to surface applications in the Herbert Catchment.

The application of fertiliser provides essential nutrients to enhance sugarcane growth and yield. The rate of application and where fertiliser is placed in the soil profile influences plant uptake and the loss through runoff and deep drainage.

HCPSL Company Manager Lawrence Di Bella, who participated in the study stated, "The findings from this study clearly shows sub-surface applications of both liquid and granular fertilisers had a positive impact on reducing nitrogen runoff from cane farms. The study also looked at cane yields from the various practices to find that broadcast applications of fertiliser on the soil surface had lower yields when compared to other methods. These results are a win-win for the environment and growers' hip pocket."

Grower Incentive Grants are part of the Major Grants Project and the Lower Herbert Water Quality Program (LHWQP). Funded by the Reef Trust Partnership the aim is to improve the quality of water flowing from the Herbert River catchment to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon while at the same time improving productivity and profitability of the Herbert sugar industry.

The Lower Herbert Water Quality Program aims to prevent 140 tonnes of dissolved inorganic nitrogen from entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon from the Herbert River catchment each year. Under the Reef 2050 plan to reduce runoff of dissolved inorganic nitrogen the Herbert River is one of the highest priority river catchments. The \$16.2 million program is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government's Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation with coordination support provided by CANEGROWERS Herbert River.

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Great Barrier
Reef Foundation