



FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION

Our country. Our future.

Improving run-off

Restoring flooded cotton farm



Arcturus Downs, located near Springsure, is one of many cotton farms in the Fitzroy Basin that sustained significant damage to its fields and infrastructure through wet season flooding in recent years.

Reef Rescue supports recovery

In late 2011 Sam Bradford from Arcturus Downs developed a project to make improvements to his property in partnership with Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. supported by Reef Rescue funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

Flood inundation had damaged sections of the farm, which comprises 1100.4 ha of irrigated cotton.

The project was designed to reduce soil and water borne contaminants in farm run-off, contributing to better water quality flowing to the Great Barrier Reef.

The work

Sam received funding that allowed him to repair six moisture probes across 528.9 ha of furrow irrigated fields allowing him to reinstate his water management plan, schedule water in a timely manner, use less water and prevent over-watering of his crop.

He was also able to repair and reconstruct 6.2km of earthen tailwater return channels.

Sam said during the tailwater return channel repairs he was able to improve the efficiency of the layout so that water can be recycled instead of wasted, increasing the amount of stormwater able to be collected for use.

Specialist technical advice was sought as part of the project, providing very useful recommendations for improving the irrigation system on Arcturus Downs, including surveying and laser leveling across 815 ha of furrow irrigated fields.

"It will be more efficient and will allow even watering of the paddock, reduce water logging and improve productivity so crops don't suffer and we can water on and off in the most efficient way we can," Sam said.

Better water quality

"We appreciate funding to improve our operation while also getting good environmental outcomes at the same time. It is important to maintain our ecosystem and whatever we can do to minimize impact as farmers is important.

"I see it as part of our responsibility as farmers to do what we can in our operations to reduce impact," he said.

Sam said that without the 50% Reef Rescue co-funding Arcturus Downs would not have been able to recover from the floods as quickly.

Arcturus Downs continues to implement myBMP, the best practice management program for the cotton industry, and participate in audits by Cotton Australia which allows Sam to identify and address water quality issues in detail.

