

HORTICULTURE ABCD FRAMEWORK: DRAFT



| Principle | Management Practice Category | D Degrading | C Compliant | B Better Practices | A Unproven |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| | | Unacceptable & potentially degrading practices | Legislative requirement, Horticulture code of practice, ETC | Current Best management practice | Testing practices that could provide WQ outcomes |
| 1. Soil Management | 1.1 Trees | Inter rows cultivated | Inter rows bare | Inter rows maintained with active management of grass ground cover & mulched bed | Actively Managed for cover & soil improvement such as inter cropping to improve soil nutrition & pest or disease control. Active management of the bed |
| | Plantation - Bananas & Pawpaw's | Cultivated establishment phase, inter rows cultivated in production phase | Cultivated establishment phase, Inter rows bare in production phase | Inter rows maintained with active management of grass ground cover & mulched bed, minimum till establishment phase, Contour planting | Control traffic permanent beds with GPS guidance for establishment phase, Actively Managed for cover & soil improvement such as inter cropping to improve soil nutrition & pest or disease control. Active |
| | 1.2 Plantation - Pineapples etc. | Cultivated establishment phase, inter rows cultivated in production phase | Cultivated establishment phase, Inter rows bare in production phase | inter rows maintained with as much ground cover as practical in production phase, minimum till establishment phase, contour planting | Control traffic permanent beds with GPS guidance for establishment phase, cropping & harvesting operations, inter rows actively Managed for cover & soil improvement in production phase |
| | 1.3 Annuals | Cultivated cropping phase, no management of traffic | Reduced tillage cropping phase, use of multitask machinery, to annually form beds, (lay plastic and drip irrigation) | Developing control traffic systems, strategic till cropping phase, no inter row tillage, beds reshaped for specific crops | Control traffic permanent beds with GPS guidance for establishment, cropping & harvesting operations, organic mulches |
| | 1.4 Fallow Management | Cultivated bare Fallow, | Minimal till, grass fallow, | Minimum till cover crop fallow | Permanent bed cover crop fallow to improve soil health or disease and pest resistance. |
| | 1.5 Headland Management | cultivated headlands | Grassed headlands | Permanent grassed Headlands and managed to minimise erosion, | Permanent grassed Headlands managed as filter strips. |
| | 1.6 farm layout Plan | No soil management plan | Basic soil management plan | Soil management plan developed for specific soil types: identify soil types, soil mapping/testing, adjust soil Management plan for next year if required | GPS based soil management plan: identify soil types & productivity zones for each paddock using GPS, using soil mapping & remote sensing, adjusted for next year if required |
| 1.7 Machinery | Standard tillage equipment | Standard tillage equipment | Bed former, strategic till equipment, mulcher, minimum till seed/seedling planter & Machinery moving towards unified wheel spacing's | GPS based Bed former, zonal till equipment, mulcher, minimum till seed/seedling planter | |
| 2. Nutrient Management | 2.1. Planning & Monitoring | No nutrient management plan, no records kept | Basic nutrient management plan, including soil test during fallow, Keep Basic Records - daily diary | Annual crop specific nutrient management plan, conducts regular soil tests & leaf analysis, Aware of soil types / productivity zones for each paddock, uses harvested yield & remote sensing. Keep detailed records | Annual productivity zone Nutrient management plan including nutrient budget, conducts GPS referenced soil tests & leaf analysis, Manage for soil types & productivity zones for each paddock, uses harvested yield & remote sensing. Keep spatially referenced records. |
| | 2.2 Fertiliser application rates | Application rates based on historic rates or rules of thumb or cost of fertiliser | Application rates based on industry recommendations & soil testing | Application rates based on soil & leaf test and productivity zones & accounts for all sources of nutrients. Change fertiliser rates between paddocks if required. | Application rates based on soil & leaf test and productivity zones & accounts for all nutrient sources. Change fertiliser rates for productivity zones within paddocks (if required). |
| | 2.3 Accuracy of application | Irregular calibration | Annual calibration or in accordance with manufactures recommendations | Calibration to ensure the accuracy of application equipment for example granular product change | Automated calibration to get instant accuracy of application & monitoring during application |
| | 2.4 Application timing | application does not consider crop stage & weather conditions | application does consider crop stage & weather conditions | Nutrient applications are based on crop stage, 2-3 day weather forecast, soil type & moisture levels (irrigation timing) | Nutrient applications are based on monitoring of crop health & stage, 2-3 day weather forecast, soil type & moisture levels (irrigation timing) |
| | 2.5 Application method | Surface applied not incorporated | Mixture of surface incorporated & subsurface applications | Specific application method utilised to (e.g. subsurface, basal (preplant), fertigation & foliar) maximise efficiency of nutrient uptake. | Automated specific application method utilised to (e.g. subsurface, basal (preplant), fertigation & foliar) maximise efficiency of nutrient uptake. |
