

Optimising pesticide use as a management plan

Use flexible management strategies based on block monitoring and taking into account:

1. Weed species, stage of weed and crop growth,
2. Pest threshold numbers, populations of beneficial species and levels of crop damage,
3. Block history, prevailing environmental conditions, chemical options, rate and timing of applications, and selection of equipment,

Efficient use of residual and knockdown chemicals (e.g. regular calibration of equipment, nozzle selection, band application and product label recommendations).

Water quality

Use flexible management strategies based on block monitoring

Under development.

Efficient use of residual and knockdown chemicals

Under development.

Regular calibration of spray equipment

It is important to calibrate application equipment to minimise runoff of pesticides from a property. The level of pesticide runoff is directly proportional to the amount applied. It is important to not apply more than the required amount. By calibrating equipment you ensure that excessive amounts of pesticide are not applied to the crop. (3B & 17B & 14B).

Costs and benefits

There were no examples found of the economic impacts (either positive or negative) to a grower of applying granular and liquid fertiliser subsurface. It is anticipated that relevant information may be provided in the near future as further research is undertaken.

Regional studies

Case study south of Innisfail

Management practices: a system of improved practices including all nutrient, pest, soil and water management.

A 95ha banana farming property, which adopted improved practices following Severe Tropical Cyclone Larry in 2006, showed an improvement in its financial viability, with benefits extending to the bordering wetlands. The farm's gross margin improved due to increased yields and the savings associated with improved practices. The net present value of the practice change was positive.



The improved practices adopted included:

Nutrient management

- soil and leaf analysis
- matching nutrient application to crop needs
- fertigation and foliar application allowing smaller, more regular doses

Pest management

- targeting chemical application (inject rather than spray)
- reducing chemical use

Soil and water management

- reducing tillage
- longer crop cycles
- minimising traffic in wet season
- monitoring soil moisture
- interrow vegetation
- composting

Capital outlay was required to purchase three harvesters, a slasher and to make changes to the irrigation and fertigation system. The farmer considered this a worthwhile investment due to a 20% reduction in irrigation related costs as well as improvements in soil and plant health. Other purchases included soil analysis and water monitoring equipment.

This resulted in a considerable reduction in chemical (fertiliser and pesticide) costs. The demonstrated savings included herbicide use, which was down by 50%, fungicide by 60%; no nematicides were used and granular fertiliser usage was reduced by 30%. There were also production benefits in terms of site preparation, with use of the ripper and plough down by 60%, and reduced irrigation costs. (13B & 16B & 22B)

Banana economic tools

Banana root and soil health user's manual

This manual (developed by DAFF) identifies simple, practical tests to measure soil health and outlines the use of an on-farm testing kit to perform these tests. This testing is designed so that banana producers or agricultural consultants can assess or monitor the health of the soil inexpensively and without the need for a laboratory.

Website: http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/4789_18453.htm

Phone: 13 23 25 (DAFF)



Extension services

Banana BMP

Best Management Practice program for the banana industry is a source of information about suggested farming practices. It was designed as an environmental guideline and considers the impact of banana production on water quality. It was created by the Australian Banana Growers Council and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Website: <http://bmp.abgc.org.au/>

EnviroVeg

EnviroVeg (a program of AusVeg) provides growers with guidelines and information on how to manage their business in an environmentally responsible manner. Participants can also earn environmental certification.

Website: www.ausveg.com.au

Phone: (02) 9822 0388 (Victoria)

Email: info@ausveg.com.au

Fertcare

This program is a joint initiative of the Australian Fertiliser Services Association and the Fertiliser Industry Federation of Australia. It provides training, quality assurance, certification and accreditation. The training program delivers training in managing food safety, environment and occupational health and safety risks associated with the storage, handling and use of fertilizer and soil ameliorant products.

Website: www.fifa.asn.au

Phone: 02 6230 6987 (Canberra)

Email: fertilizer@fifa.asn.au

Growcom FMS (water efficiency, water quality, soil nutrient)

Developed by Growcom Land and Water staff to assist horticulture growers to identify natural resource management risks, develop action management plans and to assist with directing on-farm investment. Delivered by Growcom staff and external partners, under licence, predominately one-on-one on-farm but can be delivered within a group setting. From a Growcom perspective the FMS enables us to benchmark the horticulture industry in terms of current practices, better document change in practices, provide improved delivery of ongoing and new projects and better target on-ground activities to assist growers to meet and exceed BMP.

Website: <http://www.growcom.com.au/>

Ph: 4613 1066

Email: growcom@growcom.com.au

Guidelines for environmental assurance in Australian horticulture (soil, nutrients, water, chemicals, biodiversity, waste, air, energy)

Developed by the Horticulture for Tomorrow project, managed by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) in partnership with industry, and funded by the Natural Heritage Trust, through the Australian Government's Pathways to industry EMS program. The guidelines help growers link production targets with their care for the environment as an integral part of daily business management. The final version includes a review checklist (to record progress and identify priorities for action and information about risk assessment); suggested practices, monitoring and

recording of eight key areas, including soil, nutrients, water, chemicals, biodiversity, waste, air and energy. The guidelines are available online for free via www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au or the CD and/or hard copy folder can be ordered from HAL.

Ph: 02 8295 2317

Email: horticulturefortomorrow@horticulture.com.au

Regional extensional services

ABCD framework of bananas, papaws and mixed cropping (e.g. potatoes, peanuts, maize, grass seed)

Developed for Terrain NRM for use in identifying recommended best practice. Part of the Reef Rescue program to prioritise practices for incentives funding to achieve water quality improvement.

Website: www.terrain.org.au

Ph: 07 4043 8000

Supplementary resources

Freshcare code of practice - Environmental, Second Edition (2011)

This is an on-farm environmental assurance program. It covers the issues of environmental action planning, land and soil, chemicals, fertiliser and soil additives, water, biodiversity, waste, air, energy and fuel.

Website: www.freshcare.com.au

Phone: 1800 853 508

Email: info@freshcare.com.au

Guidelines for environmental assurance in Australian horticulture

Developed by Horticulture for Tomorrow in association with Horticulture Australia Ltd and the Natural Heritage Trust. The guidelines look at:

- land and soil management
- water and soil management
- chemical management
- nutrient management
- biodiversity
- waste management
- air management
- energy management

It also includes a self-assessment checklist.

Website: www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au/for_growers/guidelines_table.asp

Phone: 02 8295 2300 (Horticulture Australia Ltd, Sydney)

Email: horticulturefortomorrow@horticulture.com.au

Wetlands management handbook

Farm Management Systems (FMS) guidelines for managing wetlands in intensive agriculture. Developed by the Australian and Queensland Governments, as part of the Queensland Wetlands Program. The guide provides information to landholders and extension officers on:

- identifying wetlands
- wetland management
- artificial wetland creation

The guide was designed to complement other industry FMS programs, for holistic farm management.

Website: <http://wetlandinfo.ehp.qld.gov.au/wetlands/resources/publications/reports.html>

Phone: 13 74 68 (Queensland Government statewide)

More information

If you would like to contact DAFF about the information presented in this factsheet, contact us on: 13 25 23, for the cost of a local call within Queensland, or 07 3404 6999, or email us at; ReefPlan@daff.qld.gov.au



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