
What are Best Management Practices?

Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) are practical measures that producers can take to reduce the amount of fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste, and other pollutants entering our water resources. They are designed to improve water quality while maintaining agricultural production.

Working with stakeholders, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) adopted a statewide equine manual. The BMP manual covers key aspects of water quality and water conservation. Typical practices include:

- **Nutrient Management** to determine nutrient needs and sources, and manage nutrient applications (including manure) to minimize impacts to water resources.
- **Irrigation Management** to address the method and scheduling of irrigation to reduce water and nutrient losses to the environment.
- **Water Resource Protection** using buffers, setbacks, and swales to reduce or prevent the transport of sediments and nutrients from production areas to waterbodies.

After Enrolling in BMPs

An important part of BMP implementation is documenting it through record keeping, as specified in FDACS rules and BMP manuals. This is sometimes the only way to confirm BMP implementation. BMP records should be accurate, clear, and well-organized. You may develop your own record-keeping forms or use the ones provided in the manual.

FDACS staff, UF-IFAS Basin Area Team Extension agents, soil and water conservation districts, and USDA-NRCS can assist producers with BMP implementation and record-keeping methods.

For assistance with enrolling in and implementing BMPs contact:

Call - (850) 617-1727 or Email - AgBMPHelp@FreshFromFlorida.com

FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy
1203 Governors Square Blvd., Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Office: (850) 617-1700
Fax: (850) 617-1701
www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy
Why should I implement BMPs?

• Some BMPs can help you operate more efficiently and reduce costs, while you help protect the environment. Also, producers enrolled in FDACS BMP programs are eligible for cost-share, when available, for certain practices.

• Implementing (and maintaining) verified FDACS-adopted BMPs provides a presumption of compliance with state water quality standards for the pollutants addressed by the BMPs.

• BMP implementation provides protection under the Florida Right to Farm Act from duplicative local regulation.

• Producers who implement FDACS-adopted BMPs might satisfy some water management district permitting requirements. Check with your district.

• In areas with adopted basin management action plans (BMAPs), and some other designated areas, producers who implement BMPs avoid having to conduct costly water quality monitoring.

• BMP participation demonstrates agriculture's commitment to water resource protection, and helps maintain support for this alternative approach.

How do I participate in BMPs?

1. Schedule a meeting with a BMP team member, who will provide a free FDACS BMP manual and other BMP-related information.

2. Participate with the team member in a free assessment of your operation, to determine which BMPs apply to you.

3. Fill out a BMP checklist and sign the Notice of Intent (NOI) to implement the BMPs.

4. Keep a copy of the checklist and signed NOI in your records.

5. Implement and maintain the applicable BMPs and keep adequate records, to maintain a presumption of compliance with state water quality standards.

6. If you would like to receive a Certificate of Enrollment in BMPs, contact FDACS at (850) 617-1727 or email AgBmpHelp@FreshFromFlorida.com.

Examples of Equine BMPs

Nutrient Management
- Using UF/IFAS recommended fertilization rates
- Basing fertilization rates for phosphorus and micronutrients on a soil test-based results from a lab that uses a method used by the UF/IFAS Extension Soil Testing Laboratory

Manure Management
- Collecting manure from confined areas and riding trails at least monthly and properly disposing of manure pending appropriate use or disposal
- Utilizing appropriate composting system based on the amount of manure generated on-site

Sediment and Erosion Control
- Stabilizing access roads or trails that cross streams and creeks, using rock crossings, culverts, or bridges
- Maintaining vegetative cover on road banks

Pasture Management
- Managing grazed pastures based on established forage heights to maintain plant vigor and prevent soil erosion
- Using fencing to subdivide larger pastures to ensure uniform grazing

Stormwater Management
- Installing gutters and downspouts on all buildings adjacent to High Intensity Areas (HIA) and diverting the water away from HIA pastures to other vegetated areas

Water Resources Protection
- Maintaining a 25-foot non-fertilized vegetated buffer upward of the landward boundary of all wetlands, unless you have a water management district permit specifying a different buffer

Equine Watering Requirements and Sources
- Installing shut-off devices on all troughs, preventing water from overflowing and turning water off when not in use

Pesticide/Pharmaceutical Use
- Storing pesticides in a roofed, locked structure at least 100 feet away from wells, surface waters, and sinkholes

Animal Mortality Management
- Properly disposing of carcasses on-site depending upon below- or above-ground burial plans