

Minimum till planters – a great way to patch up a poor plant cane strike



Many growers have at some stage suffered from a poor plant cane strike. Often this poor strike has been caused by adverse weather conditions after the cane was been planted. Heavy rainfall or prolonged dry conditions can result in part of a plant cane block having a plant population which is unsatisfactory.

Poor plant cane establishment is not just an issue in the plant crop but will lead to reduced yield potential for years to come throughout the ratoon cycle. In many cases wet conditions after planting

may persist so that it is no longer viable to replant in the plant cane year.

By using a double disk opener planter many growers have been able to replanted ends of blocks or gaps in the 1st ratoon block through the trash blanket. By using this type of planter the soil disturbance is minimised and the newly planted cane can easily be established through the trash blanket of the ratoon crop.

Once the gaps and poor strike areas have been replanted the block can be allowed to ratoon to its normal crop cycle with no loss of yield thereby increasing profits while avoiding the high cost of replanting the entire block.

Double disk opener planter

Double disc opener cane planters are available in both single and dual row configuration.

The planters are designed to plant into trash, sprayed out cane or break crop stubble in a minimum or zero tillage situation. The double discs push the soil open and produce little mixing of moist and dry soil. Good sett to soil contact is ensured via the narrow V produced and the firm press wheel which follows the double discs.

Re-planting within failed plant cane crops has been successful using these planters. Filling gaps across the block or replanting corners or flooded out ends of the block may save ploughing out the whole block.

Successful germination that has been aided by the use of the planter has encouraged the minimum till concept as a planting method. Direct planting into legume stubble after the wet season into good moisture will allow early planting. The ground can be prepared before the wet season and sowing a legume fallow will protect the soil from erosion and washouts.



Above: Double disc opener on dual row billet planter.



Above: Billets place in furrow through trash blanket.