

# FERTILISER

		Below Standard Practice	Acceptable Practice	Innovative Practice
Soil Sampling & Analysis		Do not understand why you would need information on soil fertility.	Understand why soil sampling is being undertaken and follow a planned approach.	
		No information on soil fertility or data is over 3yrs old.	Fertiliser decisions are based on soil sampling every three years, and soil fertility trends.	Fertiliser decisions are based on soil sampling every one to two years, and soil fertility trends.
				Plant sampling (tissue testing) and soil sampling are used to fine-tune nutrient requirements.
		Unsure what to consider when soil sampling.	Soil samples are taken from three or four representative areas of the farm using correct sampling procedures.	Separate soil samples are taken from all Farm Management Zones, or paddocks, using correct sampling procedures. Soil sampling transects are mapped using GPS for future soil testing.
		Do not use a soil testing laboratory that is National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited or Australian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASAPC) certified for the analysis required.	Use a soil testing laboratory that is National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited or Australian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC) certified for the analysis required.	
		Do not use a soil test results as part of nutrient management decisions.	Soil test results and soil nutrient target levels are used as part of making nutrient management decisions.	
Soil Constraints		Soil constraints and other limiting factors are not considered before applying fertilisers.	Soil constraints and other limiting factors are considered before determining nutrient requirements.	
Nutrient Budget		Do not use a nutrient budget (a calculation of what comes onto the farm and what leaves it).	Use a nutrient budget that is calculated over the whole farm, i.e. a farmgate nutrient budget.	Calculate nutrient budgets for different Farm Management Zones.

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Nutrient application rates & spreading	Use the same rate of fertiliser on all paddocks without considering nutrient requirements.	Target your nutrient rates/types for different areas of the farm based on soil test results.	Target your nutrient rates/types for different areas of the farm based on your soil test results, nutrient budgets, and areas where there is a high risk of nutrient loss through run-off and drainage.
	Do not consider effluent as a fertiliser.	Effluent is used as a fertiliser with rates determined by soil nutrient requirements and soil test results.	Effluent composition is tested, and is used as a fertiliser with rates determined by soil nutrient requirements, soil test results, effluent nutrient value, and the financial value to the farm.
	Nutrient application rates are not determined by a trained farmer or adviser.	Nutrient application rates are determined by a farmer or adviser with training in the interpretation of soil test results and calculating nutrient application rates according to the 4Rs principles.	Nutrient application rates are determined by a Fertcare accredited advisor, or farmer with accredited training in soil test interpretation.
	Do not calibrate the fertiliser spreader or use an Accuspread-accredited spreader.	Calibrate the fertiliser spreader or use an Accuspread-accredited spreader.	
Avoiding Nutrient Losses	Proximity to waterways or drainage lines is not considered.	A buffer distance is maintained between areas where fertiliser/effluent is applied and waterways or drainage lines.	
	Do not know if there are farm areas with a high risk of nutrient loss through runoff and leaching.	Farm areas with a high risk of nutrient loss through runoff and leaching have been identified and fertiliser is not applied in these areas. These areas may include wet spots, steep areas etc.	
	Fertiliser is applied to nutrient built-up areas, such as stock camps, gateways, troughs, etc.	Fertiliser is not applied to nutrient build up areas.	
	Fertiliser is applied without considering soil moisture levels, weather forecasts or irrigation schedules.	Fertiliser is applied at times when the risk of run-off/leaching is low. The risk may be determined by considering soil moisture, weather forecasts and irrigation schedules.	

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Planning & Record keeping	No records of soil fertility or fertiliser management are kept.		Soil fertility records and fertiliser management are kept for each paddock or Farm Management Zone and are used for making fertiliser decisions.	
	No documented farm nutrient management plan		A farm nutrient management plan is documented and used to guide fertiliser applications.	The farm nutrient management plan is documented and reviewed every 1-2 years.