



LATEST WATERWAY HEALTH REPORT CARD FINDINGS IN CANE LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Canegrowers are making headway in land under best management practice, according to the 2016 Mackay-Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef report card, released in October.

This year the sugarcane industry in this region reported a 2% increase in hectares of sugarcane under best management practice. Best management practice is defined as management practices that pose a low or moderate to low risk to water quality.

The assessment utilised the Water Quality Risk framework for sugarcane within the region, which focuses on practices with the greatest potential to influence the movement of nutrients, pesticides, and sediment. This included fallow management, controlled traffic and trash blankets; you can see the full list and the %ha uptake in the table below.

Industry stewardship assessments of agricultural land under improved practices is limited to land

directly influenced or assisted by recognized service providers, such as the Reef Trust 3 Program delivered through Reef Catchments. It is expected that this may result in a conservative estimate of the number of growers implementing improved practices (Australian government and Queensland Government, 2015a).

The report card also delivers environmental condition data from the 2015/16 period, as well as stewardship assessments of other industries in the region, such as heavy industry and tourism, from the 2016/17 period. You will find the full results including a map and interactive results tool, online at www.healthyriverstoreef.org.au

The report card showed that water quality is poor to moderate in the Plane and Pioneer basins. Growers in the Sandy Creek area (within the Plane basin) have worked together proactively to address poor water quality in their catchment. You can find out more about this project in the Sandy Creek liftout in this edition

AREA UNDER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Key Practices	Area under best practice		Mackay Whitsunday - Area under Best Practice								
	2015 Reportcard	2016 Reportcard	Pollutant	Baseline Best Practice	Baseline Best Practice Ha	2013-14 Best Practice	2013-14 Best Practice Ha	2014-15 Best Practice	2014-15 Best Practice Ha	2016 Reportcard	2016 Reportcard Ha
Green cane trash blanketing	84%	86%	Sediment	41%	55870	41%	55870	41%	56030	42%	57641
Fallow management	13%	14%	Nutrients	19%	26500	20%	27106	21%	28450	23%	31074
Controlled machinery traffic	55%	56%	Pesticides	37%	49892	37%	49892	41%	55365	43%	58711
Tillage - plant cane	19%	20%									
Nitrogen surplus	22%	24%									
Fertiliser placement	70%	71%									
Residual herbicide Targeting	39%	41%									
Residual herbicide strategy	42%	44%									



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