| 3. Pesticide Management | 3.1 Planning & monitoring | No pesticide management plan, no records kept. | Basic pesticide management plan, with pest monitoring & reactive pest control, Keep Basic Records- daily diary | An IPM program has been developed & implemented using pest pressure, soil types, crop stage, surrounding crops & yield mapping, Change pesticide strategy for different blocks if necessary, Document pest monitoring & identify pests. Complete record keeping. | A GPS based IPM program has been developed & implemented using pest pressure, soil types, crop stage, surrounding crops & yield mapping, Change pesticide strategy for different blocks if necessary, Document pest monitoring & identify pests. spatial record keeping. |
| | 3.2 Pesticide application Rates | One Crop protection strategy for each crop based on historic application rates or rules of thumb, & the use of non selective products, irrespective of the control needed. | Multiple crop protection strategies for each crop, uses a combination of selective & non selective products at rates appropriate to control needed. | Paddock scale pest presence & pressure monitoring is used to guide selection & application rate of pesticides. Where practical pesticides that are selective to target species replace non selective, broad spectrum pesticides (strategic pesticides use only) | Variable pesticide strategies within blocks, Management of high pest pressure zones with specific pesticides while also maximising benefit from encouraging natural & introduced biological control agents, i.e. increasing level of beneficial organisms. |
| | 3.3 Application Timing | Calendar scheduled applications regardless of pest pressure or climatic conditions. | Application timing based on evidence of pest & disease pressure & weather conditions, rainfall and wind at time of applications. | Timing pesticide applications with respect to crop stage, pest pressure, irrigation & rainfall, pest scouting governs pest control program | Variable Timing of pesticide applications within blocks with respect to crop stage, pest pressure, irrigation & rainfall, Pest scouting governs pest control program |
| | 3.4 Application method | Irregular calibration & maintenance of spray equipment. | Annual calibration or in accordance with manufactures recommendations & | Modern application technology for improved placement & timing to improve application efficiency, accuracy & to extend the window of opportunity. Calibration to ensure the accuracy of application technology. | Apply variable pesticide strategies within paddocks, specific nozzles, volume, pressure & droplet size matched to specific chemical & variable rate screen, Computerised application: GPS &/or sensor controlled, &/or control droplet, height control & section control, electronic weather station, use of low volume applicators, Use of crop or weed sensors to target crop canopy, Automated calibration to get |
| 4. Irrigation & Drainage management | 4.1 System design | Irrigation system not suited to majority of soil type or crop e.g. flooding on sandy soils Basic pumps not necessarily matched to irrigation system. Inefficient reticulation systems | Irrigation system suited to majority of soil type or crop. Marginal capacity to deliver crop water requirement. Pumps designed to suit the application. Efficient reticulation system. | Irrigation systems suited to all soil types and crops. Has capacity to deliver crop water requirement. Pumps designed to suit the application. Efficient reticulation system. Irrigation system audit maintained. | Variable rate irrigation systems suited to all soil types and crops. Has capacity to deliver crop water requirement. Pumps designed to maximise efficiency. Efficient reticulation system with use of controllers & automation. Irrigation system audit maintained. |
| | 4.2 Scheduling | Calendar scheduling | Scheduling based on basic field monitoring using visual/manual assessments such as a penetration test | Irrigation scheduling based on regular field monitoring to determine plant available water content, moisture monitoring equipment, daily evaporation data, soil type and crop stage. Irrigation water tested for EC & nutrients. Irrigation record documented. | Irrigation scheduling based on regular field monitoring at multiple locations and depths to determine plant available water content, moisture monitoring equipment, daily evaporation data, soil type and crop stage. Irrigation water tested for EC & nutrients. Irrigation record documented spatial. |
| | 4.3 Run-off management | No planned drainage management | Runoff is managed to minimise farm impacts | Whole of farm run-off including packing sheds etc. is filtered via properly designed & managed traps and buffers. | Whole of farm run-off including packing sheds etc. is filtered via properly designed & managed traps and buffers. Water quality leaving farm is monitored. |
| | 4.4 Uniformity | Application uniformity (DU) unknown. No monitoring | Irrigation application uniformity (DU) below industry benchmark (<80%DU) Annual farm scale monitoring of irrigation uniformity. | Irrigation system performing at industry benchmark. (80 - 85% DU) Annual paddock scale monitoring of irrigation uniformity. | Distribution uniformity consistently above industry benchmarks (typically >90%). Annual paddock scale monitoring of irrigation uniformity. |