

SRA's Julian Connellan collects data from a trial site in the Burdekin.



## How could using less fertiliser benefit my business?

That's the question a group of Burdekin growers involved in a nitrogen-use trial wanted to test. They put the Six Easy Steps methodology through its paces in trial sites starting in 2011. By 2016 they had some eye-opening answers.

One grower is now using 15 tonnes less fertiliser a year and hasn't lost tonnage or sugar content. Another grower has calculated his savings to be \$28,000 on 100 ha worth of fertiliser.

To see them talk about their experiences, visit <http://bit.ly/2b1JOrU> to watch the Sugar Research Australia video, or download the SRA Case Studies booklet from <http://bit.ly/29KCrSj>

The success of the project, known as RP20, in turning Six Easy Steps sceptics into converts prompted the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to commit funding through its reef water quality initiatives to support 100 more growers through the process under a project called RP161.

CANEGROWERS congratulates the growers behind the 50 farms that have signed up to participate in the first year of this new fertiliser efficiency program.

"Growers have been telling us they want evidence that changing practices will be worthwhile, that they won't lose money or production while meeting environmental objectives," CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said.

"This Burdekin nitrogen trial project is all about growers proving the science for themselves and their neighbours.

"Not only are the growers in the original RP20 project still running highly productive farms, they are saving costs on fertiliser.

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"This is a win on so many levels for the industry and these growers are leaders among their peers for taking action on being involved and testing the science for themselves."

"We are delighted that all of the places in the first year of this project have been quickly taken up – 50 farms will benefit this year and more next year.

"Six Easy Steps ties in to our industry best management practice program

Smartcane BMP which, through the efforts of farmers across the industry, is delivering productivity and water quality results across all cane growing districts.

"These projects are a perfect example of growers, industry research and government all working together towards the common goal of a sustainable sugarcane industry, contributing to the Queensland economy for decades to come." ■

Six Easy Steps is a science-based nutrient management tool. It is acknowledged as industry best-practice for nutrient management to optimise productivity and profitability without adversely influencing soil fertility or causing off-farm effects.