

Fish to reduce weeds and improve water quality in the lower Burdekin

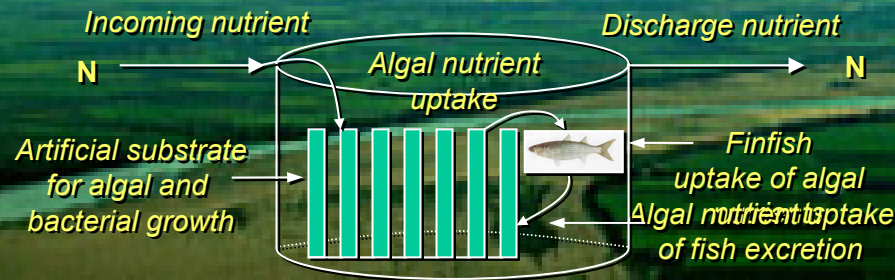


Illustration of the constructed nutrient removal system

THE ISSUES

The Burdekin shire is one of the most productive and intensively farmed regions in Australia. The region's sugarcane production is sustained by Queensland's largest river system, the Burdekin River, and a significant groundwater reservoir.

Canals bringing water to the cane lands often become choked with weeds. Mechanical harvesting of aquatic weeds is costly and may disturb the environment.

The Burdekin delta lies adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). Ideally, water discharged from the delta should benefit the GBR.

Can aquaculture assist with sugarcane agriculture sustainability issues?

An initiative of:

- South Burdekin Water Board
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Queensland Department of Primary Industries
- The Lower Burdekin Initiative

A PRO-ACTIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Many overseas countries employ multiple water usage technologies – eg. aquatic plants are used to strip dissolved nutrients and to feed secondary crops. Our challenge in Queensland will be to identify the local species (eg. fish) and the systems which are most suitable for multiple water use.

This pilot will assess the capacity of several native fish to consume aquatic plants of the Burdekin, and indirectly, sequester dissolved nutrients. This new knowledge will promote the wider application of multiple water use systems.

Overall we are looking for environmental positives from aquaculture technologies.

South Burdekin Water Board

